

Organisational Sustainability

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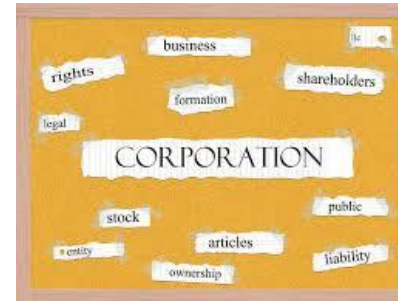
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Sustainability

Dimensions

Economic
Environmental
Social
Time

Actors



Organisations (1)

- An **integral part** of modern societies (Scott & Davis, 2015)
- Sub-systems of a larger **environmental system** (L. W. Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975; Stacey, 1993), which have boundaries between the **inside** and the **outside** (Scott & Davis, 2015)
- They are complex social systems with sets of inter-related units engaged in joint problem-solving to **accomplish a goal or objective** (Jones, 2013; Porter, Lawler, Edward E, & Hackman, 1975; Rogers, 1962), and to **create value and acceptable outcomes for stakeholders** (Jones, 2013)



Organisations (2)

- Organisations have **differentiated functions** (the hierarchy and labour division) (Porter et al., 1975)
- An organisation is **affected** by forces and conditions that operate **beyond its boundaries**, which affect its ability to acquire and use resources **to create value** (Jones, 2013)



Organisations as systems

- Organisations are **semi-open** (or semi-closed) systems, where some resources **enter** (e.g. employees when they arrive to work, raw materials, and energy); some resources **exit** (e.g. emissions and effluents, waste energy, products and by-products, employees when their work is finished); and some **stay in the system** (e.g. patents, organisation secrets, intellectual property, and organisational routines and behaviours) (Lozano, 2006a)

Types of organisations

Civil Society

- Education
- NGOs
- Religious
- Institutional

Corporations

- Micro
- SMEs
- Large
- MNEs and TNCs

Public Sector (Government)

- Local
- Regional
- Federal/national

Hybrid

- Government owned companies

Higher Education Institutions (1)

- For centuries, universities have been at the forefront in **creating and breaking paradigms**, and educating the future decision-makers, entrepreneurs, and leaders (Cortese, 2003; Elton, 2003; Lozano, 2006a)
- In the last years there have been a number of universities **engaging with SD** (Boks & Diehl, 2006; Wemmenhove & de Groot, 2001)



Examples of Higher Education Institutions for Sustainability

- Involvement in **regional development** (Dlouhá, et al., 2013)
- **Curricula** development (Pappas, 2014)
- Reduction of **greenhouse gas** emissions (Klein-Banai & Theis, 2013)
- **Leaders'** perceptions of the topic (Lee, Barker, & Mouasher, 2013)
- Sustainability **reports** of HEIs (Ceulemans, et al. 2015)





Corporations

- Traditionally, corporations **produce and sell** goods and services for a profit (C.E.C., 2002; Demsetz, 1988; Freeman, 1984)
- Their main objective is to generate a satisfactory level of **profit for their legal owners** (Argadoña, 1998; Boatright, 1996; Friedman, 1970; Lee, 2005; Radin, 1932); however, they are subjected to **external concerns and costs** (see DeSimone & Popoff, 2000 for examples)
- Other terms used to refer to corporations include firms, enterprises, businesses, and companies



Voluntary corporate initiatives

- *Cleaner Production*
- *Corporate Citizenship*
- *Corporate Social Responsibility*
- *Design for Environment*
- *Eco-efficiency*
- *Eco-labelling*
- *Environmental Management Systems*
- *Environmental and Social Accounting*
- *Factor X*
- *Green Chemistry*
- *Industrial Ecology*
- *Life Cycle Assessment*
- *Sustainable Livelihoods*
- *Sustainability Reporting*
- *The Natural Step*
- *Triple Bottom Line*



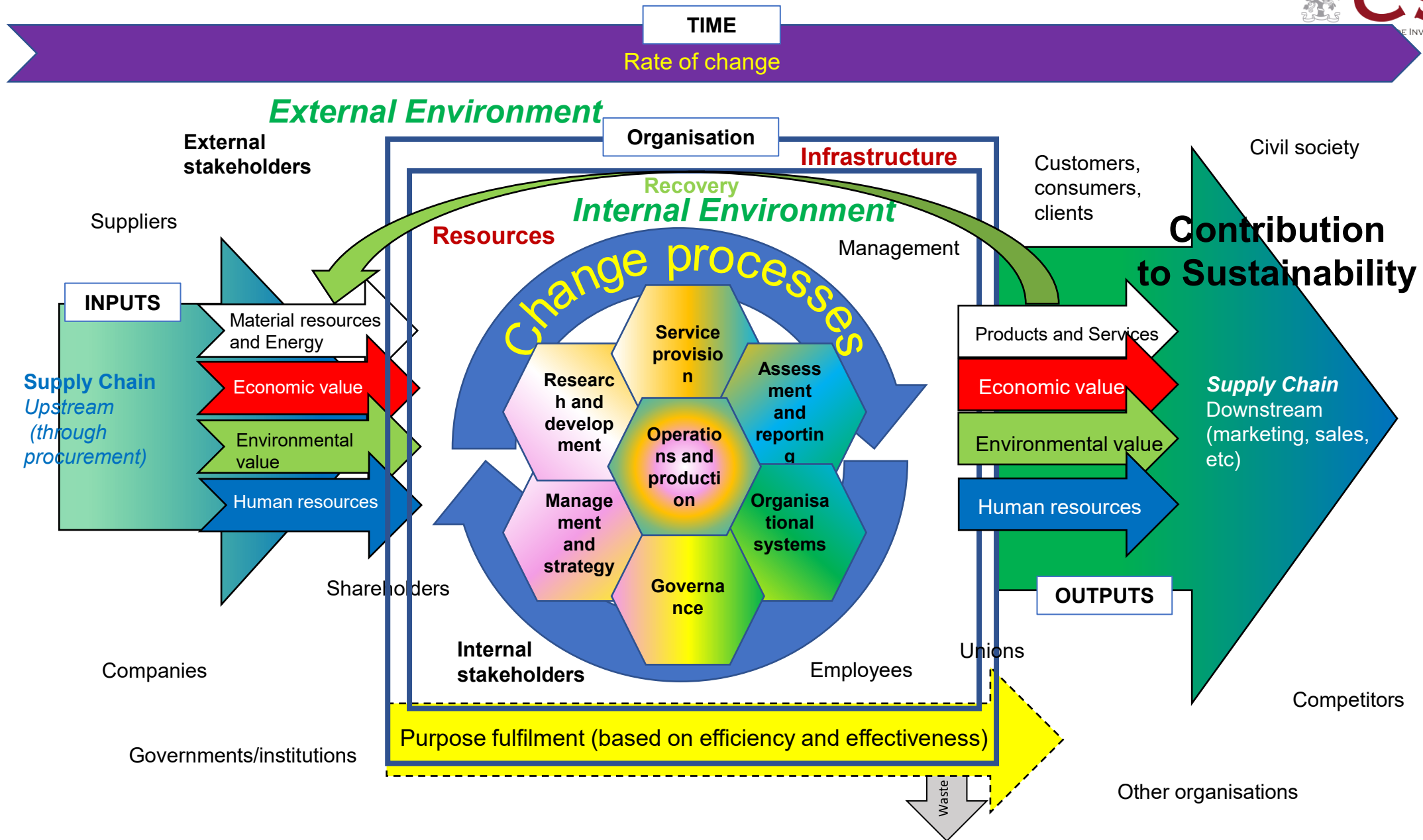
Public sector organisations (PSOs)

- Any organisation that is under the **Government control** that develop public goods or services (OECD, 2015)
- **Major employers**, providers of services and consumers of resources (GRI, 2005) associated to significant aspects and impacts in the sustainability of the organisation
- It represents an important part of international economic activities (Ball & Grubnic, 2007; Walker & Brammer, 2012), accounting for about **20% of Gross Domestic Product** (Flynn, 2012)



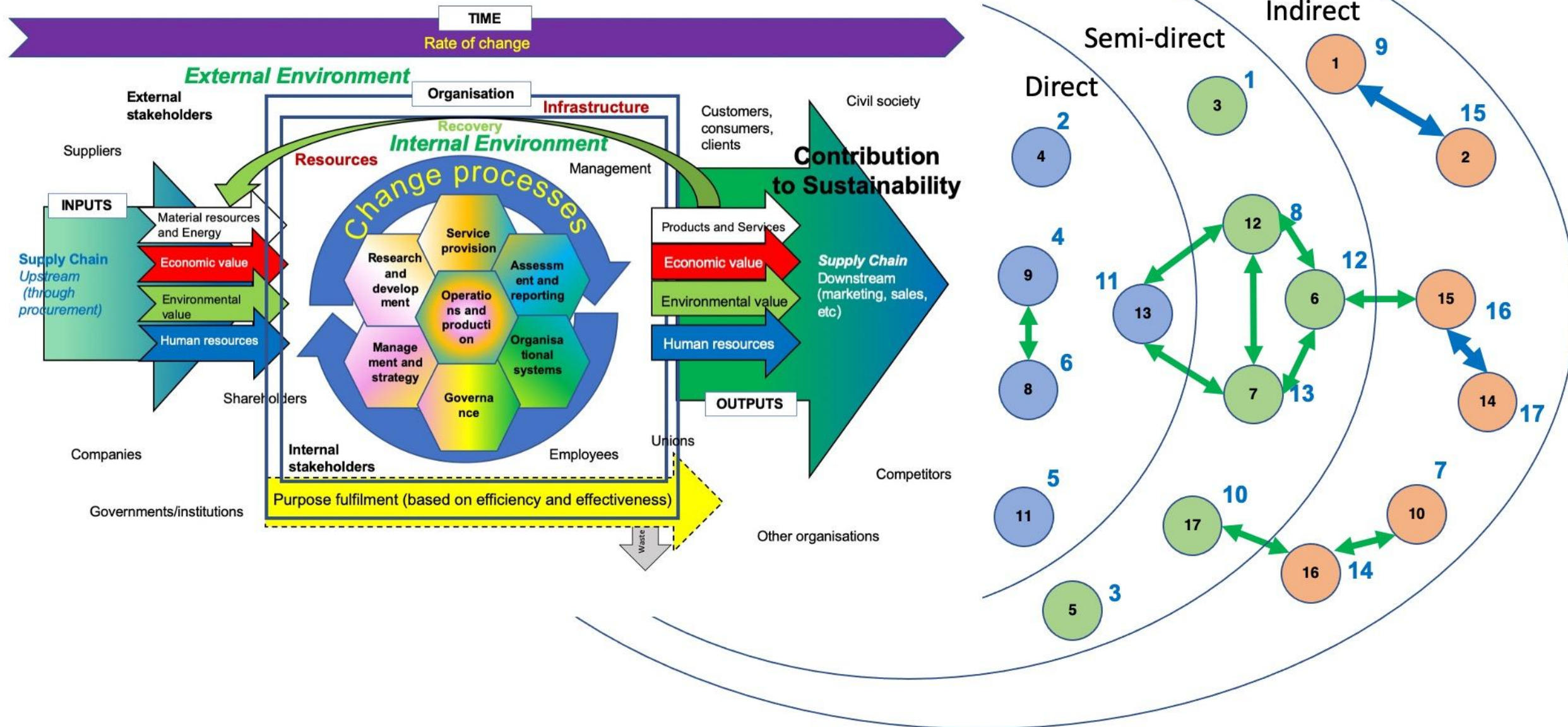
Examples of contribution to sustainability

- Demand for sustainable products and services can be **promoted** (Parikka-Alhola, 2008; Walker and Brammer, 2012), set a **trend** for other organisations (Day, 2005), and **enlarge** the market for sustainable products or services (Uyarra et al., 2014)
- **Sustainability reports** of PSOs (Domingues, et al. 2016)
- **Stakeholder** engagement in PSOs (Domingues et al. 2017)



(Lozano, 2018)

Impact on the SDGs



(Lozano, R., & Barreiro-Gen, M., 2022)

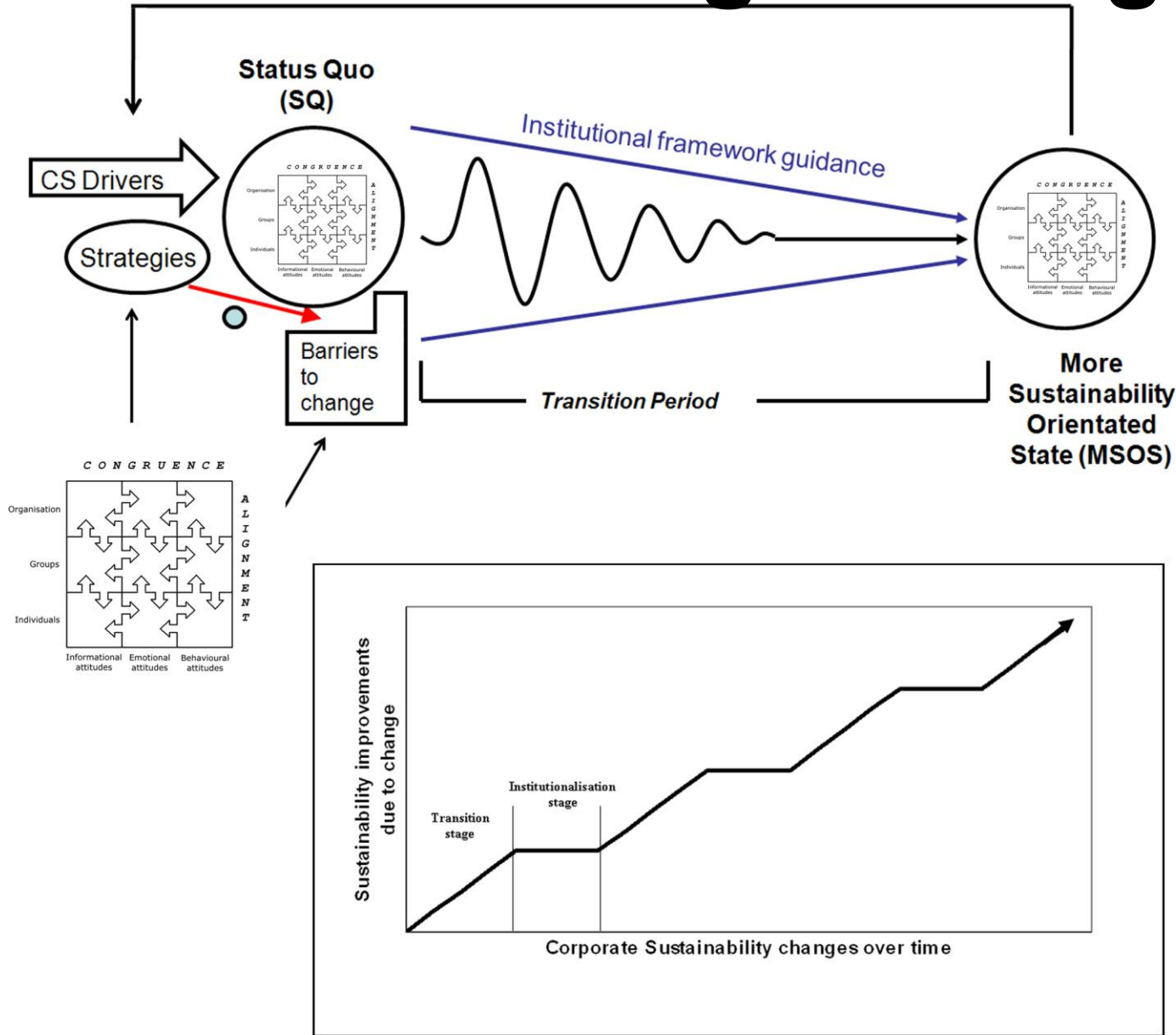
Assessment and reporting

- Voluntary activity with the following purposes:
 1. **Assess** the current state of an organisation's progress towards sustainability, and
 2. **Communicate** the efforts and progress to stakeholders (Dalal-Clayton & Bass, 2002; GRI, 2011)
 3. Assess sustainability **performance** over time
 4. **Benchmark** against other organisations
 5. **Demonstrate** how the organisation influences and is influenced stakeholders (Daub, 2007; GRI, 2011)
 6. Serve as a **catalyst** and base for **planning changes** for sustainability (Adams & McNicholas, 2007; Doppelt, 2003; Lozano, 2013)

Main sustainability assessment guidelines

- ISO 14000 series (focusses on environmental impact)
- SA 8000 (focusses on human and labour rights)
- GRI guidelines (focusses on economic, environmental, and social dimensions)

Organisational change management



(Lozano, 2012)

Effects of the above model over time

More and more organisations are
realising that they can, and have
the obligation to contribute to
**making societies more
sustainable**

Organisations are not islands, they
must **address economic,**
environmental, and **social** issues **of**
today and the future, in holistic,
systemic, and transdisciplinary ways

- How can Research Centres better contribute to sustainability?
- How should sustainability be implemented in RCs?
- What can RCs learn from other organisations' efforts towards sustainability?
- What can RCs teach other organisations regarding their contribution to sustainability?

Thank you!

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