

A Systems Innovation Model for Sustainability Competence Development in PMI Chapters

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PMI Culture Value: Together We Can

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Explain the principles of a systems-based model for sustainability competence development.
- Design a preliminary chapter-level structure for implementing the model within their local PMI context.

Setting the **Context**

The Problem

Australia, 1935. A beetle species is destroying sugarcane crops. Farmers are suffering economic losses. The government is under pressure to act quickly.

The Proposed Project

Introduce a natural predator, the cane toad. Release into Queensland sugarcane fields and control the beetle population biologically.

The Rationale

- Chemical pesticides are limited
- Scientific experts supports the intervention
- Pilot releases appeared promising



Setting the **Context**

The Outcome

The toads did not solve the problem. They multiplied. Rapidly.

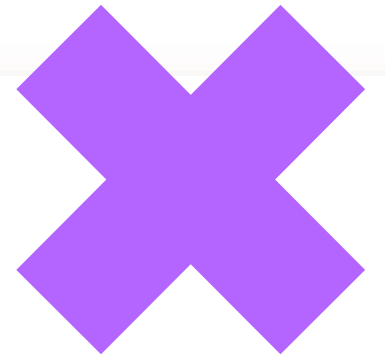
What Actually Happened

The beetles lived high on sugarcane stalks. Cane toads could not reach them.

- Native predators had no natural defense against the toads
- The toads were highly toxic

Result

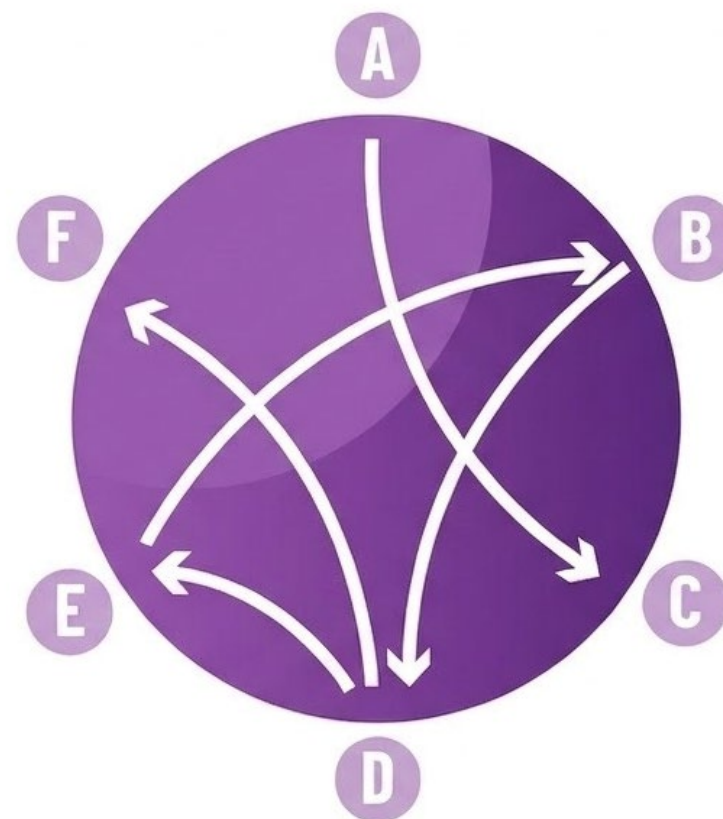
- Massive spread across northern Australia
- Collapse of native predator populations
- Ongoing ecological management costs.



What this teaches us **about sustainability**

Sustainability challenges are **systemic** and **non-linear**.

They emerge from complex adaptive systems where the economy, society, and environment are deeply interconnected.

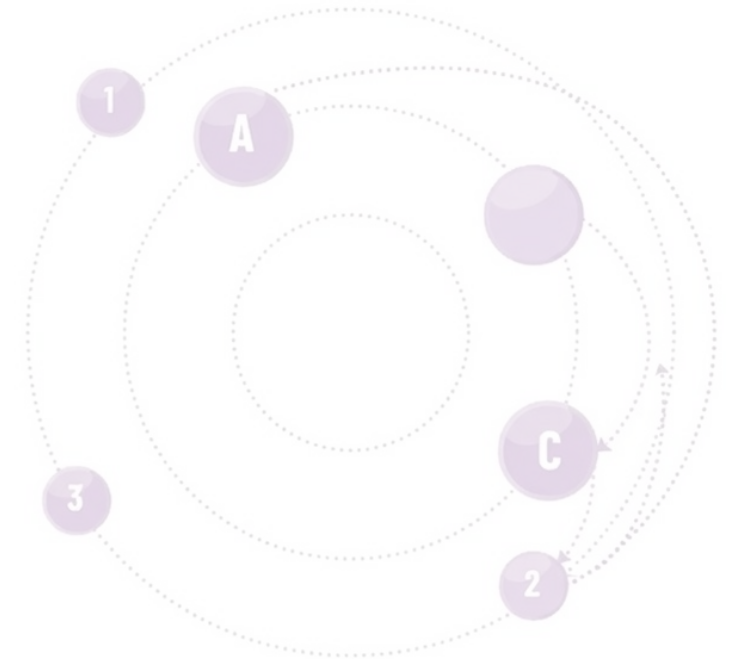


Why this matters for our Chapters

If we want to **help project professionals lead sustainable change**, we must help them become **system thinkers**.

- See **the system**, not just the problem
- Understand **interconnections**
- Approach sustainability challenges from **multiple perspectives**

PMI Chapters can create the spaces and conditions **for this competence to grow**



PMI Chapters as Sustainability Hubs

The Chapter as a managing center for networks of local stakeholders to learn, connect, and cooperate on sustainability challenges.

Enabling project professionals and other stakeholders to



Think in Systems



**Develop Sustainability
Competences**

Core Functions of the Chapter Hub



**Provide
Insight**



**Build
Community**

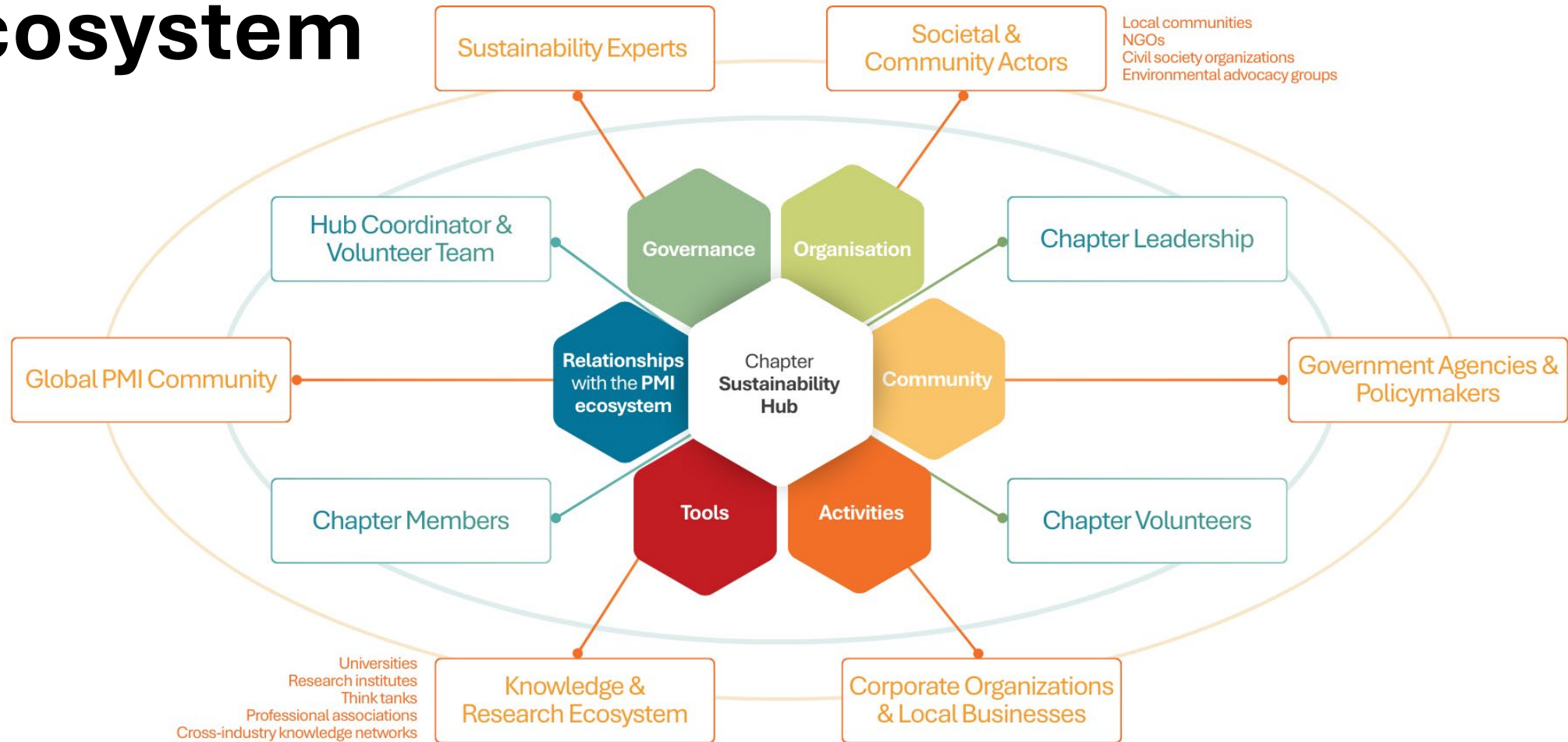


**Foster
Learning**



**Co-design
Solutions**

Ecosystem



How-to Set up the Hub

Development Domains



Governance





 **Vision Setting:** Establish a mission and values aligned with the Chapter goals.

 **Leadership:** Appoint a Hub Coordinator and a Sponsor in the Chapter Board





 **Goal Setting:** Formulate SMART objectives and expected results.

 **Resources:** Plan the generation and allocation of financial, human and physical resources.





Organisation

-  **Team Formation:** Recruit volunteers, covering key functions (e.g., training design, communication and outreach, partnership development, IT support).
-  **Current State Assessment:** Conduct internal and external situational analyses (SWOT, PESTEL) to assess existing sustainability initiatives and competences.
-  **Intervention Strategy:** Outline the hub's intervention strategy to achieve the stated objectives and generate value beyond the state-of-the-art.
-  **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish systems to collect and interpret data from the hub's community members - internal and external.

Community

-  **Stakeholder Mapping:** Identify and analyse internal and external stakeholders within the Chapter's ecosystem.
-  **Strategic Partnerships:** Establish collaborations with relevant stakeholders, using Memorandums of Understanding when relevant.
-  **Outreach & Onboarding:** Facilitate networking events and welcoming guides to foster a sense of belonging among community members.
-  **Mentorship:** Provide guidance and counseling services to enhance active participation and knowledge sharing

Activities


-  **Internal Operations:** Manage administrative and communication tasks required to maintain the hub's structure.
-  **Educational Workshops:** Interactive and practical sessions about sustainable project management, to help integrate sustainability principles into PM practices.
-  **Open Spaces:** Dynamic discussion forums where participants generate their own topics for debate, fostering a self-directed learning environment.
-  **Collaborative Events:** Co-creation initiatives such as hackathons, contests, and cross-sectoral workshops where members work with external stakeholders.

Tools

 **Thinking Tools:** System thinking tools to enhance understanding of interconnectedness within ecosystems and promoting a holistic view.

 **Digital Tools for Communication:** Platforms to facilitate interaction and coordination among Chapter members and stakeholders.

 **Digital Tools for Knowledge Exchange:** Repositories for sharing best practices, resources and materials (e.g., cloud storage, information hubs like Google Sites)

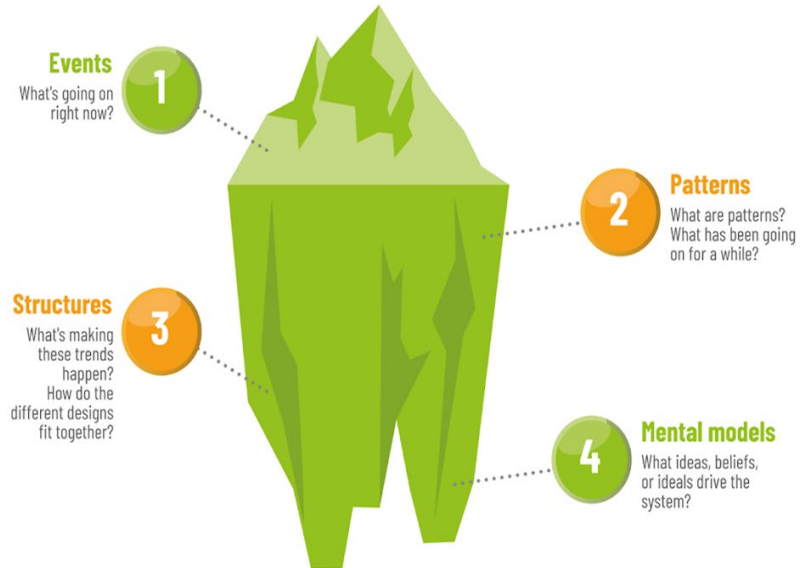
 **Digital Tools for Education:** Platforms to create and deliver educational experiences (e.g., content authoring and visual collaboration tools, LMS)

Tools

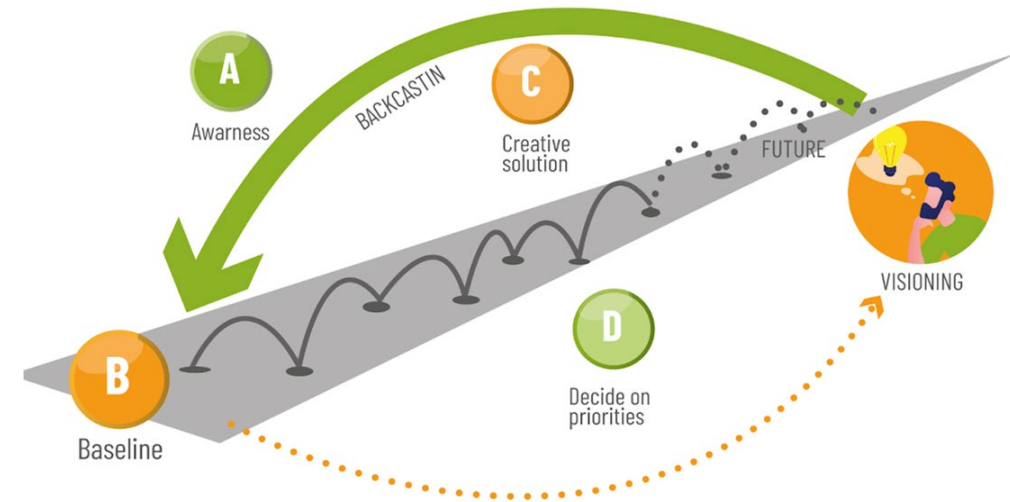


Examples of *Thinking* Tools

TOOLS 03 Iceberg Model



TOOLS 12 Backcasting



Abbruzzese, G., Acomi, O., Acomi, N., Gonzalez, M. B., Lanzetta, M., Mangiullo, A., Maravelaki, A., & Sofianou, D. (2024). Setting Up a GreenComb: Set of Canvases. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12530358>

Relationships with the PMI ecosystem



Map Existing Networks: Identify stakeholders and organizations already operating in the sustainability space within the ecosystem.



Co-Creation Opportunities: Engage members in ecosystem-wide hackathons, contests, and collaborative projects.

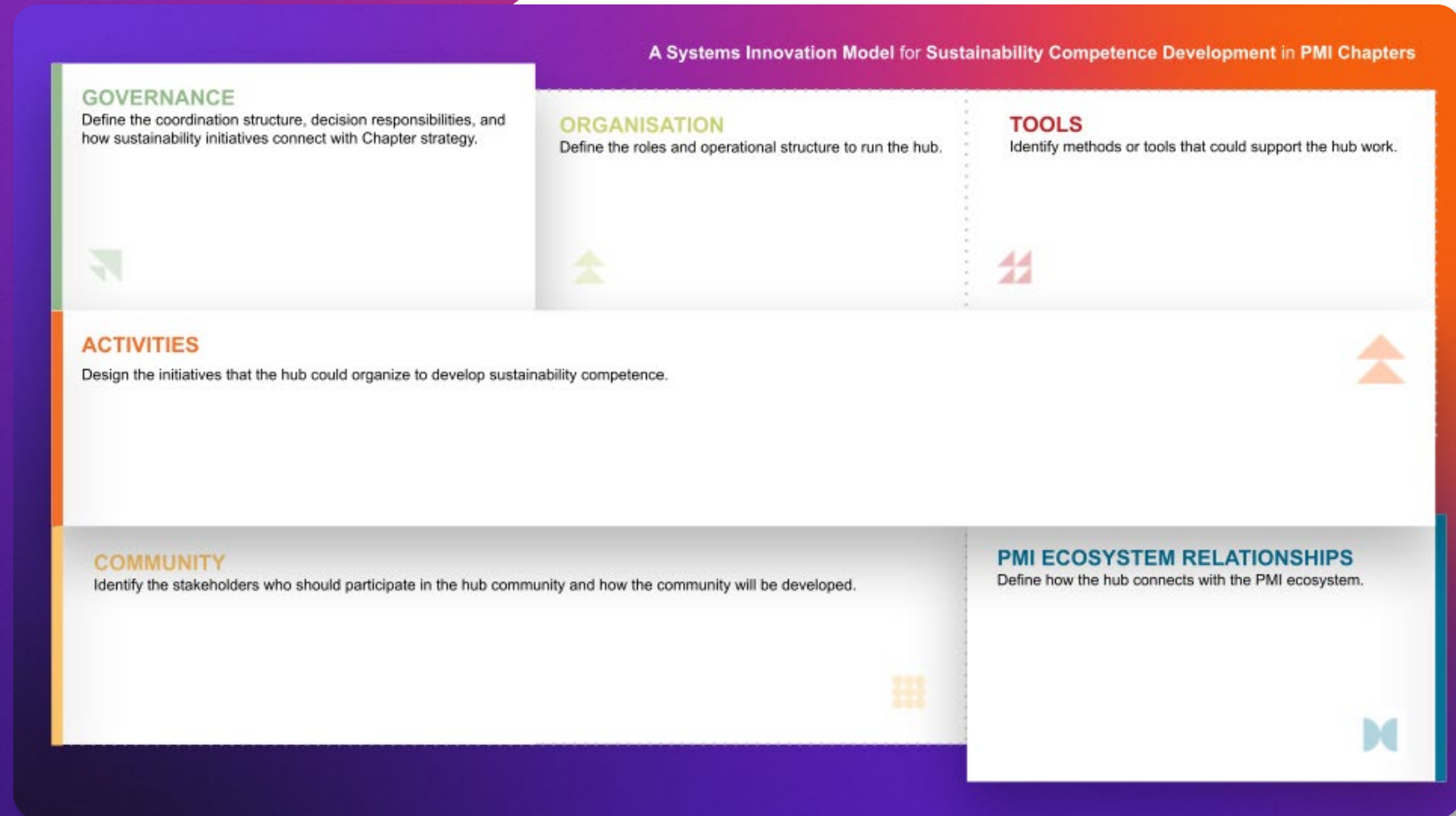


Strategic Collaboration: Partner with other hubs to pool resources for research and other joint initiatives (e.g., ecosystem-wide awareness campaigns)



Knowledge Sharing: Use a centralized information hub to share best practices and shared educational resources.

Applying the Model



Key Takeaways

- Chapters can serve as **managing centers for local ecosystems**, orchestrating diverse expertise to drive the future of sustainable project management.
- Through permanent **co-creation structures**, we can help our communities develop the skills needed for more sustainable societies and economies.

Thank you!

Let's continue the conversation!



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Thank You!

Questions?