# Future-Focused Entrepreneurship Assessment (FFEA®)

Niko Roorda, PhD, 2018
https://niko.roorda.nu

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## Corporate Social Responsibility in Management and Engineering

Carolina Machado and J. Paulo Davim (Editors)

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# Abstract

FFEA®, *Future-Focused Entrepreneurship Assessment*, is a system that enables companies and other organizations to investigate to which extent they are 'fit for the future'.

FFEA (which is pronounced as rhyming with 'tea'), is based on a management philosophy that describes four perspectives from which companies see themselves and their relations with the outside world. The perspectives, called 'diligent', 'targeted', 'systemic' and 'holistic', together form the basis for an assessment instrument that is the core of FFEA. The FFEA assessment is done by a group of stakeholders of the company (such as management, employees, customers, owners, suppliers, banks, neighbors, community representatives, societal or environmental action groups, etc.), who together reach consensus about (1) the current perspective of the company in relation to a series of different topics, and (2) the 'desired' perspective that is to be reached after for instance a couple of years.

The purpose is, to investigate how likely it is that the company will survive, prosper, and fit within a sound society and environment. If weaknesses are found during the assessment, plans are made to make improvements, in order to increase the company's '*Future-proof Resilience*'.
The conclusions of a FFEA assessment may be that only minor improvements are necessary. On the other hand, it may appear to be of vital interest to drastically change the way in which the company acts, thinks, or even sees itself, leading to a process called '*change the company mission*'.
The result of the assessment is a concrete action plan.

The chapter first describes why this Future-proof Resilience of companies is directly linked to the Future-proof Resilience of society as a whole. The link between the two is CSR: Corporate Social responsibility. Motivations of companies for CSR are discussed, making clear why CSR is essential for their continuity. Cases are offered, such as Eastman Kodak, Xerox, the music industry, and the Royal Dutch Shell company.

The four FFEA perspectives are introduced, after which the entire FFEA system is explained, including its assessment procedures. Next, it is shown how FFEA is to be applied as an integrated part of the quality management cycle. This is illustrated with two practical cases.

After a FFEA assessment is finished, it may be concluded that, as a part of the action plan, special attention is to be given to a number of FFEA's 30 topics. For most of these topics, FFEA offers extra tools, the so-called 'FFEA Extensions'. A selection of them is described in this chapter.

The final part of the chapter explains the origins and theoretical backgrounds of FFEA, enabling the reader to study the way in which the system was developed, based on a range of management theories.
One of the sources of FFEA is AISHE, which was developed – just like FFEA – by the author of the present chapter. AISHE, the 'Assessment Instrument for Sustainability in Higher Education', was applied hundreds of times in higher education institutions, before it was used as the main source for FFEA.
The AISHE Certificate is currently applied as a model for a Certificate that will be launched as an extension to FFEA. Companies which are awarded the FFEA Certificate can thus show that they are 'Future-proof resilient'.

# 1. Motivations for CSR

## 1.1. Maslow for CSR

CSR, *corporate social responsibility*, is hot. Many companies practice it, ranging from multinational businesses to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Their annual reports are silent witnesses of it, in various forms. Some companies present separate CSR Reports (e.g. Cisco [1]) or combined CSR & Sustainable Development Reports (e.g. Volkswagen [2]), next to a more general annual report. Others use integrated reporting (e.g. Denso [3]), in which CSR is accounted for as an essential aspect of all or most business activities. In some of such integrated reports, CSR as such is not mentioned explicitly but related terms are, such as *social and environmental benefit*, *corporate government*, and/or *sustainable development* (e.g. Unilever [4]).

Why is CSR hot? For what reason have millions of companies all over the world adopted CSR as a bottom line? Actually, for a wide variety of reasons. In some cases, the main motivation is based on *fear*. Fear for all kinds of bad things that might happen, either to the company as a whole, or to board members or managers, employees, stockholders, the local community or the environment.
In other cases, the CSR mission and strategy is based on the opposite: *hope*. Hope to be able to contribute to a better world. To combat poverty, educate people, strengthen communities, save ecosystems, or simply to expand the company.

Where fear is the main motivator, relevant causes for that fear may be: the limited availability of energy; of raw materials; of legal maneuvering space; money; patents; customers. Alternatively, fear may exist for legal liability or for reputation damage.
Hope, on the other hand, may be driven by idealism, but also by creative and innovative minds, market opportunities, or a thrive to create or increase prestige, respect or even power. Or simply the ambition to do business in a decent way.

Which kind of motivation is better? The answer to that question depends on the personal position and convictions of those who are judging. For some, CSR without idealism is without any real value, being at best an example of greenwashing or window-dressing, and at the worst a kind of hypocrisy. As an example, the McDonald's Corporation has been mentioned [5], as this company presents itself as a strong advocate of CSR, while at the same time being accused of abuses of labor rights and health safety standards, union-busting practices, and offering low wages. In cases like this, commercial interests seem to contradict idealistic motivations or ethical standards.
However, there is no real reason why commercial and idealistic motivations are in mutual conflict. This may be made clear with the aid of a simple scheme, that is based on Maslow's famous motivations pyramid [6]. In this model, a hierarchy of needs is described, consisting of five layers. The most fundamental needs, according to Maslow, are presented at the lowest layers, as the left side of figure 1 shows.
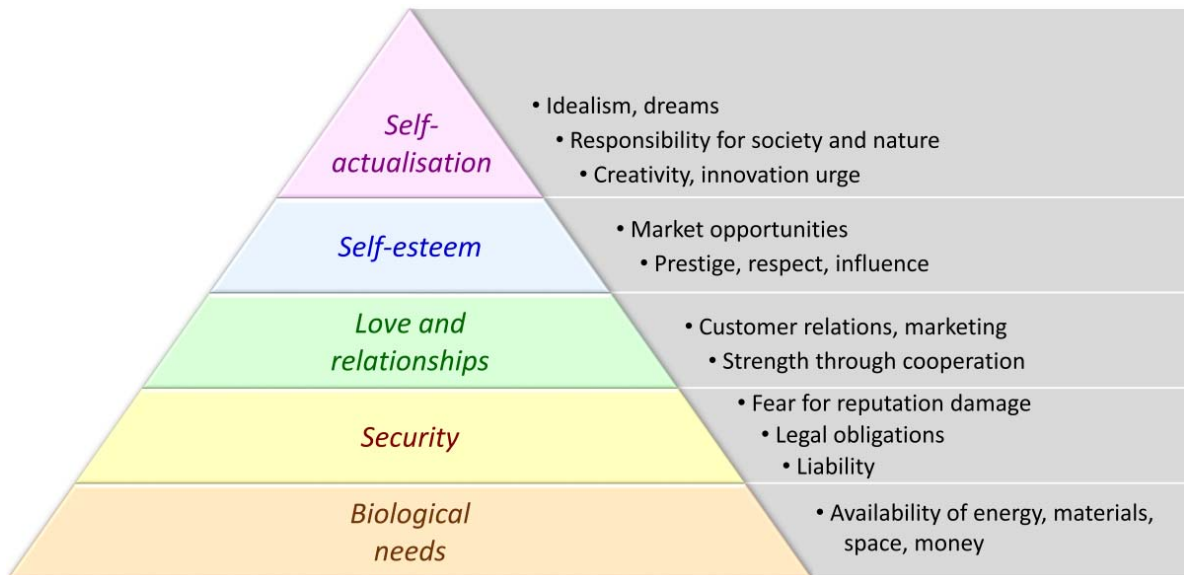
*Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs [6], related to corporate motives for CSR*

In figure 1, these five layers of needs are compared with the needs of companies. (Wherever in this chapter the word 'companies' is used, all kinds of organizations are implied, unless otherwise stated, including commercial companies and non-profit organizations such as schools, healthcare institutions, government departments, non-governmental organization (NGOs), etc.) Actually, the comparison with Maslow's model of needs implies that these companies are conceptualized as a kind of living organisms, for which their physical and mental needs act as motivations for their plans and activities [7].

Motivations based on *fears* are mainly present at the lowest two levels of the pyramid. There, the fear for a lack of energy, materials, money or legal maneuvering space are to be found, as well as the fear for damages and liabilities. Both kinds of fear are presented as *biological* needs (also referred to as physiological needs) and the wish for *safety and security*.

The top three layers mainly represent hope, ranging from self-oriented hopes such as market opportunities to altruistic ones like dreams and ideals.

No doubt, all companies who dedicate attention to CSR do this based on not just one motive, but rather a combination of motives. Arguably, in many cases such a *motivation mix* is related to all five levels of Maslow's pyramid, or at least to most of them. Consequently, when one zooms in on particular companies, the question should not be whether its CSR motives are purely idealistic or instead purely selfish; both extremes will almost certainly rarely be the case. On the one hand: 100% idealistic motives may be a threat to the company's financial position. Every company needs to make profit or at least provide sufficient income to continue its operations. Completely idealistic organizations may sooner or later fail by going bankrupt. On the other hand: 100% selfish motives for practicing CSR will carry the threat of being exposed, after which losing customers will also damage the company.

Later in this chapter (in section 7), the *CSR Motivation Mix Model for Companies*, based on Maslow's model, will be presented as a management tool, along with other pragmatic tools that together are described as the *FFEA Extensions*, i.e. as accessories to the *Future-Focused Entrepreneurship Assessment* (FFEA) system which is the main topic of this chapter.

### 1.2. Future-proof resilience of companies and society

More and more companies and CSR organizations prove that idealistic and pragmatic motives don't conflict. To the contrary: analyses (e.g. [8]) show that in many cases there is a strong positive correlation between ideals-based CSR and profit. [9] even writes, linking CSR to sustainable development: "Sustainable front-runners are more successful than average businesses". This conclusion is supported by others, e.g. [10], who illustrates the reality of *corporate sustainable profitability* using a range of Swedish companies.

Table 1 illustrates how the interests of society and the environment, striving for a sound future, coincide with the same interests of companies, and how those companies can deploy CSR-based actions for the interest of both, contributing to what may be called '*future-proof resilience*' of both.

Table 1. CSR actions for future-proof resilience

| Level | Interests and risks of companies | CSR actions |
|---|---|---|
| 5. Actualization | • Dreams and ideals | • Evolve towards sustainable identity & mission. |
| | • Responsibility | • Enhance transparency and integrated reporting. Move from *shareholder value* to *stakeholder value*. |
| | • Creativity, innovation | • Stimulate creativity of personnel. Invest in research. |
| 4. Esteem | • Market opportunities | • Offer innovative products / services. Open new markets. Be sensible to changes in society, technology and economy. |
| | • Prestige, respect, influence | • Be honest. Participate in societal projects. Don't discriminate. Offer fair wages. |
| 3. Relations | • Continuous customer relations | • Trade fairly. Listen and respond to customers. Move from selling products to offering services. |
| | • Cooperation within the chain | • Adopt principles of cradle to cradle (C2C) & circular economy. Reject unsustainable suppliers. |
| | • Local cooperation | • Invest in relations with regional community and within business park. |
| 2. Security | • Reputation, liability | • Offer safe and healthy products / services and jobs. Recall products as soon as necessary. Offer generous indemnities. |
| | • Legal obligations | • Comply with laws and regulations. Comply with corporate codes and ethical standards. |
| 1. Biological needs | • Climate change, energy scarcity | • Apply sustainable energy. Increase energy efficiency of production and products. |
| | • Nature damage, materials scarcity | • Reuse, recycle, substitute. Design for disassembly. |
| | • Insufficient space | • Stimulate efficient, multifunctional use of space. Protect forests and ecosystems. |
| | • Solvability, liquidity | • No risky investments. Support sound banking system. |

Table 1 makes clear that the continuity and the profitability of a company depend on its CSR strategy for many reasons. This is illustrated by the demise of many past companies, professions and even entire business sectors that have ceased to exist for a range of reasons, many of which are present in table 1.

In the twenty-first century, this is more true than ever before. It is interesting to combine the past, the present and the future with the aid of a 'Red List of Professions and Business Sectors', shaped after the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species [11]. Using the same terminology as the IUCN does for species of animals and plants, this Red List of Professions and Business Sectors looks like table 2.

Table 2. Examples of professions on the Red List of Professions and Business Sectors

| Status | Examples |
|---|---|
| Extinct, Locally Extinct or Critically Endangered | Clog makers. Telegraph operators. Night soil collectors. Fire makers. Log drivers. Cobblers. Ice Deliverers. Lamp lighters. Leech collectors. Bowling pin setters. Typesetters. Elevator operators. Resurrectionists. Knights. |
| Threatened | Chemical photo & film industry. Millers. Bridge keepers. Travel agents. Printing companies. Desktop publishers. Clock hand inspectors. Paper mills. Shepherds. CD Music industry. Inner city shops. |
| Vulnerable | Bus drivers. Typists. Translators. Livestock farmers. Infantrymen. Money printers. Cashiers. Librarians. Software developers. Financial analysts. Gas stations. Oil companies. |

During discussions between the author of this chapter and members of company boards, frequently a question was asked to them:

-       "Why do you expect that your company will still exist in, say, twenty years?"

It is striking that one kind of answer to this question has *never* been heard:

-       "I am not at all sure that my company will exist in twenty years."

It is nice to see that entrepreneurs and managers believe in their company – although it must be said that in some cases a variation to this unheard answer was occasionally given:

-       "Between now and twenty years, we may have been a partner in a merger."

A frequently given answer is:

-       "We will still exist as a company, because we make such good products."

Or alternatively:

-       "… we deliver such good services."

In spite of this answer, and related other ones, delivering good products or services is not a proof that the company will go on making it: there are many reasons, as table 1 shows, why a company may die in spite of its excellent products. As society, science and technology change, so do customer preferences. The world is changing, and it does so faster and faster. Thus, it may well be that products with an excellent quality, that are highly popular at one moment, may lose customers' interests at the next. Alternatively, even if the products as such are still wanted, the company may get into trouble due to reputation damage. As a consequence, companies, professions, or entire business sectors may end gradually or abruptly.

## 2.  (not) Ready for the future

One may discuss whether all entries in table 2 are placed correctly. Probably, many more items are to be added. But the general idea is evident: many professions and sectors are threatened or have already disappeared. Even professions that perhaps ten years ago looked solid and safe, such as drivers of buses, taxis and trains, could die out in the next ten or twenty years. In a report published in 2014 [12], CBRE Consulting warns that 50 per cent of all occupations may have become obsolete within a few decades.
As a consequence, companies in many business sectors may go bankrupt on a large scale.

Many examples illustrate the truth of this fact. Take Eastman Kodak and Fujifilm, who thought around the year 2000 that chemical photography had a sound future. Here is the story of Kodak [7].

### 2.1.    The Eastman Kodak case

1888: The Kodak company is founded by George Eastman and Henry A. Strong.
1975: Eastman Kodak dominates the US market for photography, commanding 85% of camera sales and 90% of film sales.
Also 1975: Kodak develops the very first digital camera. But it is dropped, as the company fears it will threaten Kodak's own chemical photography business.
1994: Apple introduces the innovative QuickTake digital camera. Although it carries the Apple label, it is produced by Kodak, which proves that Kodak's digital knowhow is up to date.
2000: In the years around the start of the new millennium, Kodak does not develop a digital photography strategy. The company believes that its core business, traditional film, will not be threatened by the digital technology.
In the same years, Sony, Nikon and Canon start flooding the market with digital cameras.
2004: While in the midst of a hasty U-turn towards digital technology, Eastman Kodak announces it will shed 15,000 jobs. A year later, the number is raised to 27,000. Its stock value plummets: see figure 2.
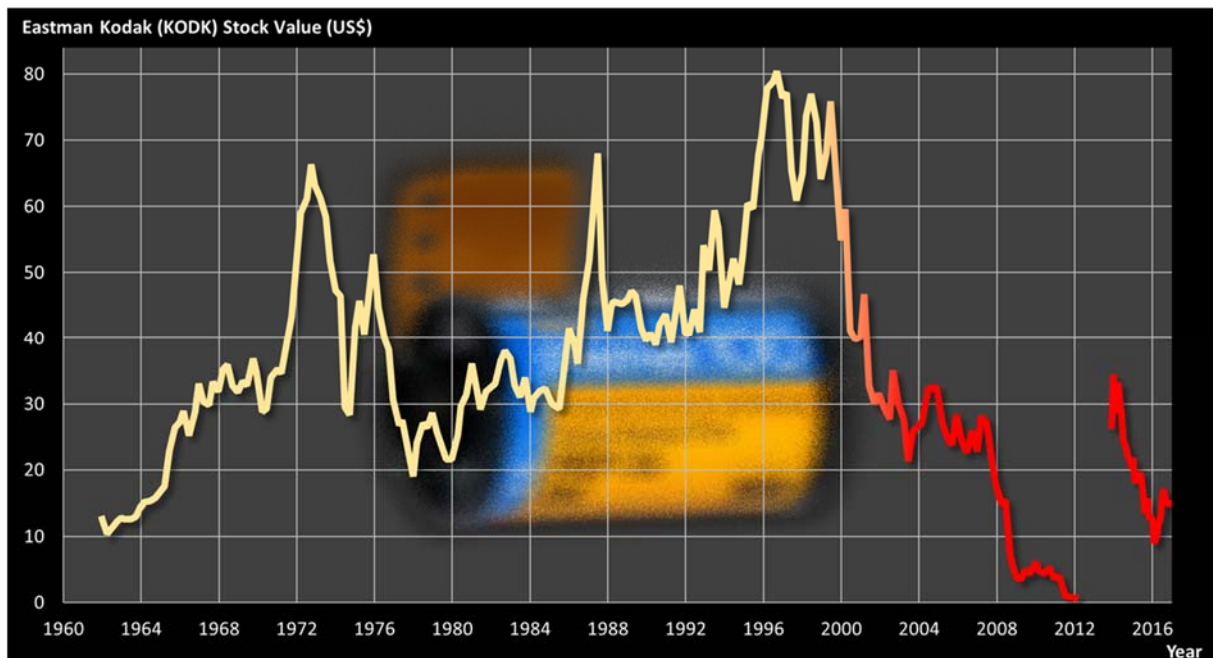


*Figure 2. The rise and fall of Eastman Kodak. Sources: [13], [14]. Background photo: [15].*

2010: Kodak rapidly used up its cash reserves. Most of its revenues now come from patent licensing to competitors.
2012: Eastman Kodak is declared bankrupt. In an attempt for a restart, its photographic film, commercial scanners and kiosk divisions are sold.

2013: Next, many of its patents are sold as well, for more than half a billion dollars. In August, the company emerges from bankruptcy after also abandoning personalized imaging and document imaging. In October, it returns to the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), as figure 2 shows.

In the 21st century, hardly anyone still buys old-fashioned rolls of film. Kodak started to move too late, years after young computer companies had already conquered the digital photography field, leaving no niche for Eastman's company.

Kodak was *not* ready for the future.

It was not only Eastman Kodak that fell into the time trap. It's one-time main competitor, Fujifilm, made the same mistake and got into trouble too. Another company fared completely different: Xerox.


## 2.2.    The Xerox case

In 1938, the very first photocopy was generated in a New York laboratory. The first photocopier appeared in 1949. The process, called 'xerography', was owned by a company that called itself the Xerox Corporation from 1961 onwards, describing itself as 'The Copying Company'.

But the company did not stop there. Beginning in 1970, Xerox also investigated in computer technology. As computers were starting to conquer the world, Xerox realized at an early stage that there would come a day when computer monitors and hard drives would largely replace the role of paper documents. If that were to happen, the use of photocopiers would decline and this would ultimately – maybe only after decades had passed – spell the end for the Xerox Corporation.

This perspective of the future resulted in the company adopting a drastic change of course in the 1990s, when it launched a new image and officially called itself 'The Document Company'. On top of photocopiers, the company placed a larger focus on products and services for digital information and documentation.

Xerox was ready for the future; see figure 3.



*Figure 3. Xerox: ready for the future. Kodak and Fuji: not ready.*


The Xerox case shows that it is essential for each and every company – whether commercial or non-profit – to investigate every few years whether it has a sound future. Threat to the company continuity may come from many sides. Perhaps, new technologies of competitors may make the present products obsolete. Perhaps the company makes use of child labor in far-away countries or pollute the environment, causing customers to flee ('voting with their feet') or governments to impose laws and regulations the company is unable to afford financially or mentally. A lack of CSR can be lethal.

If it seems that there is a serious threat to the company continuity, it is vital to investigate the reason why the company exists – the raison d'être or the mission – and see if it can be redefined, just like Xerox did. *Redefining the Company Mission*, as this exercise is called, is something that every company should do every now and then. Another example illustrates this principle again.


## 2.3.    The Music Industry case

LPs and CDs: once they were a cash cow for the music industry. But then, online file sharing started. Through Usenet and Napster, followed by Rapidshare, Megaupload and torrent sites like Demonoid and ThePirateBay, millions of songs and compositions were downloaded for free – legally or otherwise. Soon, the music industry

and the record stores were in big trouble. Sales and stocks plummeted, and the music companies complained loudly. Lawsuits were fought.

In an attempt to turn the tide, the music industry introduced paid downloads, together with digital rights management (DRM) that were supposed to block free downloads. In spite of these efforts, the revenues of recorded music sales continued to decrease, while paid downloads did not do well either.

The size of the loss is difficult to assess. According to the Institute for Policy Innovation (IPI), the effects were the following [16]:

> "The U.S. economy loses $12.5 billion in total output annually as a consequence of music theft. Sound recording piracy leads to the loss of 71,060 jobs to the U.S. economy. Music theft also leads to the loss of $2.7 billion in earnings annually in both the sound recording industry and in downstream retail industries."

Estimates of the loss however are heavily disputed [17], and are therefore hard to express graphically. Revenues of the music industry are much more objectively assessable, and are shown in figure 4.
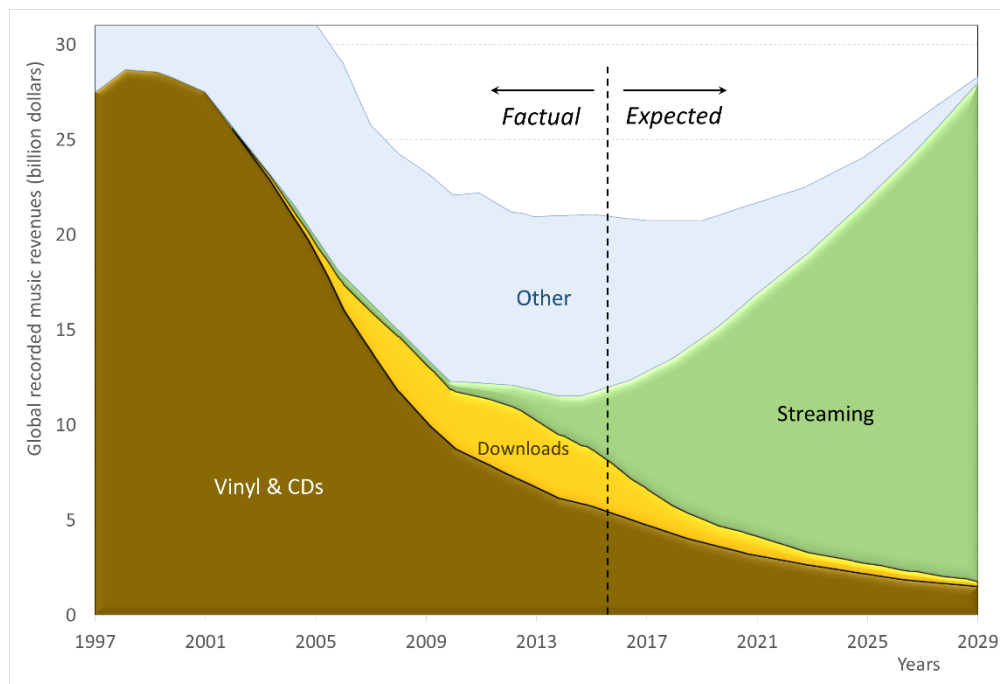


*Figure 4. Streaming may save the Music Industry. Sources:* [18]*,* [19]*.*
*'Other': e.g. performance rights, film and advertising tie-ins.*

The music industry definitely had to reinvent itself. It was a classic case of the necessity of *redefining the company mission*, or rather: redefining the *sector* mission.

The tide turned, when streaming music was introduced. iTunes, Spotify and others stormed the market and conquered a major market share. The effect is clearly visible in figure 4, showing the expectations for the next decade.

All of the above cases show: companies, professions and business sectors are not invulnerable. They can be heavily damaged or even disappear. No sector can ever be future-proof.

In other words: a company that cares for its own future, should also care for the future of society and the natural environment, and should adopt CSR and sustainable development as its bottom line.

CSR is where the future-proof resilience of a company and the future-proof resilience of society and the environment come together. In formula-shape:

> *Formula 1:*
> *CSR  =  Entrepreneuring from a perspective of the future of the company*
> *        =  Entrepreneuring from a perspective of the future of society & the planet*

# 3. The four perspectives of Future-Focused Entrepreneurship Assessment

*"You probably spend a lot of time in cars, perhaps at the steering wheel. You make sure that your front window is clean and clear so that you can constantly see where you are heading. If this is not the case – perhaps you covered the windshield because of severe frost to prevent ice crystals – and you start driving while the cover is still on, you won't get very far. A hundred yards later, you will probably end up wrapped around a lamppost, or worse, you'll hit another car or a child crossing the street. Of course, nobody would do that. You would be a fool if you did: You don't go on the road blindly!*

*Have you ever realized that when riding in a car, you actually travel in two directions at once? First, when you drive on the road, you cover a distance expressed in miles or kilometers. Second, while you drive, you also move in time, and this is expressed in minutes or hours. Even if you are standing still, not adding any miles to your traveling distance, your temporal motion continues: hour upon hour, day by day, year after year. Why, then, do so many people travel blindly toward the future? (…)*

*It's always beautiful to see how an entrepreneur believes in his or her own product, but whether that is sufficient is doubtful. What if, between now and in twenty years, this excellent product becomes obsolete or is out-performed by something even better or cheaper? What if the people twenty years from now just don't need your product, excellent as it may be? Yes, entrepreneurs who don't think about such things travel blindly toward the future."*

## 3.1. Travelling towards the future

The above text is the introduction to the description of one of a set of competences for sustainable development ( [20], chapter 8). The entire set is called *RESFIA+D*, with the subtitle *The Seven Competences of the Sustainable Professional*. Whereas [20] offers a series of case descriptions to illustrate the model, which can be applied as an assessment & policy instrument by companies and individuals (see section 9), the theoretical aspects are treated in [21], i.e. as a chapter in a book in the same series of books as the present one, with the same editors. Online, details of RESFIA+D can be found at [22].

The opening text of this section is an introduction to competence *F: Future Orientation*. Competence *F* consists of three concrete achievements. The first is: *F1 – Think on different time scales: flexibly zoom in and out on short- and long-term approaches*.
Practically, this means:
- You zoom in: You analyze the opportunities and consequences of your work for the short term.
- Your short-term approach to a problem is aimed at tackling symptoms. (This is the *operational* approach.)
- You also zoom out: You investigate the options for the long term, if necessary even decades ahead, to improve your work fundamentally and in an innovative way.
- Where solving problems is the issue, you primarily aim at eradicating their causes. (This is the *strategic* approach.)
- This zooming in and out in time is done regularly and fluently, thanks to which you have continuous attention for both the short and the long term.

Redefining the company, mentioned earlier, is a typical example of the long-term, strategic approach. [20] goes on to explain this principle:

*"Zooming in and out in time is easy to understand if you imagine the following situation: You are sitting quietly at home one night. Outside it is raining cats and dogs, but inside it feels nice and cozy until you suddenly realize that water is dripping from the ceiling. The roof is leaking! What do you do? Well, or course, the very first thing you do is get towels, wipe up the water, and place some buckets. The leaking roof is one thing, but you don't want your costly hardwood floor or broadloom carpet to get ruined as well.*

*Next, you have to find the cause. Something is wrong with the roof. Maybe some roof tiles have shifted, or perhaps a watertight strip is no longer watertight. In other words, you find the cause and repair the damage. You might even take another big step and replace the entire roof, or as a last resort, you may find*

*another house and move. Wiping water up with towels and placing buckets – these are examples of short-term actions. They don't address the causes, but they prevent further damage. This is what acting operationally means.*

*Repairing the roof represents a more profound approach. If you don't do it, you will still be emptying buckets next year. It is a tactical approach, aimed at a longer term than the towel operation. It's not a matter of minutes; rather, it takes days or weeks.*

*When you replace the roof or even move to another place altogether, then you apply a genuine long-term view. We call this a strategic approach, which involves considering many issues, not just acute problems. For example, you would ask yourself: How do I want to live in twenty years?"*

Evidently, moving to another place is a metaphor for redefining the company mission.
The range from operational to strategic forms a frequently used series of different policy levels, which can be defined as follows:

An *operational* policy makes use of methods that can be applied immediately or in the short term, possibly (but not necessarily) based on tactical or strategic plans.

A *tactical* policy aims at an intermediate term, attempting to realize concrete targets of the organization or of a person, possibly (but not necessarily) derived from the strategic policy.

A *strategic* policy aims at the long term, endeavoring to realize fundamental goals based on the mission of an organization or on personal life goals.

Whereas this range of three policy levels is a classical one, used by many, this chapter adds a fourth policy level, which is essential to the *FFEA* (Future-Focused Entrepreneurship Assessment) system that is the main topic of the present chapter:

A *panoramic* policy aims at the long term of not only the most expected future, but based on a vision about a range of possible or thinkable futures, even actively participating in creating or supporting developments ('gates') towards sustainable, societally preferred futures ('utopias') and discourages developments towards less preferred and unsustainable ones ('dystopias').


### 3.2. Company perspectives

Just like human beings, companies act from a certain *perspective*: a view on itself, on the outside world, and on its position within that world. Due to this perspective, the company has expectations and ambitions about what it can do and should do. The perspective may have been made explicit in a company mission, describing the reason why the company exists and what it strives for. But the perspective may even go beyond such a mission, if it also defines the kind of society in which the company wishes to exist, and the notions about the range of possibilities the company possesses to give shape to this: its *action perspective*.

For many companies, their perspective is primarily related to one of the four policy levels described above. Although not all of their actions will be based entirely on just one policy level, assessments made with FFEA show that, when a wide range of topics are assessed, many of them are based mostly on one policy level.
It is the task of a FFEA assessment to discover the company perspective, and to enable decisions about adaptations of this perspective, thus raising the future-proof resilience of the company. This will be explained in detail in the next sections.

In order to make such an assessment possible, it is first essential to have a scale along which the various perspectives can be expressed. This is what table 3 offers. The four perspectives, applied to companies, have all been given a name: *diligent*, *targeted*, *systemic*, *holistic*.
The perspectives are numbered using the Greek character *Π (capital 'pi'): Π1 to Π4.*

<div align="center">Table 3. Overview of the four perspectives</div>

| Perspective | Π1: Diligent | Π2: Targeted | Π3: Systemic | Π4: Holistic |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Policy | Short term: *Operational* | Intermediate term: *Tactical* | Long term: *Strategic* | Panoramic: *Visionary* |
| General description | The organization primarily focuses on activities that are being carried out now or shortly, and spends little time on external trends that may affect the organization. It relies on current products or services, there are not many initiatives for innovation, and as far as they are, they will remain isolated and they will not or hardly be invested in. 'Do not talk but work on', could be the motto. | The organization aims at fulfilling measurable goals of the established policy. For these purposes, new initiatives are being invested, which lead to visible results, e.g. in the form of improved or new products or services or new markets. The extent to which they help making the organization more future-proof has not been clearly investigated, as the organization does not pay much attention to long-term developments in society, science and technology or in its own sector.<br>The mission and core values of the organization are not really discussed with an open mind. As far as they are discussed, only a select part of the organization participates. | The organization knows who she is and who she wants to be. There is a clear and continuous alignment between short till long term developments in the outside world, the organization's mission, core values, activities and future plans of the organization. All departments and ranks of the organizations are actively involved, bear responsibility, and are taken seriously by management. The organization operates as an organic whole. | The organization actively participates in society and its developments. It has an explicit vision of its position within society and the natural environment. It takes a visionary position about a range of possible or thinkable futures. It actively participates in creating or supporting developments ('gates') towards sustainable, societally preferred futures ('utopias'); and discourages developments towards less preferred, unsustainable ones ('dystopias'). |

As an example: a *targeted* company will, in many respects, act from an intermediate term, based primarily on tactical considerations; although in some respects, the other three perspectives may have a role in this company, too.

By the way: how long is a short, intermediate or long term? It is impossible to define this in an absolute sense; it depends on the context. For businesses or communities, in most cases a good general guideline is:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Short* | = | now or in less than six months to two years |
| *Intermediate* | = | three to five years |
| *Long* | = | up to twenty or a hundred years (or more) |

Many exceptions to this rule exist. For example, if the roof is leaking, repairs (= intermediate to long term) occur within a matter of days or weeks at the most – hopefully.

### 3.3. Cumulative perspectives

The range *Π1: diligent*, *Π2: targeted*, *Π3: systemic* and *Π4: holistic* forms an ordinal scale. That is to say: there is a natural order in which they are sorted: from short to long, from narrow to wide. The holistic perspective obviously offers the widest view, both in time and in space, as well as in the level of creativity.

The descriptions of the consecutive perspectives are stacking, or with a more formal word: cumulative. This means that the descriptions for the first perspective (*Π1*) - at least insofar as they are positive and not restrictive - are still valid for perspective *Π2* and above, even though they are not again mentioned there. In the same way, the characteristics of perspective *Π2* are again applicable to perspective *Π3* and above, and so forth.

The principle is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The cumulative nature of the four perspectives

| Perspective | Π1: Diligent | Π2: Targeted | Π3: Systemic | Π4: Holistic |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Characteristics | Descriptions of *Π1* | Descriptions of *Π1* (not mentioned again) | Descriptions of *Π1* (not mentioned again) | Descriptions of *Π1* (not mentioned again) |
| | | + Descriptions of *Π2* | + Descriptions of *Π2* (not mentioned again) | + Descriptions of *Π2* (not mentioned again) |
| | | | + Descriptions of *Π3* | + Descriptions of *Π3* (not mentioned again) |
| | | | | + Descriptions of *Π4* |

As an example: where *Π2* (*targeted*) is characterized in part by 'The organization aims at fulfilling measurable goals of the established policy', this will probably still be true for *Π3* (*systemic*) and *Π4* (*holistic*), fully or at least partially, although this not again mentioned in their columns in table 3.
On the other hand: where another aspect of *Π2* is characterized by 'The extent to which they help making the organization more future-proof has not been clearly investigated', this description is not positive but restrictive, and so it does *not* apply to *Π3* and *Π4*; *Π3* even explicitly claims otherwise.

Whenever FFEA is applied as an assessment instrument, as will be described soon, the four perspectives will always have to be interpreted in accordance with this cumulative principle.

Whereas table 3 offers general descriptions of the four perspectives, table 5 offers more characteristics that are typical for organizations with a focus on one of those perspectives. These characteristics are a kind of 'dimensions' that are helpful to assess a company (or a department of a company).

In table 5, the cumulative character is to applied again (to positive, but not to restrictive descriptions). As an example: *product or service quality* (*Π1*) will always be a natural aspect or consequence if *production quality* (*Π2*) is the focus of the quality management. Both are essential elements of *organization quality* (*Π3*), while all three are necessary in order to provide *societal value* (*Π4*).

Table 5. More characteristics of the four perspectives

| Perspective | П1: Diligent | П2: Targeted | П3: Systemic | П4: Holistic |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motto | **Traditional:** *'We do it as we always did, it has always worked well.'* | **Structured:** *'We work according to well-considered structures.'* | **Flexible:** *'The structures are there for the employees, and not the other way around. Where necessary, we customize our activities.'* | **Adaptive:** *'We work as the circumstances require, we always adapt our structures if necessary: we are a living organism.'* |
| Definition of 'quality' | Product (or service) quality | Production quality | Organization quality | Added societal value (*stakeholder value*) |
| Mission, strategy, policy | **Operational:** The management is primarily focused on the short term, in order to be able to carry out the ongoing processes. Mission and strategy do not play a clear role, if they even exist. | **Tactical:** The policy is aimed at achieving medium-term concrete goals, taking into account foreseeable in- and external developments in the next few years. | **Strategic:** The mission is regularly reviewed and adjusted as necessary or even redesigned. The strategy is derived from the mission, and focuses on the long term. The policy is derived from the strategy. | **Visionary:** The prevailing ideas about the organization, its mission, and its products or services are constantly challenged actively and creatively, with inspiring views not being shunned. |
| Decision making and involvement | **Hierarchical:** Many decisions are taken top-down, without much consideration for support or resistance of employees or lower management. Although it may seem different, the management actually holds every responsibility in its own right. Bottom-up processes are not appreciated. | **Supported:** Decisions are taken by the management after the level of support of the staff has been determined. In case of insufficient support, decisions are adjusted or postponed, or staff involvement is increased. | **Participative:** Employees ranking from high to low in the organization are genuinely involved in processes that lead to decision making. They experience shared responsibility, a *sense of ownership*. | **Open:** The outside world is also actively involved in processes that lead to decision making. These include e.g. customers, suppliers, civil society organizations. The organization is a strong brand, and is experienced by the outside world to some extent as 'of all of us'. |
| Initiatives | **Ad hoc:** Initiatives usually arise ad hoc, either by individual employees without management support or by management without the support of the employees. | **Supportive:** Employee or departmental initiatives are encouraged and supported by the management, if they contribute to realizing the goals of the organization. | **Sensitive:** Possible trends and developments in the coming decades are being actively studied, and conclusions from this influence the company strategy. | **Interactive:** Initiatives are established through intensive interaction with the outside world, e.g. with clients and civil society organizations, and have effects on both the organization and the outside world. |
| Innovations | **Glued-on:** Innovations are glued-on' without questioning the existing processes, thanks to which not much really changes. | **Accepting:** Innovations that are helpful in achieving the goals of the organization are embraced and applied by management and staff, and incorporated into existing structures and processes. | **Embedded:** Innovations are embraced in such a way that they become a part of the nature and the identity of the organization. | **Trendsetting:** The organization is trend-setting with its innovations, thereby conscientiously contributing to societal developments. |

## 4. The FFEA system

### 4.1. The five modules of Future-Focused Entrepreneurship Assessment

On the one hand, the FFEA (Future-Focused Entrepreneurship Assessment) system is based on the four perspectives described in section 3. On the other hand, it has its fundaments in a view on the main roles of a company within society and the natural environment. (Please remember: wherever in this chapter the word 'companies' is used, all kinds of organizations are implied, unless otherwise stated, including commercial companies and non-profit organizations such as schools, healthcare institutions, government departments, non-governmental organization (NGOs), etc.)
These four main roles are called 'pillars', and they are shown as pillars in figure 5.



*Figure 5. The 'Temple': four pillars, their fundament, and their roof*

The left pillar, *operations*, deals with all internal processes that enable the company to operate, e.g. the human resource management (HRM), the financial administration, the maintenance of buildings and equipment, the procurement.
The second pillar, *primary process*, is related to the main processes with which the company earns its income, i.e. industrial processes, healthcare (for a hospital, etc.), education (for a school or university), etc.
The third pillar, *innovation*, has to do with all kinds of change processes, ranging from modest adaptations to thorough innovations or transformations, including fundamental or applied research. They may be related to the primary processes, but just as well to marketing policies, operations, financial management, or the company identity itself. Redefining the company mission takes place through an exchange of this pillar with the identity.
The fourth pillar, *society*, contains all kinds of contacts and relations of the company with the outside world, including the local, regional or even global community and the natural environment. Low-ambition relations may involve donations by the company to charities or small-scale actions of members of staff to local schools or playgrounds. More ambitious interactions within society may e.g. range from participations in societal discussions to public-private partnerships.

In a well-organized company, the four pillars will all have their fundament in the company identity, as figure 5 shows, which may be made explicit in a company mission. Besides, many companies evaluate their processes and results regularly and report about them. As a consequence, companies may be awarded some kind of certification, e.g. an ISO certificate. Together, assessments, reports and possibly certificates form the 'roof' of the 'Temple' of figure 5. Actually, this figure implicitly contains a PDCA cycle (Plan – Do – Check – Act) or Deming cycle [23], in which the identity stands for 'Plan'; the four pillars for 'Do'; the roof for 'Check'; and the

feedback from the evaluations towards the identity – with as its most ambitious option 'redefining the company mission' – for 'Act'.

There is a kind of correlation between the four pillars and the four perspectives, although it is not an exact 1-to-1 match. Both correspond to a certain extent to an inside-outside scale, ranging from the very core of the organization itself to the entire outside world, as figure 6 illustrates. Diligent companies (*Π1*) tend to have a focus on operational aspects (but also on the primary process, which shows this is not a 1-to-1 relation). Targeted companies do the same, but with an emphasis on measurable outcomes and processes. Systemic companies, acting from a long-term perspective, usually have a clear policy on innovations, while holistic companies are strongly embedded in society.
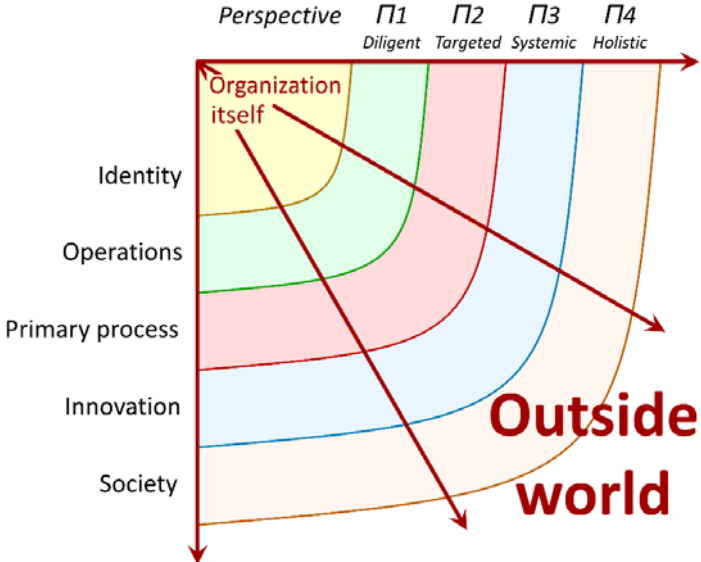


*Figure 6. The (imperfect) correspondence between the four pillars and the four perspectives*

The four pillar-model is reflected in the structure of the FFEA system, as figure 7 shows. FFEA consists of five modules: one for each of the pillars, and one for the fundament, i.e. the identity.
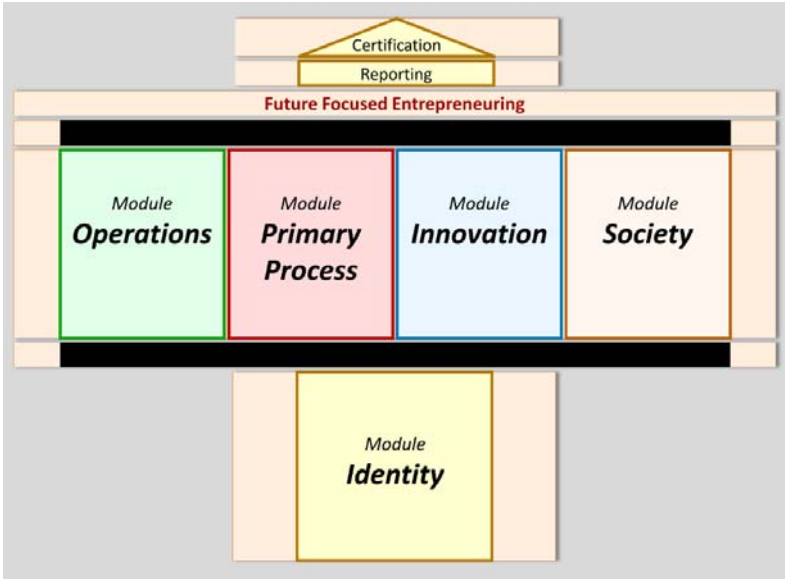The details of each of the five FFEA modules are explained in the next section.



*Figure 7. The five FFEA modules, derived from the 'Temple' model*

### 4.2.  Six topics to each module

For each of the five FFEA modules, a range of six topics is distinguished, as table 6 shows. Three of them are arranged along the well-known Triple P ( [7], p. 31): people, planet, profit. They all belong to the 'Do' section of the already mentioned PDCA cycle, together with a topic called 'Basics', which is defined as the starting point or preparation to 'do', i.e. to operate. All of these four topics are based on a 'Plan' fundament, defining the 'roots' of an organization. Finally, the 'Check' part of the PDCA cycle is expressed as the assessment of the rate to which the roots are realized, based on key values as indicators.

Table 6. The six topics of a module

| PDCA | Topic | | PDCA |
|------|-------|---|------|
| Check | Key values | → | |
| Do | World *(Planet)* | | Act |
| | Humans *(People)* | | |
| | Finance *(Profit)* | | |
| | Basics | | |
| Plan | Roots | ← | |

When all six topics are applied to all five modules, the full extent of FFEA becomes visible, as is shown in figure 8. This figure clearly shows how all kinds of topics that are relevant for CSR are integrated elements of FFEA.



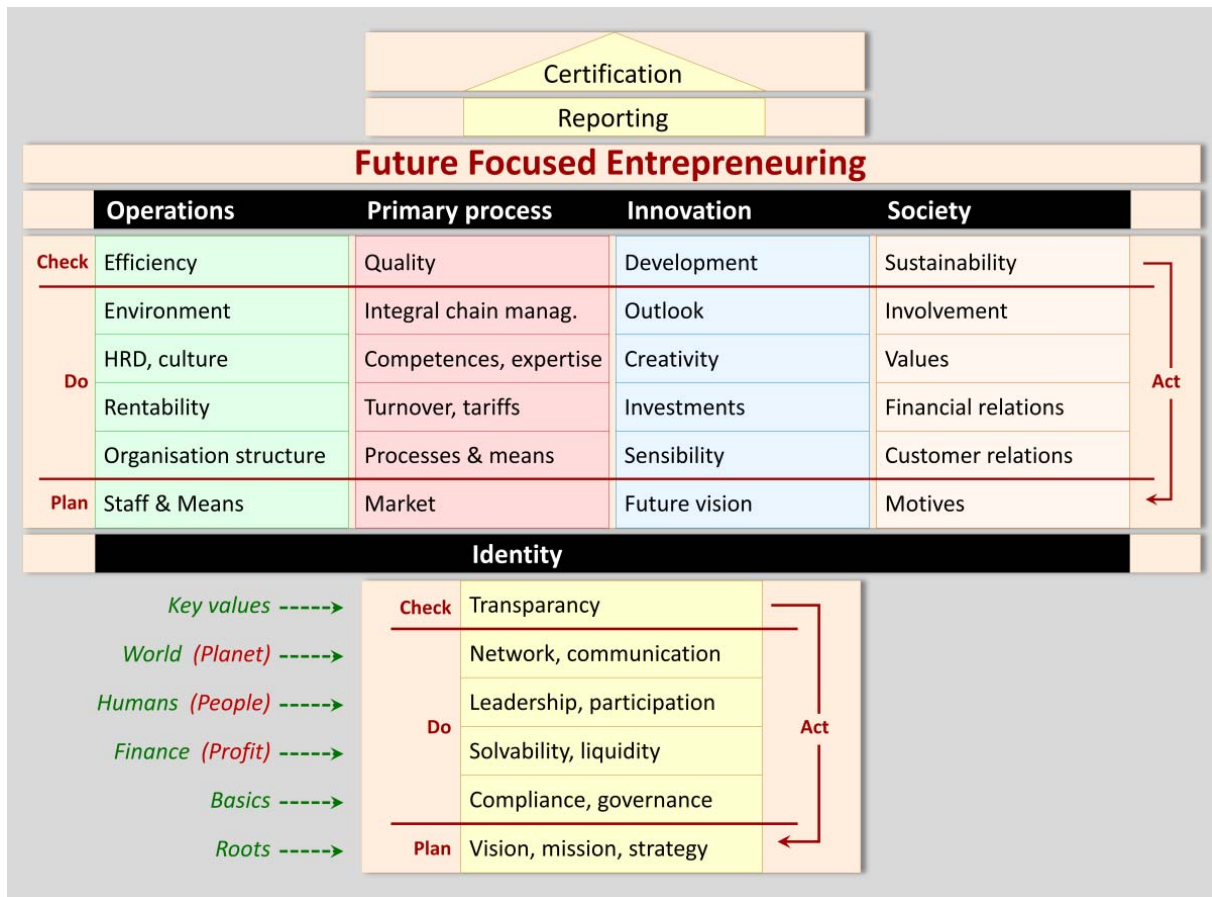*Figure 8. The five modules of FFEA*

Thus, all in all the FFEA system consists of 6 x 5 = 30 topics. These topics, or rather a selection of them, form the agenda for FFEA assessments. Each of the 30 topics is expressed in detail, making use of the four perspectives, as will be described in the next section.

Actually, the FFEA system has the shape of a matrix of 6 rows and 5 columns. Each column is formed by a module, while each row is formed by a 'Theme Group'. An example of such a theme is 'Finance' (the 'profit' part of the Triple P), shown in figure 9.
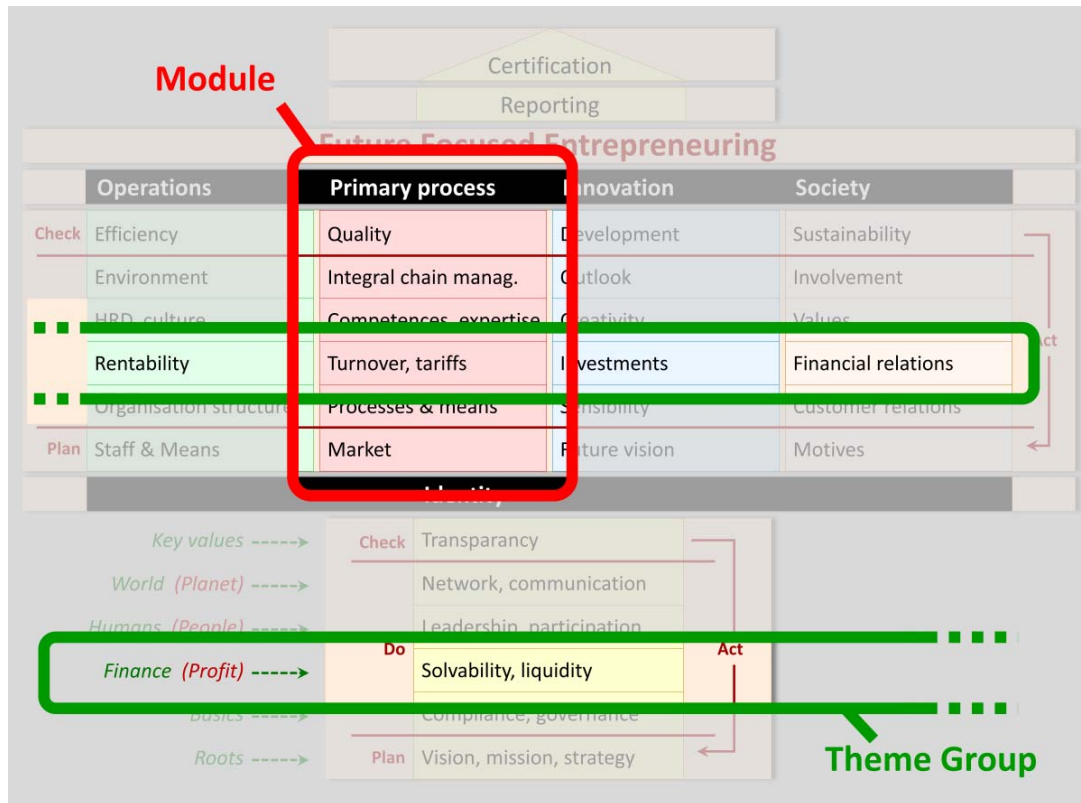


*Figure 9. Modules and Theme Groups*

Before going to the final details of FFEA, with descriptions of the four perspectives for each of the 30 topics and offering the assessment procedures, the system will first be applied to a particular case.

### 4.3.  *The Royal Dutch Shell case*

The British-Dutch multinational oil and gas company Royal Dutch Shell PLC is the largest of the 'supermajors': the dominating oil and gas companies, among which also BP, ExxonMobil, Chevron and some more. According to the Fortune 500 list [24], it is the fifth-largest company in the world, with revenues in 2016 of US$ 272 billion. It is evident that its CSR & sustainability policy has a major impact on global economic and environmental developments, especially related to climate change – either in a positive, or a negative sense.

Already as far back as 1991, Shell was aware of the dangers of climate change. The catastrophic risks were described in a documentary produced by Shell, a movie clip [25] that for some reason was not publicly seen until it resurfaced in 2017 [26].
In 1998, Shell confirmed the dangers of global warming in its corporate sustainability report [27]:

> *"Human activities, especially the use of fossil fuels, may be influencing the climate, according to many scientists, including those who make up the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (...)*
> *The burning of fossil fuels - coal, oil and natural gas - together with other human activities, such as deforestation, releases greenhouse gases, mainly $CO_2$ into the air.*
> *Their concentration in the atmosphere has been rising since the industrial revolution. This has led to an enhanced greenhouse effect and there is concern that it will cause the world to warm up, which could lead to a change in climate and local weather patterns, possibly with increased droughts, floods, storms and sea*

*level rise. The average temperature of the earth has risen by about half a degree Celsius over the last century, possibly due in part to greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity."*

In spite of this, through several decades Shell, together with other 'supermajors', has attempted to deny human-caused climate change by criticizing scientific research and influencing the public opinion and political decision-making. Around 1990 it became a member of the Global Climate Coalition (GCC), an international lobbyist group of businesses that opposed action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 1997 the Royal Dutch left the GCC after heavy pressure from environmental groups, but it continued its lobbying, also described as deception [28].

Around 2000, Shell started a new division, Shell Solar, in an attempt to open a market for sustainable energy. To the surprise of many, the division was sold in 2006 to SolarWorld, and Shell ceased its investments in solar or wind energy.

A decade later, in 2016, a group of Shell shareholders who called themselves 'Follow This' [29] prepared a resolution for the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Their 'Shareholder Resolution' ( [30], p. 10) started and ended with:

> *"As shareholders in Shell, we want you to know that we expect the company to move in a new direction. We want Shell to change course and make the move to sustainable energy. We know you can make a difference. (…)"*
> *"We ask the board to make the right investment decisions, in the interest of all stakeholders of the company; clients, personnel, shareholders and society. For the future of Shell."*

The resolution explicitly mentions 'all stakeholders', not just the *share*holders. This corresponds directly with table 1 in this chapter, in which the highest 'Maslow level' mentions: Move from *shareholder value* to *stakeholder value*.
In their response ( [30], p. 10), the directors of Shell unanimously recommended to vote against the resolution. At the AGM, the resolution was rejected by 97.22% of the votes [31].

One year later, the 'Follow This' group, expanded with many new members, proposed a new shareholder resolution ( [32], p.6). This time, the text was modest and careful, as the group attempted to formulate a proposal that 'nobody could possibly be against':

> *"Shareholders support Shell to take leadership in the energy transition to a net-zero-emission energy system. Therefore, shareholders request Shell to set and publish targets for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are aligned with the goal of the Paris Climate Agreement to limit global warming to well below 2°C.*
> *These GHG emission reduction targets need to cover Shell's operations as well as the usage of its products (…), they need to include medium-term (2030) and long-term (2050) deadlines, and they need to be company-wide, quantitative, and reviewed regularly.*
> *Shareholders request that annual reporting include further information about plans and progress to achieve these targets."*

Although - instead of being imposed to accept targets for the company - the directors were only invited to define their own targets, their response ( [32], p. 7-8) was:

> *"Your Directors consider that Resolution 21 is not in the best interests of the Company and its shareholders as a whole and unanimously recommend that you vote against it. (…) The resolution is unreasonable with regard to what the Company can be held accountable for and would be ineffective or even counterproductive for the following reasons: (…)*
> *We are convinced we have all the required flexibility to adapt and remain relevant and successful, no matter how the energy transition will play out. We believe that by tying our hands in the early stages of this evolution, this resolution would weaken the Company and limit our flexibility to adapt. (…)*
> *We are pursuing at scale the development of new gas markets around the world. Putting limits on these business activities, which do indeed increase emissions by Shell and its customers but reduce emissions in the system overall, would be counterproductive. (…)*

*To impose targets on a single supplier in this complex system does not only fail to address the actual challenge (as it will not reduce system emissions overall because customers will simply turn to alternative suppliers); it would also undermine our ability to play an active role in the transition and would hinder long-term value creation for the Company and its shareholders."*

This time, the resolution was rejected with 93.66% of the votes [31].

Several elements in the directors' considerations are striking.
One is that the reference to "alternative suppliers" reminds of the so-called 'Prisoner's Dilemma' ( [7], p. 229). It appears that Shell mentions the competition as a reason, not to adopt a leading position towards sustainable energy.
Another is the mentioning of the shareholders, twice. This seems to indicate that a transition from shareholder value to stakeholder value, which is occurring in many small and large companies ( [7], p. 343) has not yet reached Shell.

This negative attitude of Shell's directors towards an innovative, leading position, an attitude that was accepted by a large majority of its shareholders, is all the more awkward as the global energy market is changing rapidly. Costs of several kinds of sustainable energy are decreasing at a fast pace, even exponentially, as figure 10 shows.
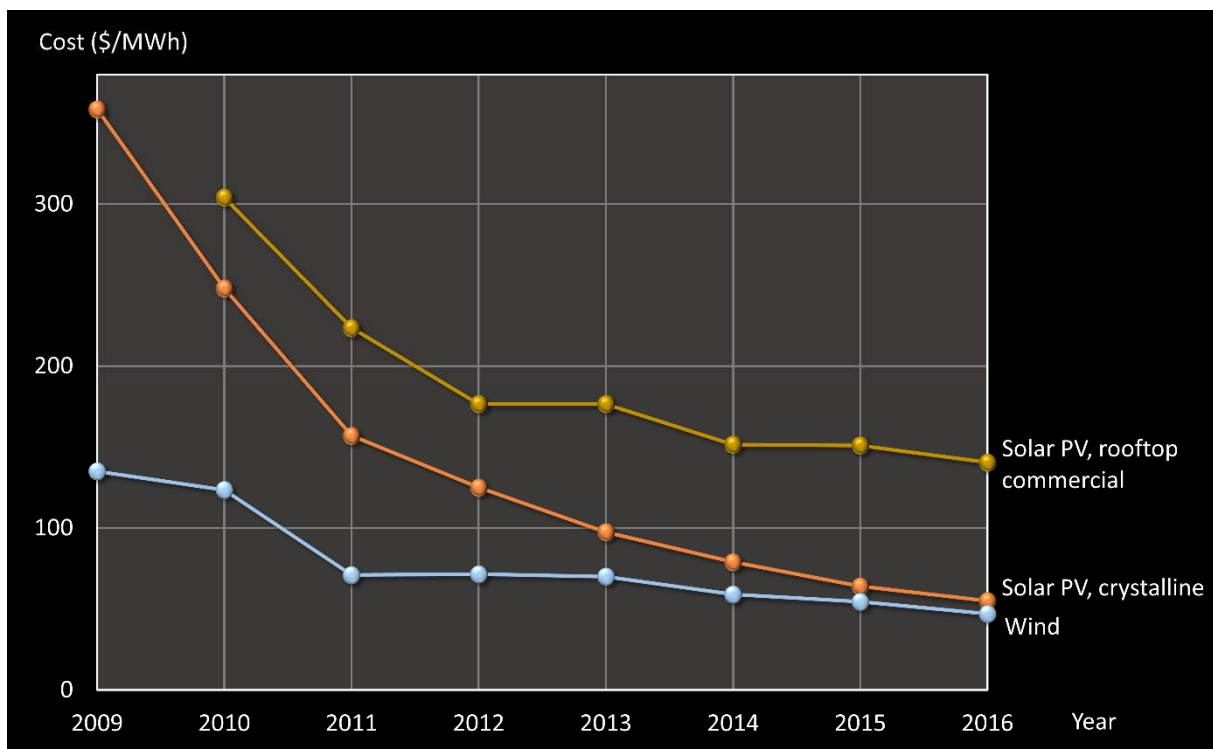


*Figure 10. Cost development of three types of sustainable energy*
*Source: [33]*

Although the costs of fossil energy are presently low (but highly fluctuating), it is to be expected that sustainable energy will outcompete coal, oil and gas within a limited number of years – in some circumstances, it already does. Presently, many companies are investing heavily in it, and they are prospering: a scenario is unfolding which reminds of the Eastman Kodak case in section 2.

It is fascinating to compare the history and the possible future of Shell with the 'Bridges Model' for organizational development. William Bridges based his model [34] on the Myers-Briggs model for personality types [35], applying it to organizations instead of individuals. A short description of the Bridges model is offered in [36]:

*"The life of an organization usually follows a typical series of phases. In order to characterize these phases, Bridges makes use of four dichotomies with which organizations can be categorized. Only one will be described here: it is the distinction between 'extraverted' organizations (focusing on the outside world, with open boundaries, quickly reacting to external changes) and 'introverted' organizations (focusing on the internal processes and procedures, with closed boundaries, reacting to external change only after careful reflection). (…)*

*Making use of this dichotomy, the following natural organizational development phases can be described.*

1. *The dream. An idea or ideal is in someone's mind, nothing more than that yet. The phase is introverted.*
2. *The venture. Action is taken to realize the dream. This demands a lot of creativity and involvement of the (small) staff. In this phase, there is an intensive interaction with the outside world, and the phase is extraverted.*
3. *Getting organized. The success of the organization increases, and so does the size of the organization, which becomes more complex. This demands a set of fixed procedures and some standardization. In this phase the organization is introverted, trying to develop its structure.*
4. *Making it. Now that the internal processes are all right, the organization is able to grow further. This demands the discovery of new market opportunities, and so the organization is extraverted again, as account managers swarm the earth.*
5. *Becoming an institution. Some organizations may exist for a long time and become a part of the 'establishment'. Its name is known to many. It may even be the dominant market leader, able to set the standards that others have to follow. In this phase, the urge to renew the organization or its products and services may shrink, since the organization 'knows' what the customers want. Therefore, the tendency is to become introverted again.*
6. *Closing in. This is actually a deepening of phase 5. The bureaucracy weighs heavy on the organization. The introversion gets so strong that customers are made to feel that the organization is doing them a favor by serving them. The organization is a 'rusty mammoth'.*
7. *Death. Because the organization has virtually lost its ability to change, the very first significant external change will kill it. Its place is taken by a dozen new extraverted ventures, based on new dreams, and so one generation disappears and make place for the next one.*

*Many variations exist to this natural development process. Organizations in phase 6, or any earlier phase, may be revitalized and start a 'second life', perhaps even entering an iterative process of repeated rejuvenation. Organizations in phase 4 may meet a sudden change (a trend break) in the external circumstances, and die. But generally, the described development pattern is recognizable in many existing and past organizations."*

When applied to Shell, the Bridges model raises the suspicion that the Royal Dutch is somewhere in phase 5 or more likely 6. Has Shell become a 'rusty mammoth'? Bridges writes about phase 5 ( [34], p. 72): "Radical new ideas are distrusted because everyone agrees that the status quo is pretty darn good." And about phase 6: "Discordant information from the outside – such as increasing numbers of complaints or the news that a competitor is launching a new product line – gets filtered out or watered down so that it is of little concern."

Applying tables 3 and 5, together characterizing the four perspectives of companies, a lot more can be concluded about Shell. The company certainly does not operate from a holistic (*Π4*) perspective: the company can hardly be called 'visionary'; it certainly does not "participate in creating or supporting developments ('gates') towards sustainable, societally preferred futures ('utopias')". Decision making and involvement cannot be seen as 'open', and the company is by no means trendsetting.

Table 5 defines 'quality' for holistic (*Π4*) organizations as 'added societal value (*stakeholder value*)'. The Shell directors' response in 2017, with its emphasis on shareholders' interests, again does not indicate that Shell is a *Π4* company.

It would be interesting to formally assess the Shell Company with FFEA, using the procedures that will be described in the next section. But even without such a formal assessment, the FFEA system as shown in figure 8 offers a lot of information.

In the *Innovation Module*, Shell evidently misses sufficient sensibility for trends in the outside world; a long-term perspective; and genuine creativity. Its investments are in the wrong direction: "new gas markets around the world".

In the *Society Module*, the company is low on societal involvement, societal values (only mentioning: "value creation for the Company and its shareholders") and sustainability.

In the *Identity Module*, a clear vision and a sense of leadership cannot be observed, and the communication with stakeholders is mainly in one direction: the board seems to be 'audibly challenged'. Even a basic compliance seems to be lacking, as the company is accused of deception [28] and of systematically violating laws [37]. (In table 1, compliance is explained as not just related to laws and regulations, but also to corporate codes and ethical standards.)

If the FFEA theme group *Finance* is applied, there may be dark clouds gathering above Shell. All the above-mentioned weaknesses of the 'rusty mammoth', among them wrong investments, may soon lead to: decreasing turnover; negative rentability; zero liquidity; insufficient solvability; and finally, Bridges' phase 7: death.

Table 2 puts the oil companies in the category 'vulnerable'. Maybe this description is too modest for Shell. Perhaps 'threatened' or even 'endangered' would be more appropriate. Instead of redefining the company mission, Shell remains to see itself as a 'fossil company'. A self-fulfilling definition?

Royal Dutch Shell received a draft of the present chapter and was asked for a reaction. Shell's response was [38]:

> *"Shell's business strategy is resilient to the envisaged implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change, which is now progressing through the Nationally Determined Contributions. For example, the increased use of natural gas in place of coal has contributed to the emissions reductions being seen in the USA and the UK and the emissions plateau in China. Natural gas now makes up over half of the Shell portfolio. At this stage, however, industry is still facing significant uncertainties as to how government policy and consumer behaviour will ultimately shape the evolution of the energy system and which technologies and business models will prevail. We believe we are unique in having a broader set of business options under technical and commercial development than any other company in our sector. We are pursuing these options with conviction and commercial realism. We are convinced we have all the required flexibility to adapt and remain relevant and successful, no matter how the energy transition will play out."*

Whether it is true, as Shell's spokesman e-mailed, that Shell is resilient to the implementation of 'Paris' will become clear in the future. At present, one conclusion can be drawn from Shell's answer: the company deals with climate change in a reactive, not in a proactive way; and – focusing on natural gas – in a traditional, not in an innovative way. Not a word is spent on societal or environmental considerations; it only seems relevant that Shell claims to remain 'successful' in the future. The idea that the success of a company depends on the success of society as a whole appears to be missing.

This confirms the conclusions that Shell is not by far a *Π4* company. From one of the largest companies in the world, leading in causing climate change, a different role was to be expected: leading in combating climate change as well.

The Royal Dutch Shell may not be ready for the future.

All in all, the Shell case proves how CSR – or rather the lack of it – leads both to a severe threat to the company, and to society and the natural environment: the negative variety of formula 1 with which section 2 ends. In an adapted shape, this formula becomes:

> *Formula 2:*
> *Lack of CSR    =    Threat to the future of the company*
> *                =    Threat to the future of society & the planet*

### *4.4.    Details of the FFEA system*

The Shell case illustrates how the FFEA system may be used to investigate the future resilience of a company. The way in which this was done, did not yet make use of the full potential of FFEA, as the four perspectives were not explicitly used. Now, they will be added to the system.

For each of the 30 topics, the four perspectives have been made explicit. This chapter will not offer all of these 30 x 4 descriptions, but limit itself to just one example.

This example belongs to the Innovation Module, for which the initial '*N*' is used, from 'inNovation'. (The '*I*' is used for the Identity Module.) The six *N* topics are taken from figure 8 and are shown in table 7:

Table 7. The six topics of the inNovation Module

| PDCA | Topic | | PDCA |
|---|---|---|---|
| Check | *N6*: Development | → | |
| Do | *N5* (*planet*): Outlook<br>*N4* (*people*): Creativity<br>*N3* (*profit*): Investments<br>*N2*: Sensibility | | Act |
| Plan | *N1*: Future vision | ← | |

As an example, the descriptions are shown of the four perspectives for *N6*: Development. In table 8, first a general description of *N6* is presented, and next the four perspectives. Some of the concepts used in the descriptions may not be immediately clear to all users, or may be explained in different ways in various contexts. So, for these underlined items, explanations about their use within FFEA are offered in the notes in the bottom row of the table.

Table 8. Example: the four perspectives related to *N6*: Development

| General description | *Sensibility*, *investments*, *creativity* and *outlook* - the criteria *N2* to *N5* - together determine the innovative strength of an organization. However, a great innovative force does not automatically have a big effect from that power. An elephant experiences a large gravitational force, but if it stands on a solid horizontal plane, this force does not mean that the elephant is set into motion.<br>*Development* is the term used to indicate the actual effect of the innovative power. This topic is dedicated to what is really changing due to that power: inside and outside the organization. | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Perspective | *П1: Diligent* | *П2: Targeted* | *П3: Systemic* | *П4: Holistic* |
| Policy | Short term:<br>*Operational* | Intermediate term:<br>*Tactical* | Long term:<br>*Strategic* | Panoramic:<br>*Visionary* |
| Description | - The organization is careful and emphasizes the present good, based on the expectation that small development steps are sufficient to maintain the status quo in the future.<br>- The company's reputation is one of solidity, providing products or services of consistent high quality to which the customer base relies. | - The company has a clear business sense. Structural investment is being dedicated to new developments, which lead to a regular expansion of the product or services portfolio.<br>- Planned In advance, staff are deployed for these innovations, or external expertise centers are used.<br>- Partly due to this, the organization has been able to show growth for a number of years. | - The organization is constantly evolving, dealing with insecurities with agility and success. In addition, the creativity of the employees is deployed freely, supported by substantial investments. The organization does not shun a pioneer role.<br>- The change processes have a profound influence on the products or services provided, processes and methods, staffing and organizational structure and culture, and even on the identity and mission of the organization; or at least on many of these aspects.<br>- The change processes partly have the character of an exploration or adventure, and repeatedly lead to profound transformations of the organization. | - The organization succeeds in actively participating in a process of transition, which has profound consequences for both the organization itself, its business sector, and society as a whole.<br>- This transition process demonstrably contributes to significant improvements in the human and natural environment. |

*Notes*

**Number of years:** Think of a minimum of five years in which growth in most years, and on average over that period, was demonstrable with regard to, for example, revenue, market share and / or quantity of products or services delivered.

**Transformation:** A thorough, lasting change process in which goals and structures change shape and content.

**Transition:** A comprehensive shift in society, which not only changes the actual structures but also the way in which the world is experienced, coupled with paradigm shifts and system innovations. Historic examples include: the Renaissance, the industrial revolution and the introduction of ICT society.

**Paradigm:** Fundamental word, image or concept that makes the world understandable and subjectively controlled.

**Paradigm shift:** Development in which certain paradigms, which previously determined the prevailing worldview, disappear or change significantly, to make way for whole new paradigms.

# 5. Application of FFEA

## 5.1. Assessment principles

The FFEA assessment can be applied to every kind of company. Again: wherever in this chapter the word 'company' is used, all kinds of organizations are implied, unless otherwise stated, including commercial companies and non-profit organizations such as schools, healthcare institutions, government departments, non-governmental organization (NGOs), etc.

The FFEA assessment does not necessarily have to be applied to the entire company at once. It can just as well be used to assess a part of a company, e.g. a department, a faculty, a division, a plant, a team, etc.

On the other hand, FFEA can be applied simultaneously to a group of companies that have some kind of cooperation, either long-term and structurally or just for a limited period or intensity.

For all of those, the neutral term 'organization' is used.

*The selection of topics*

In most assessments, not all 30 topics are discussed. Often, a combination of two or three modules is chosen, e.g. *Identity*, *Primary process*, and *Innovation*. Alternatively, one or more theme groups (see figure 9) may be selected, such as the combination: *Roots*, *World*, and *Key values*. An assessment of three modules (18 topics) or three theme groups (15 topics) will probably take one day.

Also, a special selection of topics out of several modules and theme groups may be assessed, based on specific needs and desires of the organization. One of the cases described in the next section will illustrate this.

The application of FFEA should preferably not be an isolated, one-time incident within an organization. The value increases hugely, if it is adopted as an integrated part of a system of quality management. In order to make this possible, it is recommended that the Identity module, or at least those topics of it that are considered as essential for the organization in its present state, are included in the assessment. This guarantees that the mission of the organization is an integrated part of the process, allowing to think freely and creatively about it and enabling all kinds of strategic or operational issues to the mission.

*The Consensus Group*

Conclusions about topics that FFEA deals with, can never be drawn in a 100% objective way. By their very nature, they are subjective concepts that cannot be measured in an exact way. That is the reason why the four perspectives are expressed on an ordinal scale, and not e.g. on a ratio scale. Nevertheless, if an assessment would do no better than render subjective results, it would be mostly useless.

FFEA operates between those two opposites: its outcomes are *intersubjective*, resulting from a decision process based on consensus building.

For this purpose, a group of persons is composed, whose members together are representative for the organization itself and all of its relevant stakeholders.

At the very least, the following need to be members of the Consensus Group:

- Managers / directors / board members, etc., i.e. one or several persons with authority or mandate for the organization;
- Members of the personnel;
- Customers / clients / patients / students, etc., i.e. those who benefit from the primary output (products or services) of the organization.

Other members of the Consensus Group may be e.g.: members of an advisory or a supervisory board; representatives of financial institutions related to the organization; representatives of local, regional or national governments; geographical neighbors; suppliers; members of societal or environmental interest groups; and so on.

Even external philosophers, experts, visionaries or artists may be invited.

The relevance of these representatives varies, e.g. depending on the kind of organization; the level within a larger company; the kind of answers and insights it is looking for; and the selected topics. If several modules or theme groups are applied within one assessment, the composition of the consensus group may vary for each module or theme group.

In total, the group should count somewhere between 8 and 15 members.

*From the present to the future: FFEA as a strategic instrument*
During the assessment, for each of the selected topics two decisions will be made by the Consensus Group.
The first decision is about the *present state*: from which of the four perspectives does the organization act, considering the topic that is being discussed?
The second decision deals with the so-called *desired state*. Considering the current topic, which perspective should be dominant in the nearby future?
In order to make the discussions about the desired state as concrete as possible, an exact year and date is appointed for this desired state, as a preparation to the assessment. The date may be e.g. one or two years after the assessment; or at the end date of the current strategy plan; or when the next external accreditation audit takes place; etc.

### 5.2. The FFEA assessment

The actual assessment consists of three parts.
In the first part, the assessor (who may be an external, certified FFEA assessor or a member of the organization staff, e.g. a quality manager with a training in the application of FFEA) explains to the Consensus Group the structure and purposes of FFEA, and the assessment procedure that just started.

*Individual scoring*
In the second part, the members of the Consensus Group receive the detailed descriptions of the four perspectives of the selected topics (like the ones in table 8). They are invited to form their own personal opinion about the perspective ($\Pi1$ to $\Pi4$) the organization is in at present, with respect to each separate topic. During this part, they are not allowed to communicate with the other participants, or to consult any documents; at this stage, it is their personal, subjective opinion that matters.
The participants are allowed not only to choose between $\Pi1$ to $\Pi4$, but also for what is indicated as $\Pi0/?$. This is the score they choose, if they either are convinced that even the demands of $\Pi1$ are not met, or if they *just don't know* if they are met.
After all participants decided about their scores, the results are gathered. The results are anonymous, apart from the fact that categories (such as Managers, Customers, etc.) are shown in the overview. For module P (primary process), such an overview (a 'cloud of opinions') may look like table 9.

Table 9. A possible result of individual scoring of Module *P*: Primary Process

| Perspective | $\Pi0/?$ | $\Pi1$: Diligent | $\Pi2$: Targeted | $\Pi3$: Systemic | $\Pi4$: Holistic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *P6.* Quality | PCO | PPPMCCA | PPPM | | |
| *P5.* Integral chain management | C | PPPMCCAO | PPPM | | |
| *P4.* Competences, expertise | P | PPPPACO | PMC | M | |
| *P3.* Turnover, tariffs | | PC | CAO | PPPMMC | PP |
| *P2.* Processes & means | CCC | PMAO | PPPPPM | | |
| *P1.* Market | O | PPPCCC | PPPMMA | | |
| *Legend: P = Personnel; M = Manager; C = Customer; A = Advisor; O = Other* | | | | | |

*Consensus meeting*
The third part of the assessment, the consensus meeting, is the main part. Whereas the first two parts together may take about an hour, the consensus meeting may take the rest of the day (if e.g. three modules are selected).
At the start of the meeting, the participants receive the 'cloud of opinions', so they are aware of the variance in viewpoints.
One by one, the selected topics are discussed, with the FFEA assessor as the chair person. For each topic, the group decides first about the present state and next about the desired state. Conclusions are *never* based on voting, but always on consensus; it is up to the assessor to see to it that a genuine consensus is reached and explicitly concluded.

The process of the assessment looks like outlined in figures 11 till 14. As an example, figure 12 shows that, with respect to topic *P1* (Market), the organization in its present state acts from perspective *Π2*, and should reach *Π3* at the appointed date of the desired state. Figure 13 shows that topic *I4* (Leadership & participation), for which the organization is in *Π3*, the consensus group agrees that no improvement is desired.

These conclusions are not just formulated in the form of numbers, but also – even primarily – in words, expressing why and how. It is the task of the assessor to guarantee that the decisions are based on concrete arguments, and that it is made explicit how the desired state is to be realized. Thanks to this, a consistent *reality check* is an integrated part of the assessment: based upon it, the participants are confident that the desired state can actually be realized within the appointed time frame.

Notes are taken during the assessment about the argumentations and conclusion. So, at the moment the assessment finishes, the report is complete as well, apart perhaps from a bit of editing.
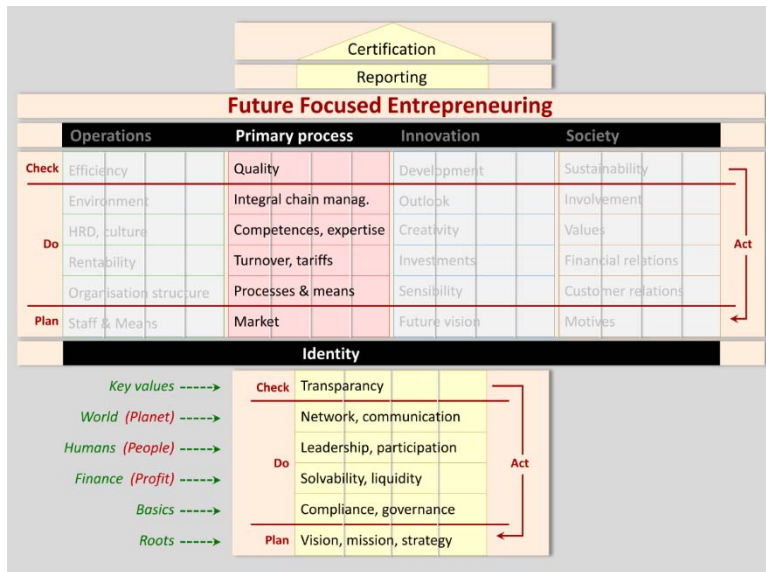
*Figure 11. The selected modules are highlighted; the others are greyed-out. In this example,* Identity *and* Primary process *are selected.*
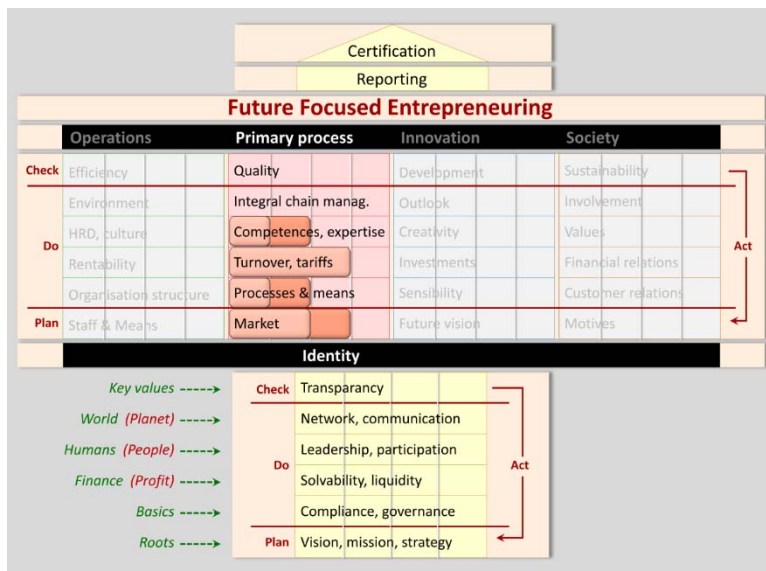
*Figure 12. The consensus meeting is at full speed. The* present state *and the* desired state *have been decided in consensus for the first four topics of the* Primary process *module.*
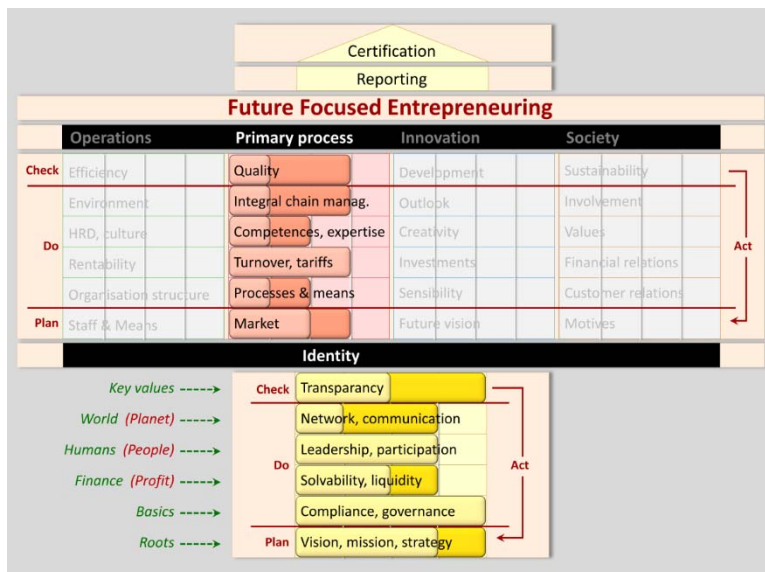
28

*Figure 13. The consensus meeting is cpmpleted. After the high priorities have been selected, the assessment is finished.*
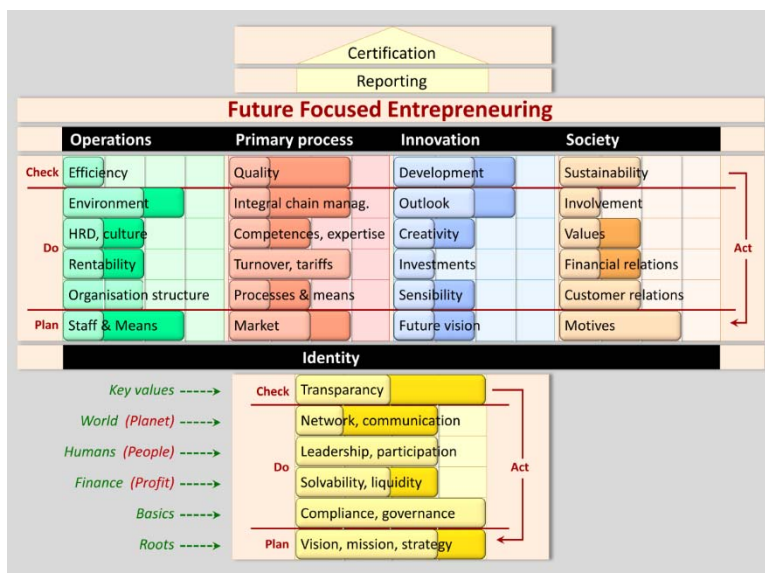


*Figure 14. If all modules are assessed – perhaps in the course of a series of assessment of the same organization within a few weeks or months – the overall result may look like this.*

After all selected topics are completed, the consensus group appoints a small number of highest priorities, i.e. of those improvements that are considered as crucial to the organization development within the appointed time frame. Selecting the priorities usually takes just a few minutes, as all topics have been discussed thoroughly already. After this, the assessment is finished.

### 5.3. The results, or: what you get

A FFEA assessment is an investment. The main costs are probably due to the time that the members of the Consensus Group spend; but these may not be out-of-pocket costs. On the other hand, an experienced FFEA assessor is essential. An external assessor will have to be paid; an internal one will have to be trained by external experts first, which also involves expenses.
So, the question is fair: what does it get you? The answer, in six parts, is shown in table 10.

Table 10. What you get (WYG) out of a FFEA assessment

| What you get | Explanation |
|---|---|
| WYG 1. Report | A well-structured report of the conclusions and argumentations that led to them, including a nice picture like figure 14. |
| WYG 2. Insight | Insight in the present state: intersubjective conclusions, based on the consensus of a well-selected group of participants |

| WYG 3. Plans | Concrete plans to realize a desired state, creating a future that the consensus group believes in. |
| --- | --- |
| WYG 4. Strategy | Input for the creation of a strategic plan for the next years. |
| WYG 5. Involvement | Involvement, a feeling of 'being heard', support, enthusiasm, and a shared sense of ownership of all those who participated. Next, also of many others, after they hear the stories of the assessment through the mouths of their colleagues. |
| WYG 6. Resilience | The assessment will certainly contribute to plans and energy that both will increase the future-proof resilience of the organization. |

As to the strategic plan, mentioned in table 10 as WYG 4: it is important to emphasize the informal status of the consensus meeting. During that meeting, a lot of concrete conclusions have been drawn. However, these conclusions are no formal decisions, and they should not be, too. A variety of stakeholders together have come to these conclusions. Some of the participants are external persons; others are members of the personnel who don't carry any decisive responsibility for the organization.

It is up to the managers, directors or board members who carry formal responsibility or have a mandate, to make final decisions. However, it is impossible to make such decisions during the assessment itself. Hence, in order to benefit from the assessment, a management meeting is to be arranged soon (e.g. on the next day) after the assessment. At this meeting, the FFEA assessor usually is present: this time not as the chair, but as an expert advisor. During the meeting, the formal decisions are made, based on the outcomes of the assessment. This will probably not be a very difficult task, as the responsible persons (or at least a delegation of them) have participated in the assessment, during which conclusions were drawn based on consensus by all.

So, the main task of the management meeting is, to elaborate on the assessment outcomes, translating them into a genuine strategic plan, including such things as: a time schedule; persons who will be given responsibilities for parts of the plan; facilities for those persons, including e.g. time, budget, tools, mandate, training, etc.; and a system of evaluation and reporting.


### 5.4. MSPOE: From mission to strategy to policy to operations to evaluation to mission

After the strategic plan has been designed and decided, it is to be translated into one or more policies, and next to concrete operations that are performed in the time period between the 'present state' and the 'desired state'. This process is 'zooming in': a shift from a long-term to a short-term approach, just like the *RESFIA+D* competence *F1* (section 3) describes: *Think on different time scales: flexibly zoom in and out on short- and long-term approaches*. If the strategy plan is based on the mission of the organization – if the *Identity* module was applied – this zooming in is even more evident: see figure 15.



*Figure 15. Zooming in from Mission to Strategy to Policy to Operations*

One or more years later, when the date of the desired state nears, it is the right time to plan an evaluation of the strategic plan. This should be done through a new FFEA assessment. Actually, this is a nice example of the already quoted Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, where the FFEA assessment is the 'Check', followed by the management decisions ('Act') that lead to a next strategic plan. The transition from the operations to the evaluation and next to the mission is 'zooming out', which not only completes the quality cycle but also the *RESFIA+D* competence *F1*.

All in all, this zooming in and out, if repeated several times, can be compared to a breathing motion: *breathing in and breathing out, breathing in and breathing out*. For companies, FFEA refers to this breathing motion as *MSPOE*: Zooming in (*from Mission to Strategy to Policy to Operations*) and zooming out (*to Evaluation, and then back to the Mission again*).
'MSPOE' is pronounced as a word that more or less rhymes with 'disco', but with a 'silent i'.

The MSPOE principle is illustrated by figure 16, where every occurrence of 'Evaluation' stands for a FFEA assessment.



*Figure 16. Zooming in and out with MSPOE*

# 6. FFEA case studies

The application of FFEA will be illustrated with two case studies, differing considerably.

## 6.1. The Tilburg Mentaal case

Tilburg Mentaal is an institution for mental healthcare in the Netherlands. A number of psychiatrists and psychologists work for the organization, as well as assistants, technicians, a secretariat, and others. The management is formed by the top psychiatrist and psychologist who are the owners of the institution.

In the Netherlands, there is a lot of uncertainty for institutions like these. This is caused partly by the need, expressed by the government, to reduce healthcare costs in the country considerably. This is effectuated mainly by putting pressure on the health insurance companies, who pay for nearly all of the budget of the healthcare institutions. Mental healthcare especially feels the consequences of this 'cheese-slicer' approach, as it is called. This caused a lot of uncertainty for Tilburg Mentaal, a few years ago.

Other factors also had a lot of influence. The growing self-awareness of the patients of the institution changed the customer relation with the institution. The heart-felt wish to operate in a more sustainable and socially responsible way also contributed to a feeling that it had become urgent to assess a number of topics as a preparation for a reorientation.

A FFEA assessment was prepared by the managers and an external assessor. Together, they came to the conclusion that the highest priority was to be put on the *P* module (Primary process) and the *S* module (Society). It was estimated that, if the relation between both aspects ('*What they want*' and '*What we do*') was redefined and optimized, the financial situation could be improved as a next step.

The Consensus Group was formed, the assessment took place. The results of the individual scoring are shown in table 11. The 'Others' were: a representative of a healthcare insurance company; and the accountant of the institution.

Table 11. Tilburg Mentaal: individual scores for the *present state*

| Perspective | Π0/? | Π1: Diligent | Π2: Targeted | Π3: Systemic | Π4: Holistic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Module S: Society* | | | | | |
| S6. Sustainability | | SMMPVO | SPP | SO | |
| S5. Involvement | PO | SMV | SP | SMO | P |
| S4. Values | | P | SPPO | SSMMVO | |
| S3. Financial relations | SPPP | | SMVO | SM | O |
| S2. Customer relations | | SPPV | MM | SSOO | P |
| S1. Motives | | PPO | SMV | SSMPO | |
| *Module P: Primary process* | | | | | |
| P6. Quality | | | MV | SSSPOO | MPP |
| P5. Integral chain management | PPOO | SM | SP | SMV | |
| P4. Competences, expertise | | P | POO | SSSMPV | M |
| P3. Turnover, tariffs | PO | SSMPO | SV | MP | |
| P2. Processes & means | | SP | SPPV | SMO | MO |
| P1. Market | | P | SSPPVO | SMMO | |
| Legend: S = Staff member; M = Manager; P = Patient; V = Supervisor; O = Other. | | | | | |

During the consensus meeting, conclusions were drawn. They are shown in figure 17.
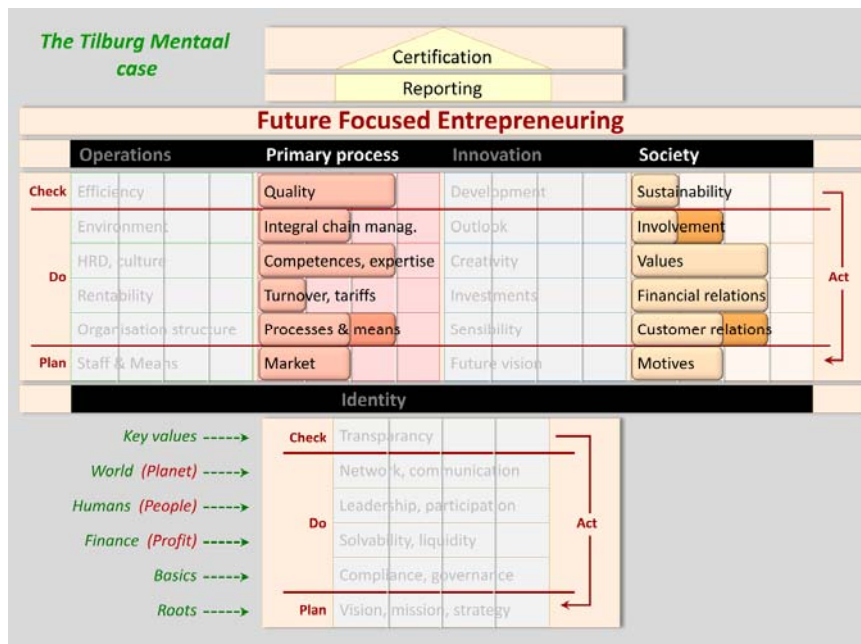
*Figure 17. Tilburg Mentaal: results*

Here are a few quotes from the report:

**P1, Market:**
*Present state:* "It is unclear who exactly are the customers. Are they the patients we help? Or the health insurance company that pays us? Or the referrers, such as the family doctors?
In our current way of working, we are not capable of long-term thinking, as the national laws and regulations change all the time. This is also caused by the every-day working pressure."

**P2, Processes and means:**
*Present state:* "Tilburg Mentaal works methodically and well-structured. The staff participates in formulating the protocols, we are really self-organized. *Just in time* is difficult, due to the waiting lists."
*Desired state:* "The communication with patients about the waiting lists can be improved, partly by creating a 'safety net' for the period between the intake and the start of the treatment. This can be done taylor-made: for each individual patient, we have ways to help them in-between, eventually with the help of other institutions. Individual feedback to the referrers will also help."

**S5, Involvement:**
*Present state:* "There is no regular contact with interest groups; it is not our focus. Staff members who are interested in this, have not yet had a chance to do something."
*Desired state:* "We will map the options for becoming societally involved. This may appear to be worthwhile or even important, we are open to it."

In a comment, one of the managers of Tilburg Mentaal afterwards wrote:
""The FFEA methodology has given us a good insight into the strong and the vulnerable aspects of our company. Concrete improvement points have now been formulated and we will benefit from that. The method fits well with our philosophy of a self-learning organization focused on communicative self-control."

As a follow-up to the assessment, the discussion about the future of the institution openly continued in the next months. One year after the assessment, Tilburg Mentaal merged with another mental healthcare institution, aiming at combining their strength towards the health insurance companies, thus raising the future-proof resilience.

## 6.2.   The Inventive case

A few years ago, a number of small businesses had been working together incidentally and informally. Some of them were copywriters; others were e.g. product designers, art designers, marketing experts. All of them had one thing in common: they thought that CSR and sustainable entrepreneurship were vital.
One of them, called "The Inventive", took the initiative to investigate the possibility of cooperating in a more structured way. This might increase their combined creative power and flexibility, increase their market, and embed their desire to operate in a societally responsible and sustainable way.
When these wishes and ideas were compared to the 'Maslow for CSR' model, i.e. the pyramid described in section 1, it became immediately clear that the ideas of The Inventive, which were soon enthusiastically shared by the other companies, could be placed on each and every level of the pyramid, together creating a very convincing Motivation Mix.
In terms of the Bridges model for organizational development: the group of entrepreneurs were in phase 1, '*The Dream*', and wanted to get into phase 2, '*The Venture*'.
Instead of the classic 'redefining', it was a case of 'defining the company mission'.

But how should this be done? There was not much enthusiasm for a complete merger of the companies; they all attached a lot of value to their independence. In a meeting with a FFEA assessor, it was decided that a FFEA asessment was to be performed to deliver clarity.
During the preparation, a particular, taylor-made route through FFEA was designed. Only seven topics were selected, distributed over all five modules. Three of them were in the 'Roots' group, which is no wonder, as it was mainly the roots of the cooperation that had to be studied. The seven selected topics are shown in table 12. As usual, the chronological order is to be read from bottom to top: the assessment started with *N1*, future vision, and worked its way to the last topic: *O2*, Organization structure.
Due to the specific situation, in which a possible structural cooperation was explored but had not yet started, there was not *present state* to be assessed, just a *desired state* to be discussed. Therefore, table 12 does not show the individual scores for the *present state*, as usual, but for the *desired state*.

Table 12. The Inventive: individual scores for the *desired state*

| # | Perspective | Π0/? | Π1: Diligent | Π2: Targeted | Π3: Systemic | Π4: Holistic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | *O2.* Organization structure | | | *EEE* | *EEE* | *EEE* |
| 6 | *I4.* Leadership, participation | | | *E* | *EEEEEEE* | *E* |
| 5 | *I1.* Vision, mission, strategy | | | *E* | *EEEEE* | *EE* |
| 4 | *S2.* Customer relations | | | *EE* | *EEEEE* | *E* |
| 3 | *S1.* Motives | | | *EEEE* | *EEEEE* | |
| 2 | *P1.* Market | | | *EEE* | *EEEE* | *EE* |
| 1 | *N1.* Future vision | | | *E* | *EEEEEEE* | *E* |
| | *Legend: E = Entrepreneur.* | | | | | |

During the assessment, in which all nine entrepreneurs participated – one of them The Inventive – it appeared that for nearly all topics, the majority wished to create a cooperation at a *Π3* level: *Systemic*. But during the highly inspired Consensus Meeting, the minds shifted: as figure 18 shows, many topics ended at *Π4: Holistic*. A main reason for this was the explicit emphasis on CSR and sustainability.
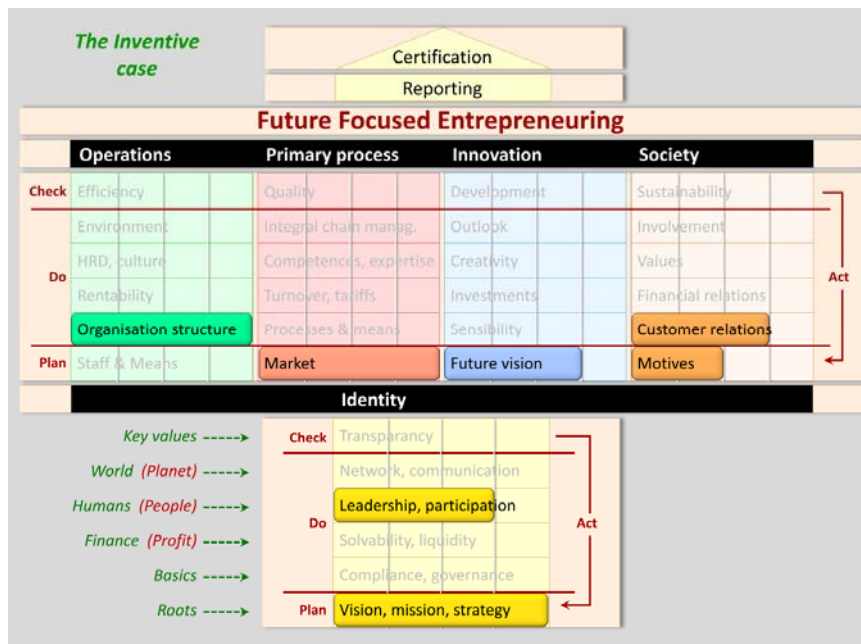
*Figure 18. The Inventive: results*

Some quotes from the report are:

**N1, Future vision:**
"We should aim at daring goals, it will help us to formulate ambitious goals."
"Each of us brings in his or her special expertise and experience."
"Flexible composition of cooperating teams."

**S1, Motives:**
"How explicit do you want to make sustainability? You expect a healthy and societal attitude of your customers: we won't try to attract oil companies or the cigarette industry; they will probably not come to us either."
"Develop new services, be innovative – e.g. 'translate' services from one business sector to another."
"Be selective in the work we accept. Really do what you believe in. Due to that: become attractive to niches."

**S2, Customer relations:**
"Perspective *Π4*, because we want to involve our clients in such a way that they have the feeling they are a part of us."
"Fading boundaries between customers and us."

**I1, Vision, mission, strategy:**
"A balance between idealism and realism."
"Our cooperation is to be a learning organization."

Comments after the assessment were:
"A brainstorming session on Future-Focused Entrepreneurship Assessment: instructive, enlightening, and stimulates a lot of thought about our business and future."
"FFEA brought us a good structure in our brainstorm afternoon about a new collective. One afternoon, without him, probably would have been a lot more chaotic and given us less clear conclusions."
"With the FFEA method, today we had a guided exploration about a possible collaboration, which made us quickly concrete. It is a purposeful way of engaging people in making future plans."

In follow-up meetings of the nine entrepreneurs, the basic principles formulated during the FFEA session were made operational, after which the structured cooperation started. They had gone into phase 2, '*The Venture*'. The collective was ready for the future.

# 7. The FFEA Extensions

During the MSPOE loop (zooming in, zooming out), the 'E', standing for 'Evaluation', is performed through a FFEA assessment. During the assessment, it will become clear which of its topics deserve special attention, as improvements on those topics received the highest priority.

Immediately after the assessment, a strategic plan is made, as was described before. In order to make this plan operational, many tools are available.

Some of these tools already existed before FFEA was developed. Examples are: the standards of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI, [39]) and ISO 26000 [40].

Other tools were specifically designed for the operational phase, as an added instrument to FFEA. They are called the 'FFEA Extensions'. Each of them is aimed at one or two specific topics of FFEA: see figure 19.

An overview of the FFEA Extensions is available at [41].



*Figure 19. FFEA as a starting point for many other management methods*

These extensions have the shape of a workshop, a book, a serious game, a forum, or an assessment. Some of them are shown in table 13.

Table 13. Some FFEA Extensions and their online sources

| Topic | Extension | Type | Online |
|---|---|---|---|
| *I4.* Leadership, participation | STELES: Self-Test Leadership Styles | Assessment | [42] |
| *I6.* Transparency | FFEA Certificate for Organizations | Certificate | [43] |
| *O1.* Staff and Means | The Seven Competences of the Sustainable Professional | Book [20] | [44] |
| *O4.* HRD, culture | RESFIA+D for HRD | Assessment | [45] |
| *O6.* Efficiency | Fundamentals of Sustainable Development | Book [21] | [46] |
| *P4.* Competences, expertise | RESFIA+D for professionals | Assessment | [45] |
| *P5.* Integral chain management | In the Rucksack | Workshop | [47] |
| *P5.* Integral chain management | EPU – Environmental Pollution Unit | Serious game | [48] |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *N2.* Sensibility | PopSim – Population Simulation | Serious game | [49] |
| *N4.* Creativity | Function Analysis | Forum | [50] |
| *N6.* Development | Backcasting the Future | Forum | [51] |
| *S1.* Motives | CSR Motivation Mix | Assessment | [52] |
| *S5.* Involvement | The Societal Triangle | Workshop | [53] |
| *S6.* Sustainability | The Pledge | Forum | [54] |

Another important FFEA Extension, not mentioned in table 13, is an assessor training, aimed at those who want to acquire the FFEA Assessor Certificate, enabling them to perform FFEA independently. Such assessments, chaired by certified assessors, may lead to a FFEA Certificate for Organizations, which is mentioned in the table related to topic *I6*.

Three of the above extensions will be discussed in more detail.


### 7.1.    An extension for topic S1: The CSR Motivation Mix Assessment

The present chapter started with the Maslow model, applied to CSR of companies. The result was shown in figure 1.
This 'Maslow for CSR' model can easily be expanded into an assessment of its own right. For this purpose, figure 1 is printed on a large paper (e.g with a width of a meter or three feet), which is put horizontally on a table. A group of relevant people (managers, employees, customers, etc.) is invited to walk around the table and study the model. Next, they take two steps:
*1. Present state:* Each participant receives 3 silver (or silver-colored plastic) coins. They are invited to place the coins on the playing board, such that the coins indicate, which of the five motivation levels descibe the company motives for CSR best.
*2. Desired state:* Now, everyone receives 3 golden coins. They are requested to put them on the board in such a way that they correct or expand the present state in the way they think the company should be motivated.
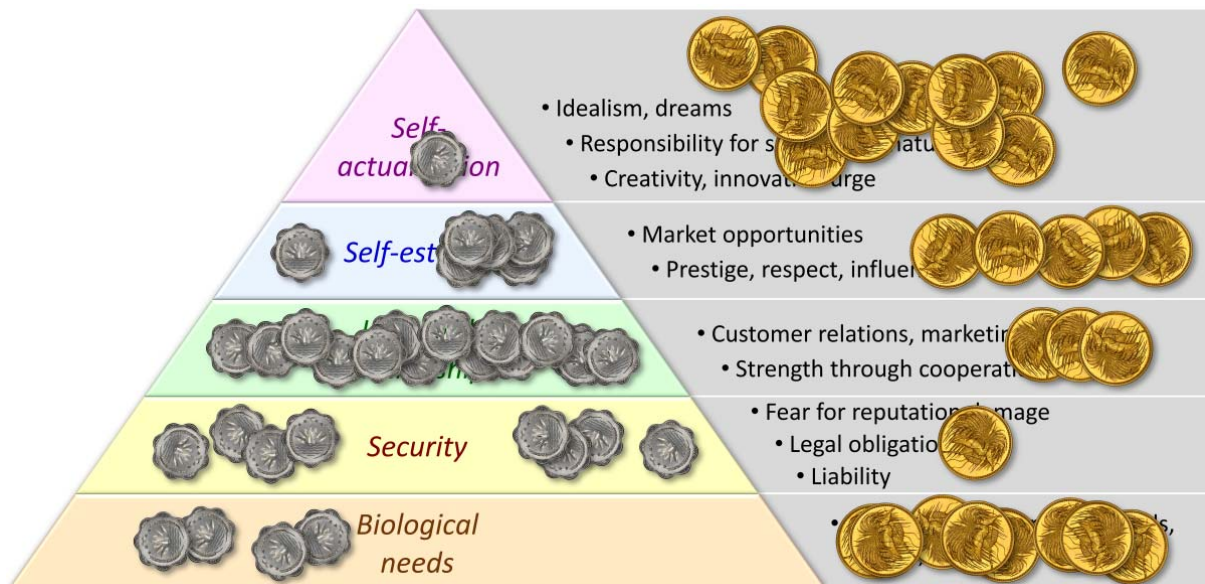The result may look like figure 20.



*Figure 20. The CSR Motivation Mix Assessment*

After the board is filled, the group discusses the results and draws conclusions.

### 7.2.    An extension for topic I4: STELES, The Self-Test of Leadership Styles

Another extension is linked to topic *I4*, Leadership. Leaders are invited to fill out a small questionnaire called STELES (Self-Test Leadership Styles), after which they receive an automated response, telling them their strengths and weaknesses in the shape of twelve different leadership styles: see figure 21.
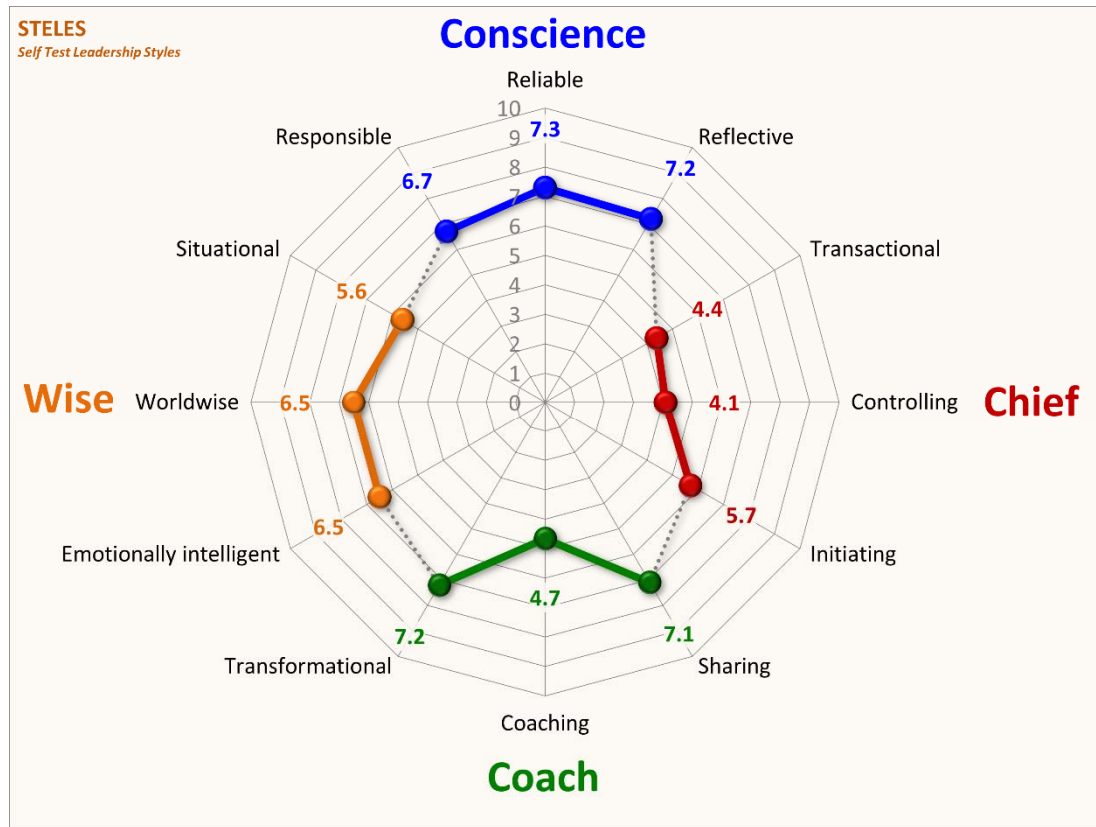


*Figure 21. An actual result of STELES*

STELES may be applied by formal leaders at every level of an organization; and also by informal leaders, or by those who have the ambition to become a leader.

### 7.3.    An extension for topics P4 and O4: RESFIA+D, or the Seven Competences

The last example of a FFEA Extension to be presented her is linked to topic *O4*, Human Resource Development (HRD) and Culture; and to *P4*, Competences & Expertise. As announced in section 3, the RESFIA+D Model, also called 'The Seven Competences of the Sustainable Professional', can be applied as an assessment instrument in several ways.
If it is applied by individual professionals, the result may look like figure 22, which was the result of an actual result of an assessment. The figure shows how the person who did the test first filled out his personal view on his competence levels at that moment, followed by his ambition, applied to a personal development plan. Besides, some of his colleagues were invited to assess his competences, together creating a 360 degrees feedback.
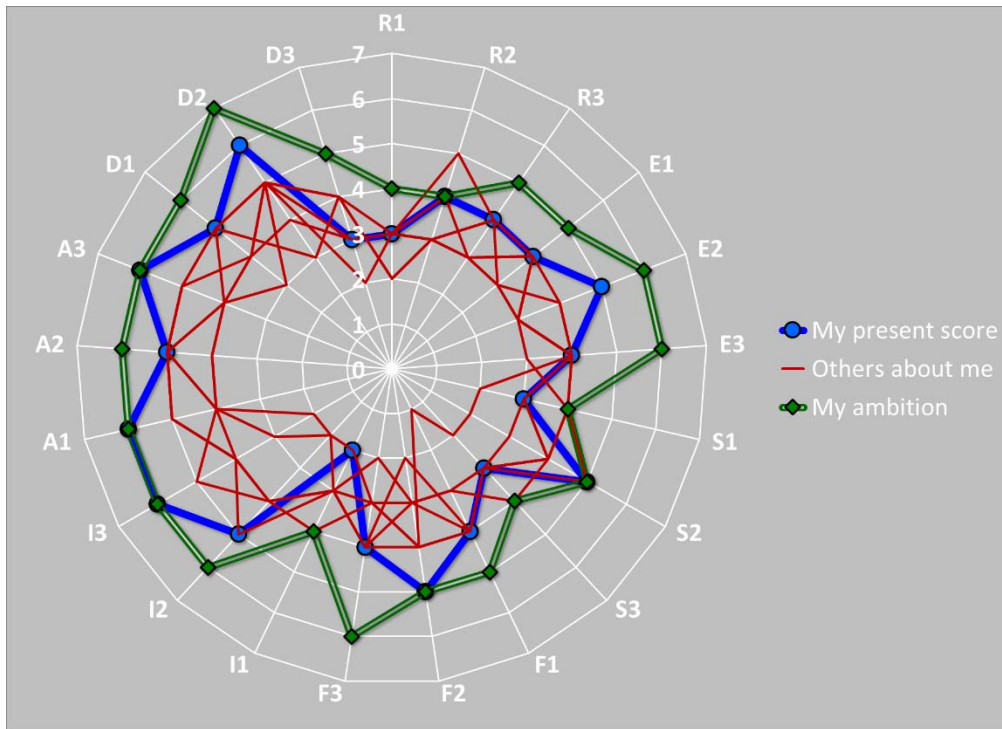
*Figure 22. An actual result of RESFIA+D, applied by an individual professional*

If the HRD department of a company applies RESFIA+D for all of the staff members of a team or a department, the results can be used as a policy instrument, enabling the management to design an integrated staff development plan. The result may look like figure 23. More information about RESFIA+D is published in [21], and online in [45], as table 13 mentioned.



*Figure 23. Result of RESFIA+D, applied by an HRD department*

### 7.4. An extension for topic I6: The FFEA Certificate for Future-proof Resilience

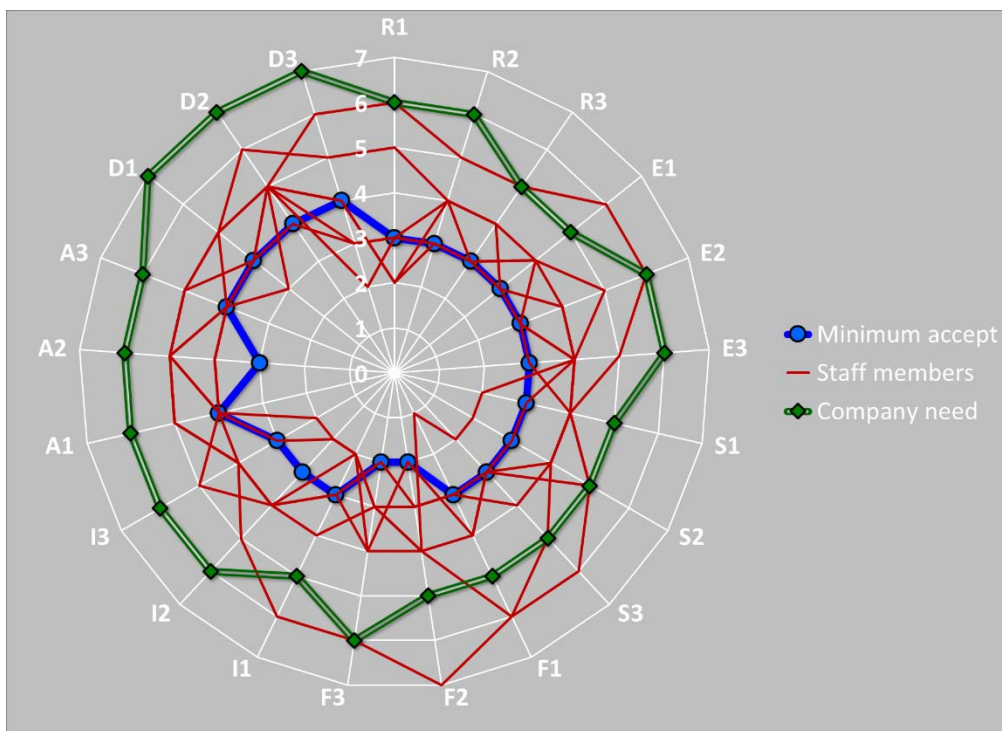It does not exist yet. But preparations are being made (and may be ready when this text is read) to create a Certificate that will be awarded to organizations that have proved, with the use of FFEA, to possess a high level of future-proof resilience.

A comparable certification system already exists, and has proved to be highly successful. FFEA has been developed, based on an earlier assessment system: AISHE, the *Assessment Instrument for Sustainability in Higher Education* [55]. FFEA has the same structure as AISHE, as will be described in the next section.
The AISHE Certificate is a star system: depending on the results of an AISHE assessment, a university (or a part of it, e.g. a department, a faculty or a campus) receives a Certificate at the level of one, two or more stars. A lot of experience has been built up with this kind of certification. Especially after the AISHE Certificate was formally recognized (see next section), many universities have acquired one or several AISHE Certificates.

The FFEA Certificate will be defined in the same way, based on a range of one to four star levels. Certifying assessments will be chaired by certified FFEA assessors, followed by a final check by an independent certification organization.
The FFEA Certificate will be a strong indication for the likelihood that the certified organization is expected to have a sound and prosperous future. Thus, it will contribute to the trustworthiness of the organization – whether it is a commercial company, a non-profit institution, a government department or whatever – for its relations. Although a certificate of course can never be an absolute guarantee that the organization will continue to exist and flourish indefinitely, customers may rely on the certificate and be confident that the services will still be available in the next years. Banks may be confident, or at least more confident, that investments will be sound; and suppliers may expect to be paid for their deliveries.

The details of the AISHE certification, which will serve as a model for the FFEA certification, will be described below (in 8.3).

## 8. Origins and theoretical backgrounds of FFEA

FFEA, Future-Focused Entrepreneurship Assessment, was designed by the author of the current chapter. (FFEA® is a registered trademark.) The same is true for AISHE and the various FFEA Extensions, e.g. RESFIA+D.

The FFEA system was developed on the basis of many existing theories, models and management systems. They can roughly be divided into three groups: (1) general management models; (2) specific models for quality management, environmental management or CSR; and (3) the AISHE assessment system, which is a model for the study and the assessment of sustainable development in higher education.
These sources will be described in this closing section.


### 8.1. Management models

An important model that was already mentioned in the first section is of course the Motivation Pyramid of Maslow [6]. Another, which was also applied in this chapter, is the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle designed by Deming [23]. Both have been important to shape the description of the four perspectives, especially the detailed descriptions for each separate topic. Evidently, the PDCA model also contributed to the formulation of the six topics per module, which were described in section 4.

In part, the four perspectives were also based on the Bridges model [34] for organizational development. This is the case e.g. for topics around sensitivity, flexibility, innovation, and investments.

Also useful was the 'colors model' designed by De Caluwé [56]. This model describes types of organizations and change processes taking place within them. The model offers a range of organization types, each characterized using a color. One of them is the 'blueprint' organization, which is typified as focusing on clear, measurable targets (as its name suggests) and on stepwise implementation plans. Many of the characteristics of this type of organization can be found in the 'Targeted' perspective (Π2) of FFEA, which also carries notions defined by Taylor [57].
Other types defined by De Caluwé also left their traces, such as the stimulation and active participation of employees ('redprint', according to De Caluwé) and the focus on a learning organization ('greenprint'), which helped to define the systemic perspective (Π3); and the dynamic and complex 'whiteprint', which contributed to defining the creative notions of the holistic perspective (Π4).

Sterling [58] defined a model for the levels of intensity of organizational change. These levels were helpful to define some of the characteristics of the four perspectives, especially those related to innovation processes. As an example, in table 5, the row called 'Innovations', ranging from 'glued-on' till 'trend-setting', was partly based on the Sterling levels.


### 8.2. Quality management; environmental management; CSR

Several approaches to quality management have contributed to FFEA. The 'classical' approach to quality management of ISO 9000 [59] was less relevant for FFEA than the quality principles of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM, [60]), as the latter philosophy emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement, just like FFEA and its MSPOE cycle. (Through the years, the principle of continuous improvement has also grown more relevant for ISO standards.) The EFQM model is explained e.g. in [61].

A Dutch organization for quality management, INK ( [62]), used the EFQM model as a starting point for the design of five different developmental stages of organizations [63]. To a certain extent, the four perspectives of FFEA are derived from the five stages of the INK model. The details of this will be described in the 'AISHE' section, below.

Based on the INK model, several special editions of its five stages have been designed, e.g. for healthcare institutions and for educational institutions. The latter, developed specifically for the Dutch universities for applied sciences, was developed in 1999 by the so-called 'Expertgroep HBO' ( [64]). Details of this model, on which AISHE was based, are described in [65], [66] and [67].

Several models and standards about environmental management were applied to define certain parts of FFEA: BS 7750 [68], EMAS [69] and ISO 14000 [70]. They were e.g. used for the details of the 'Environment' topic (O5) of the operations module and for several FFEA extensions.

Speaking of ISO: of course, ISO 26000 [71], dedicated to CSR, was an important source for many aspects of FFEA. This is also true for the GRI standard [72] for transparent reporting, which is e.g. related to the definition in table 5 of 'quality' for holistic (*Π4*) organizations as 'added societal value (*stakeholder value*)'. It is also clearly recognizable in topic I6 of the identity module: 'Transparency'. If a FFEA assessment ends in the conclusion that transparency is to be one of the high priorities for realizing the desired state, GRI may offer a suitable tool.

### 8.3. AISHE: assessment and certification of sustainability in higher education

A special source for FFEA is AISHE, which is short for: *Assessment Instrument for Sustainability in Higher Education*. Detailed information about AISHE is available online [73].

AISHE, in its first version, was developed by the author of the present chapter in 2000 – 2001, ordered by the *Dutch Foundation for Sustainability in Higher Education* ('Duurzaam Hoger Onderwijs', DHO). It was published in 2001 [74], after which it was applied in universities and colleges in many countries. A first evaluation of its results was published in 2004 [75].

The first version (AISHE 1.0) consisted of a list of 20 criteria, focusing on the educational aspects of an institute for higher education ('HEI'), and on its mission & identity, related to sustainable development. After systematic evaluations between 2001 and 2006, it had become clear that users of AISHE 1.0 wished to be able to apply AISHE also to other aspects of an HEI. The operations as well as the research were mentioned repeatedly in the evaluations.

For that reason, AISHE was thoroughly redesigned between 2006 and 2008 by an international group of universities and organizations for sustainable development in higher education, resulting in 2009 in AISHE 2.0 [55]. An analysis of the various roles of HEIs towards sustainable development gave rise to a view that is shown in figure 24. The resemblance between the figures 5 and 24 is obvious.



*Figure 24. The philosophy of AISHE 2.0*

Between 2001 and the present, the two versions of AISHE have been applied in hundreds of assessments in many countries, and as a starting point for research in universities and colleges. Examples are: Brazil [76]; Africa [77]; USA [78]; Saudi Arabia [79]; Bangladesh [80]; and Australia [81]. AISHE 2.0 is one of the assessment methods adopted by the International Platform for Sustainability Performance in Education [82]; an overview of these methods is shown at [83].

Several related assessment instruments have been derived from AISHE. One of them, called AIFSHE [84], focuses on sustainable food security. It was developed as a part of the *Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme* (CAADP) program, set up by the African Union [85].

FFEA is another derivative of AISHE. FFEA was developed, after requests from leaders of several commercial companies reached the main developer of AISHE. The structure of AISHE 2.0 was based on figure 24, resulting in five modules with 6 topics each. This structure was copied to FFEA, for which AISHE's educational module – which assesses the primary process of an HEI – was replaced for FFEA by a more general 'primary process' module. Besides, the AISHE module 'Research' was generalized to the FFEA module 'Innovation'.
These replacements were the starting point for the development of FFEA, which was designed, applied, evaluated and improved between 2013 and 2017.

After ample discussions with stakeholder representatives at the beginning of the development of FFEA, it was decided to shift the focus of the newly to design assessment tool. Whereas AISHE focuses entirely on sustainable development, it was concluded that, for companies, this would be too narrow. So, the target area was widened: first to CSR, next also to other topics that have an evident relevance for the chances that a company, as a part of society in general, will be able to survive. Next to sustainable development and CSR, topics were added such as innovativity, creativity, sensitivity, societal awareness, and transparency. In the end, this resulted in the 30 topics of figure 8.

Compared to AISHE, another change was made. AISHE applies the five-stage model developed by the INK, mentioned earlier in this section. During assessments made with AISHE, it had become clear that, in many ways, this appears to be one stage too many. During the assessments, participants repeatedly struggled especially with the differences between stages 4 and 5, which were diffuse to many.
For that reason, it was decided that FFEA should make use of a four-point scale, with a clear relation to different levels of policies, ranging from operational to strategic, with an extension towards panoramic. Careful comparisons between these policy levels and existing large and small companies rendered four types of perspectives of organizations, or perhaps even personalities of organizations and their relations with the future.

A lot of experience has been gained, using AISHE repeatedly, as the driving force of a repeated Plan – Do – Check – Act cycle. Thus, AISHE has become an integrated part of the general quality management of HEIs. Based on such repeated use of AISHE, a strategy has been developed and applied within universities in order to introduce and integrate sustainable development up to a level of '*System Integration of Sustainable Development*' (SISD), as described in [86]. The MSPOE cycle of continuous improvement (the 'breathing motion'), defined for FFEA, is derived from this AISHE strategic approach.

Based on AISHE assessments, in 2001 a certification system was set up, leading to the Certificate for Sustainability in Higher Education. This certificate, in the form of a star system varying from 1 to 4 stars, was formally recognized in 2007 [87] by the Dutch and Flemish Accreditation Organization (NVAO, [88]). The certificate is still being awarded to universities and colleges.
Currently, preparations are being made for a comparable certificate for the extent to which companies are 'Future-proof Resilient', as was told in section 7.4.

# 9. Conclusion

Companies see themselves and their relations with the outside world through different perspectives. Four perspectives can be distinguished: 'diligent', 'targeted', 'systemic' and 'holistic'.
Based on these perspectives, a company applies a strategy and a set of policies that range from short term (operational), through intermediate term (tactical), and long term (strategic), and finally to panoramic (visionary).

Most or all companies are not 100% consistent, varying their perspective according to the topics and issues it deals with. These topics can be divided into five groups: identity; operations; primary process; innovation; and society. These form the five modules of the FFEA management method. For each module, FFEA discerns six topics.

For every company, including commercial ones, government departments, educational and healthcare institutions, and NGO's, it is essential that its range of perspectives is inspected every few years. If not, the company is in danger of losing or lowering its *future-proof resilience*, and its health or even its continuity may be in danger.

It is the purpose of FFEA to assess this range of perspectives, enabling a company to become aware of it and to plan improvements. The improvements may vary between simple adaptations and fundamental transformations, including redefining the Company Mission.
Illustrated with case studies, this chapter concludes that the *future-proof resilience* of a company increases when it pays explicit attention to aspects of sustainable development and CSR. It also shows how this resilience of a company is closely linked to the resilience of society: depending on the size and scale of a company, this concerns a local community, or the global human society & nature, or something in between.

FFEA, with its development based on a range of earlier management methods, is a structured tool to investigate the *future-proof resilience* of companies. FFEA makes use of consensus meetings in which all relevant stakeholders of a company are to be represented. This guarantees that the results of an assessment are realistic and supported, and thus are suitable to be the basis for a strategic plan for improvements.

After FFEA is applied, a range of other tools and methods are available, partly preexisting ones like ISO 26000 and GRI, and partly developed as FFEA extensions.

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