



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**SSPICE IT!**

Sustainability Skills Program for International Catering  
operators and Entrepreneurs through Integrated Training

## SSPICE IT! – Sustainability Skills Program for International Catering operators and Entrepreneurs through Integrated Training

SSPICE IT! project is co-funded by the European Commission within the Erasmus+ programme.

*The content of this publication reflects only SSPICE IT Consortium's view, and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.*



CIPFP CAMINO DE SANTIAGO  
ESCUOLA DE HOSTELERÍA & TURISMO DE LA RIBERA



Escola Profissional AMAR TERRA VERDE



## Submodule n°16: The Mindset of the Sustainable Food Entrepreneur

|  |                                     |                  |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>THEMATIC AREA</b>   | <b>A Sustainable Business Model</b> |                  |
| <b>SUB AREA OF REFERENCE</b>   | <i>Entrepreneurship</i>             |                  |
| <b>HOURS</b>   | 5                                   |                  |
| <b>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</b>   |                                     |                  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Adopt Sustainable Practices in One's Job:</b> Understand the importance of adopting sustainable practices in their job roles and integrate sustainability principles into their professional activities.</li> <li><b>Act Responsibly:</b> Make ethical decisions and act responsibly in a sustainable business context, aligning actions with sustainability objectives.</li> <li><b>Identify and Assess Individual and Group Strengths and Weaknesses:</b> Assess individual and group strengths in contributing to sustainable practices and identify opportunities for continuous improvement in a collaborative and team-oriented manner.</li> <li><b>Reflect on How Sustainable Long-term Social, Cultural, and Economic Goals and Actions Are:</b> Reflect on their sustainable long-term social, cultural, and economic goals and actions, and adopt responsible behaviour to contribute to sustainability efforts.</li> </ol> <p>By achieving these learning objectives, learners will develop the necessary skills to identify needs and challenges, envision innovative ideas, and design a sustainable business model that promotes environmental and social responsibility while creating long-term value for their organization and stakeholders.</p> |                                     |                  |
| <b>LEARNING ACTIVITIES</b>   |                                     |                  |
|  | <b>Theoretical</b>                  | <b>Practical</b> |
|  | ▪ Student's manual                  | ▪ Group activity |

# CONTENT

- SUBMODULE 16: THE MINDSET OF THE SUSTAINABLE FOOD ENTREPRENEUR ..... 4
- 1. Managing innovation and creative idea development..... 4
  - 1.1. Starting with Lean Methodology ..... 4
  - 1.2. How to be Creative with Sustainability ..... 4
  - 1.3. Being Persistent with Brainstorming ..... 5
  - 1.4. Minding the Consumer through Innovation ..... 5
- 2. Reflecting on sustainable actions and responsible behavior..... 6
  - 2.1. The Phenomenon of Greenwashing ..... 6
  - 2.2. Being Responsible Towards Local Communities ..... 7
  - 2.3. Taking Ownership ..... 7
- 3. Assessing individual and group strengths and weaknesses ..... 7
  - 3.1. Understanding the Importance of Teamwork ..... 7
  - 3.2. Addressing Weaknesses and Embracing Continuous Improvement ..... 8
- Exercise: Assessment Questions (Reflection and Ethical Decision-Making)..... 8
- EXTRAS ..... 9
  - 1. Further Readings ..... 9
  - 2. Bibliography .....10

## SUBMODULE 16: The Mindset of the Sustainable Food Entrepreneur

### 1. Managing innovation and creative idea development

In this chapter, the learner examines how to engage in processes, which could potentially generate innovative or creative ideas. Sustainability by itself is a modern concept related to progress in business. Lately, sustainability is also viewed as something compatible with the lean approach, since implementing lean is all about cutting waste and improving process efficiency (Khodeir and Othman, 2016).

#### 1.1. Starting with Lean Methodology

The lean approach is a very popular **business trend**, which aims for **continuous process improvement** and the **reduction of waste**. In other words, lean is about creating value with fewer resources, including both material and knowledge-related ones (Lean Enterprise Institute, n.d.)

The reason why it is beneficial to refer to the **Lean Methodology** is twofold:

- a. On the one hand, it shows the **compatibility of some existing business approaches** with sustainability, without a direct reference to a green transition. It is not rational for a business to desire the production of more waste as it is a profit loss.
- b. On the other hand, it displays how **the correlation of two ideas can become the source of new creative elements**. In this case, it is evident how the synergy of lean methodology and sustainable practices can generate new, inspiring frameworks.

#### 1.2. How to be Creative with Sustainability

Creativity may seem to work in mysterious ways, sometimes. However, there are some best practices to follow which allow the generation of new inputs. **Do you ever consider that humorous or seemingly random entrepreneurial stories about the occurrence of new ideas can be explained more rationally?**

For example, the experience of entrepreneurs or people engaged in business activities is a defining factor in **reacting to certain stimuli**. An accident in the kitchen may mean nothing to a doctor or engineer. However, **a chef** may observe the situation from

a different angle and **match a need with an innovative solution**. Constant observations of everyday situations in restaurants and catering establishments through the lean lens of sustainability can lead to unexpected improvement and innovative changes.



Source: <https://www.pexels.com/search/catering/>

### 1.3. Being Persistent with Brainstorming

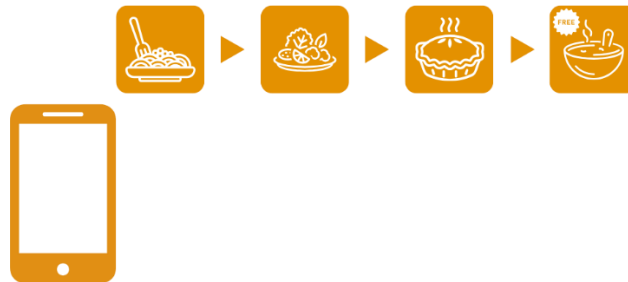
Brainstorming is also crucial for the process of innovative thinking. By sharing, the ideas, experiences, and knowledge of others can become stimuli for **a new collective innovative approach towards a matter**. Do not be discouraged, however, if nothing new comes from collective discussions. **In your daily life, have you ever found a problem unsolvable, only to solve it the next day after resting?** Innovation requires **patience** and some **space** for creative thoughts to accumulate, so by no means should a team give up on brainstorming if there is no immediate result!

### 1.4. Minding the Consumer through Innovation

Consumers often **prefer familiar tastes and experiences**, much like they gravitate towards TV series or music they're accustomed to. This habitual preference is crucial to consider when introducing innovations, whether in processes or products. Any alteration, such as in food taste or texture, may trigger negative reactions, potentially leading to a decrease in demand.

However, businesses must continually **engage with their customers**, ensuring clear communication about every change. For example, while some customers may **resist the switch** from plastic straws to eco-friendly alternatives, proper communication through marketing and employee advocacy can make such changes more palatable.

Additionally, businesses can **leverage behavioural science** to make changes more appealing. For instance, restaurants can intertwine customer loyalty programs with sustainable food choices, like "Buy three low-carbon-footprint meals and get the fourth free!"



Do you want to learn more about some behavioural patterns? You can start with some very interesting behavioural biases, which you can read about [here!](#) Do they look familiar to you?

## 2. Reflecting on sustainable actions and responsible behavior

In this chapter, learners will engage in self-reflection regarding their sustainable long-term social, cultural, and economic goals and actions. They will explore the significance of adopting responsible behaviours in their job roles to contribute to sustainability efforts. By reflecting on their actions, learners will develop a deeper understanding of their role in achieving sustainability objectives and their responsibilities as agents of positive change.

### 2.1. The Phenomenon of Greenwashing

Greenwashing occurs when a product or service is **falsely or misleadingly advertised as environmentally beneficial**. It is an unethical technique used to promote or to continue polluting activities (NRDC, 2023). Absolutely, it is a necessity to **properly advertise** a sustainable restaurant or catering business and even focus on the part of sustainability. Nevertheless, the goal of this sustainability-based communication should be a **real impact**.

One way to guard yourself from greenwashing is through the **use of certifications**. These certifications constitute **proof of a business's commitment** to the implementation of green practices through the **validation by a third party**. The requirements

of green certifications are also a great point of reference for **minor adjustments** in green practices and others (Zujewski, 2022).

## 2.2. Being Responsible Towards Local Communities

Choosing local suppliers can collectively **boost economic activity in a region** and provide employment opportunities. However, at the same time, this requires **responsible behaviour towards these same suppliers**, as any disruptions in their economic activity could have a disproportionately **negative effect**.

## 2.3. Taking Ownership

All in all, employees and business owners in the restaurant and catering industries should be taking ownership of both their **individual behaviour and the collective behaviour in their organizations**. It is easier to be responsible during an **event or in the kitchen** since it is a defined space and area of responsibility. However, it is also easy to forget about sustainability-related responsibilities as the scope is global and no effect is immediate. As a consequence, we often forget in what way **our actions locally can have a global effect**.

## 3. Assessing individual and group strengths and weaknesses

In this chapter, the learner will understand how to assess individual and group strengths in contributing to sustainability in a business environment. Learners will recognize the importance of teamwork and collaboration in achieving sustainability goals. By identifying strengths, learners will be able to leverage their skills to make a meaningful impact on sustainability initiatives. Additionally, learners will address weaknesses and embrace continuous improvement to enhance their contribution to sustainability efforts.

### 3.1. Understanding the Importance of Teamwork

Every job position and every enterprise, let alone in the food and catering sector, **necessitates specific hard skills and specialized knowledge** from employees to respond to the work's demands and tasks. However, when referring to strengths and weakness, we usually mean **soft skills in people to deal with several situations effectively**.

Teamwork is an essential professional trait, particularly in professional environments where **customer service is of paramount importance**. On the one hand, situations

requiring teamwork train staff internally to practice **active listening and communication**. On the other hand, by being communicative with the customer through the same elements of teamwork, it is easy to create a **welcoming atmosphere**, thus improving the customer experience. At the same time, **teamwork creates a common standard of customer service**, meaning that there is cohesion in the customer experience (Macaulay and Cook, 1995). With this in mind, **individual and collective attitudes are interconnected**. Interactions are usually individual, but through teamwork, **every member treats the customer, the community of customers and the environment in one agreed way**.

### 3.2. Addressing Weaknesses and Embracing Continuous Improvement

**Finding your weaknesses** is a different approach you might take **to define your strong points**. Consider the tasks or **areas of your job that you find more difficult** to perform or where you are more prone to make mistakes. **Continuous improvement** is a **sustainable mindset** that uses improvement strategies to focus on specific areas of dysfunction. We are thus referring to **small activities** that make a **significant difference** in the overall scheme of things.

The reason we pair weaknesses with continuous improvement is that **we should not view weaknesses as inherently negative**. Contrary to this perspective, **weaknesses are natural** and tackling them is a process of growth with a positive attribute.

#### Exercise: Assessment Questions (Reflection and Ethical Decision-Making)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Pre-requisites</b>  | Reading chapters 6 and 7.                            |
| <b>Time</b>  | 1,5 hours  |
| <b>Tools</b>   | PC, Smartphone, internet connection, pen and paper.  |
| <b>Objectives</b>  | 1. Assessing the understanding of previous chapters. |
| <b>Instructions</b>  |  |
| <b>Guidelines:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This assessment consists of questions and tasks related to the learning objectives and skills addressed in the module.</li> <li>• Point System with the highest score of 100 points.</li> <li>• The minimum score to pass is 60 points.</li> </ul> |  |



- All questions must be completed.

### Questions:

1. Reflect on your sustainable long-term social, cultural, and economic objectives in the food service sector (20 points).
2. Provide an example of a situation where you would have to demonstrate responsible behaviour to contribute to sustainability efforts (20 points).
3. Describe a difficult ethical decision in a sustainable business context and explain how you would act responsibly (20 points).
4. Evaluate a team's strengths and weaknesses in working together to achieve sustainability goals (20 points).
5. Identify an opportunity for continuous improvement of a team's collaborative efforts (20 points).

## Extras

### 1. Further Readings

- De Bruin (2016). Scanning the Environment: PESTEL Analysis. Business-to-you. Available at: <https://www.business-to-you.com/scanning-the-environment-pestel-analysis/>
- Fedorova, A. (2020). Research and analysis of business processes in a catering enterprise. CPT2020 The 8th International Scientific Conference on Computing in Physics and Technology Proceedings, 161–186. [https://doi.org/10.30987/conferencearticle\\_5fd755c0127bd9.87408786](https://doi.org/10.30987/conferencearticle_5fd755c0127bd9.87408786)
- Geissdoerfer, M., Vladimirova, D., & Evans, S. (2018). Sustainable business model innovation: A review. Journal of Cleaner Production, 198, 401–416. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.06.240>
- Jeff R. (February 18, 2023). Using a 2x2 matrix to plan your future. LinkedIn. [Using a 2x2 matrix to plan your future | LinkedIn](#)
- Magretta J. (May 2002). Why Business Models Matter. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2002/05/why-business-models-matter>
- Maynard, D. D. C., Zandonadi, R. P., Nakano, E. Y., & Botelho, R. B. A. (2020). Sustainability Indicators in Restaurants: The Development of a Checklist. Sustainability, 12(10), 4076. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12104076>
- Ratushnyak, E. S., & Shapovalov, V. V. (2023). Key Aspects of Sustainable Business Model Innovation. In E. G. Popkova (Ed.), Smart Green Innovations in Industry 4.0 for Climate Change Risk Management (pp. 105–113). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-28457-1\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-28457-1_11)

- Rose H. (n.d.). Availability bias: the tendency to use information that easily comes to mind. Ness Lab. [Availability bias: the tendency to use information that easily comes to mind \(nesslabs.com\)](https://nesslabs.com/availability-bias)
- Shewan D. (September 12, 2023). How to Do a SWOT Analysis. WordStream. [How to Do a SWOT Analysis \(Examples & Free Template!\) \(wordstream.com\)](https://wordstream.com/how-to-do-a-swot-analysis)
- Strategyzer (n.d.). The Business Model Canvas. <https://www.strategyzer.com/library/the-business-model-canvas>
- TEDx Talks (January 12, 2015). Gamification at Work | Janaki Kumar | TEDxGraz. Youtube. [Gamification at work | Janaki Kumar | TEDxGraz - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- The Decision Lab (n.d.). Cognitive Biases. [List of Cognitive Biases and Heuristics - The Decision Lab](https://www.decisionlab.com/cognitive-biases)
- The Sustainable Restaurant Association (n.d.) An organization dedicated to promoting sustainability in the food service sector. <https://www.thesra.org/>
- The Value Proposition Canvas (n.d.). Strategyzer. <https://www.strategyzer.com/canvas/value-proposition-canvas>
- UNSW Library (n.d.). Primary and Secondary sources. UNSW. <https://www.library.unsw.edu.au/using-the-library/information-resources/primary-and-secondary-sources>

## 2. Bibliography

- Ackerman T. (2018) "Why Company Culture is Crucial in The Franchise System", Forbes, available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2018/06/07/why-company-culture-is-crucial-in-the-franchise-system/>
- Agile Alliance (n.d.) "What is Agile?" available at: <https://www.agilealliance.org/agile101/>
- Alt R. (2021) Digital transformation in the restaurant industry: Current developments and implications. Journal of Smart Tourism. Vol. 1, No. 1. DOI:10.52255/smarttourism.2021.1.1.9
- Bronte G. (2017) "Talking trash: Tackling the industry's dirty little secret", Restaurant, available at: <https://www.restaurantonline.co.uk/>
- Buckley C. (July 21, 2023), "Save the Planet, Put Down that Hamburger", available at: [Save the Planet, Put Down that Hamburger - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/21/us/food-and-drink/save-the-planet-put-down-that-hamburger.html)
- Dsouza, Prima & Ks, Krithi & Nayak, Priyanka & R., Bhuhava (2021) "E-BUSINESS PROCESSES IN FOOD SERVICES", International Journal of Advanced Research. 9. 821-829
- Diana Gavilan, Adela Balderas-Cejudo, Susana Fernández-Lores, Gema Martínez-Navarro, Innovation in online food delivery: Learnings from COVID-19, International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science, Volume 24, 2021, 100330, ISSN 1878-450X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2021.100330>.
- Ekanem I. (2017) "Writing a Business Plan", Routledge, pp. 52-53
- Energy Star (n.d.). ENERGY STAR for Small Business: Restaurants. [https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/resources\\_audience/small\\_biz/restaurants](https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/resources_audience/small_biz/restaurants)
- Ekinci, U. (n.d.). What are the best tools and techniques for scenario planning in uncertain times? LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/advice/0/what-best-tools-techniques-scenario-planning>

- FoodMiles (n.d.) "Food miles calculator" available at: <https://www.foodmiles.com/>
- Growth Engineering (July 6, 2023). The Ultimate Definition of Gamification (With 6 Real World Examples). <https://www.growthengineering.co.uk/definition-of-gamification/>
- Harvard Business Review (July 28, 2020). How to create an Effective Value Proposition. Harvard Business School Online. <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/creating-a-value-proposition>
- Hassoun Abdo, Marvin Hans J. P., Bouzembrak Yamine, Barba Francisco J., Castagnini Juan Manuel, Pallarés Noelia, Rabail Roshina, Aadil Rana Muhammad, Bangar Sneh Punia, Bhat Rajeev, Cropotova Janna, Maqsood Sajid, Regenstein Joe M. (2023). Digital transformation in the agri-food industry: recent applications and the role of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*. Vol. 7. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsufs.2023.1217813>
- Howarth R. (September 23, 2020). What is Strategy? Strategic Thinking Institute. <https://www.strategyskills.com/what-is-strategy/>
- IBM Garage Methodology (n.d.). Define business Objectives. IBM. <https://www.ibm.com/garage/method/practices/discover/build-a-business-objective/>
- Khodeir L. M., Othman R. (2018). Examining the interaction between lean and sustainability principles in the management process of AEC industry. *Ain Shams Engineering Journal*. Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 1627-1634. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asej.2016.12.005>
- Klein E. (2023) "6 cooking mistakes you're making that are bad for the environment, according to a chef", Insider, available at: <https://www.insider.com/kitchen-mistakes-bad-for-environment-earth-month-2023-4>
- Kundamal R. (2022) "The Unsustainability of Buffet Food Waste", Global Research and Consulting Group Insights, available at: <https://insights.grcglobalgroup.com/the-unsustainability-of-buffet-food-waste/>
- NITI Aayog (2017) "Strategy on Resource Efficiency", EU Delegation to India
- Lahti T, Wincent J, Parida V. A Definition and Theoretical Review of the Circular Economy, Value Creation, and Sustainable Business Models: Where Are We Now and Where Should Research Move in the Future? *Sustainability*. 2018; 10(8):2799. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10082799>
- Lean Enterprise Institute (n.d.). What is Lean? <https://www.lean.org/explore-lean/what-is-lean/>
- Leonardsson H., Habyarimana J.B., (2022). Local Initiatives: Factors in and Lessons for Sustainable Development. Swedish Institute of International Affairs. <https://www.ui.se/globalassets/ui.se-eng/publications/ui-publications/2022/ui-paper-no.-3-2022.pdf> )
- Long, T.B. (2019). Sustainable Business Strategies. In: Leal Filho, W., Azul, A., Brandli, L., Özuyar, P., Wall, T. (eds) *Decent Work and Economic Growth*. Encyclopaedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71058-7\\_49-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71058-7_49-1)
- Macaulay S., Cook S. (1995). Practical teamwork for customer service. *Team Performance Management*. Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 35-41. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13527599510084858>
- Michelin Guide (2023). Athens: two exceptional restaurants promising a sustainable fine dining experience. <https://guide.michelin.com/gr/en/article/travel/athens-two-exceptional-restaurants-promising-a-sustainable-fine-dining-experience>
- Minttu Laukkanen, Nina Tura, (2022). Sustainable value propositions and customer perceived value: Clothing library case. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. Volume 378, 2022, 134321, ISSN 0959-6526. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2022.134321>
- NRDC (February 9, 2023). What is Greenwashing? [What Is Greenwashing? \(nrdc.org\)](https://www.nrdc.org/what-is-greenwashing/)

- Sengupta S. (March 25, 2022). Sustainable Gastronomy: Chefs Changing the Food Industry. Seventeen Goals Magazin. <https://www.17goalsmagazin.de/en/sustainable-gastronomy-healthy-eating-habits/>
- Slavik, Stefan & Zagorsek, Branislav. (2016). Relationship between Business Strategy and Business Model Studied in a Sample of Service Companies. Journal of Competitiveness. 8. 72-84. 10.7441/joc.2016.04.05.
- SNFC (October 3, 2022). Delta Restaurant was awarded Two Stars and One Green Star in the 2022 edition of the MICHELIN Guide Athens. <https://www.snfcc.org/en/news/delta-restaurant-was-awarded-two-stars-and-one-green-star-2022-edition-michelin-guide-athens>
- The Agile Manifesto Authors (2019) "Agile Manifesto", available at: <https://www.agilealliance.org/agile101/the-agile-manifesto/>
- Timmers, P. (1998). Business models for electronic markets. Electronic Markets, 8(2), p. 4
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2023) "MAX Burgers: Creating the World's First "Climate Positive" Menu | Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Poland", available at: [MAX Burgers: Creating the World's First "Climate Positive" Menu | Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Poland | UNFCCC](https://unfccc.int/news/max-burgers-creating-the-worlds-first-climate-positive-menu-sweden-norway-denmark-poland)
- U.S. Small Business Administration (n.d.). Market research and competitive analysis. <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/market-research-competitive-analysis>
- Walker I. (January 12, 2022). The Saga Of The Ultra-Rare McDonald's DS Game Comes To An End After 11 Long Years. <https://kotaku.com/we-can-all-finally-learn-how-to-make-big-macs-on-ninten-1848347540>
- Yetim A. (November 17, 2021). How mentorship can shape sustainable IT. BCS. <https://www.bcs.org/articles-opinion-and-research/how-mentorship-can-shape-sustainable-it/>
- Zujewski B. (April 28, 2022). How to Choose the Right Green Business Certification. Green Business Bureau. <https://greenbusinessbureau.com/topics/certification-benefits/how-to-choose-the-right-green-business-certification/>