



University of St.Gallen



## **HSG Sustainability Strategy and Teaching Transformation**

### **Tag der Lehre, 27 May 2021**

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*“From insight  
to impact”* 

1

**Background: why develop a sustainability strategy for the HSG?**

2

**The new HSG (environmental) sustainability strategy (2021-2025)**

3

**Embedding sustainability into existing programmes and courses**

4

**Interactive workshop: your input on embedding sustainability in teaching**



- In your opinion, how well integrated is sustainability right now at the HSG (1-10 scale)?

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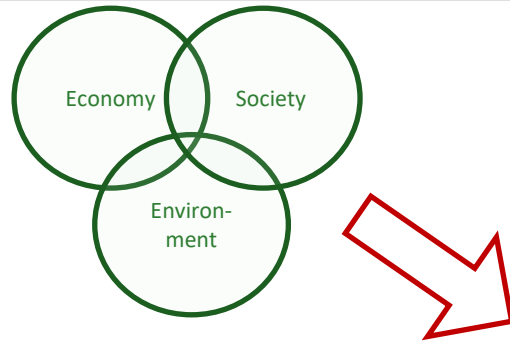
**Background: why develop a sustainability  
strategy for the HSG?**

- Late 2020 – request from President Bernhard Ehrenzeller to design a 5-year environmental sustainability strategy for the HSG
  - Also to be embedded in the overarching HSG strategy
- Feb. 2021 – first draft of strategy presented at Rektoratsausschuss
  - Bilateral discussions with various members of the President's board
- Apr. 2021 – final draft of strategy presented to Rektorat
  - Approved
- Next phase
  - Communication & implementation

## Weak Sustainability

A triple bottom line 'accounting' that **trades off** environmental and social goals **against** economic ones.

(Ehrenfeld, 2018)



## Strong Sustainability

The economy is **nested within** and **depends on** society and the natural environment.

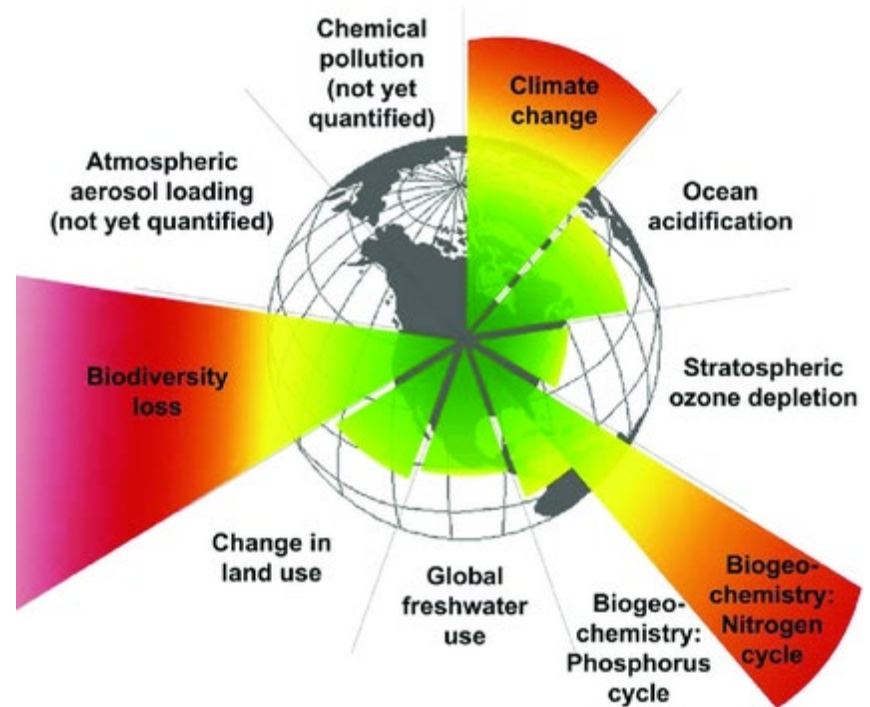
(Giddins, Hopwood & O'Brien, 2002)



# Identifying the focus of the strategy: three key **environmental** challenges that can only be solved if business takes action

Three environmental planetary boundaries have been crossed:

1. Climate change
2. Biodiversity loss
3. Material and chemical flows



# At the same time, sustainability is centrally intertwined with global mega-trends



## Climate crisis

Energy transition  
Mitigation/adaptation

Block chain (tracing)  
Gamification, modularity



## AI/Smart technology



## Health crisis

Biodiversity loss  
Zoonotic diseases

Climate and sust'y action  
Consumer preferences



## Social movements



## Geopolitical tensions & globalization

Sust. supply chains  
Paris Agreement

Smart Cities  
Mobility; Buildings



## Urbanization



# Current corporate responses to solving the key environmental sustainability challenges

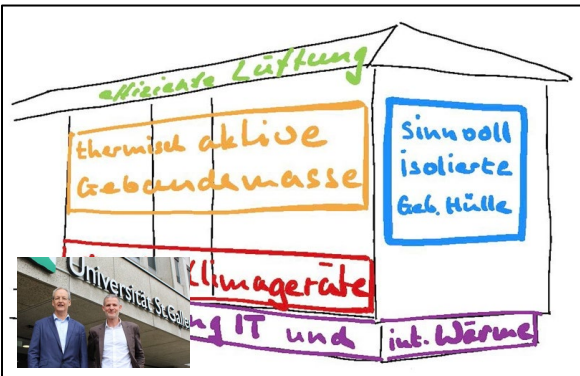
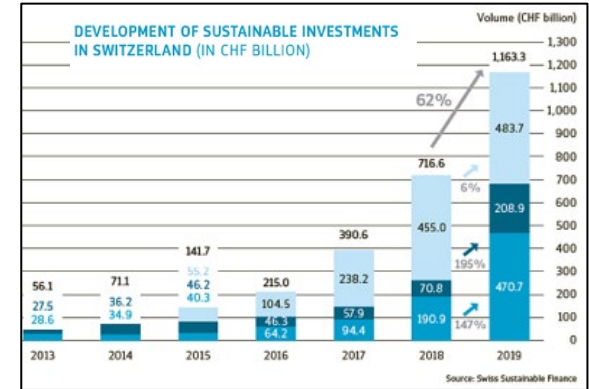
## BUSINESS MODEL TRANSFORMATION AND INNOVATION



## ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH REPORTING



## RISK AND INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT



**SCIENCE BASED TARGETS**  
 DRIVING AMBITIOUS CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION

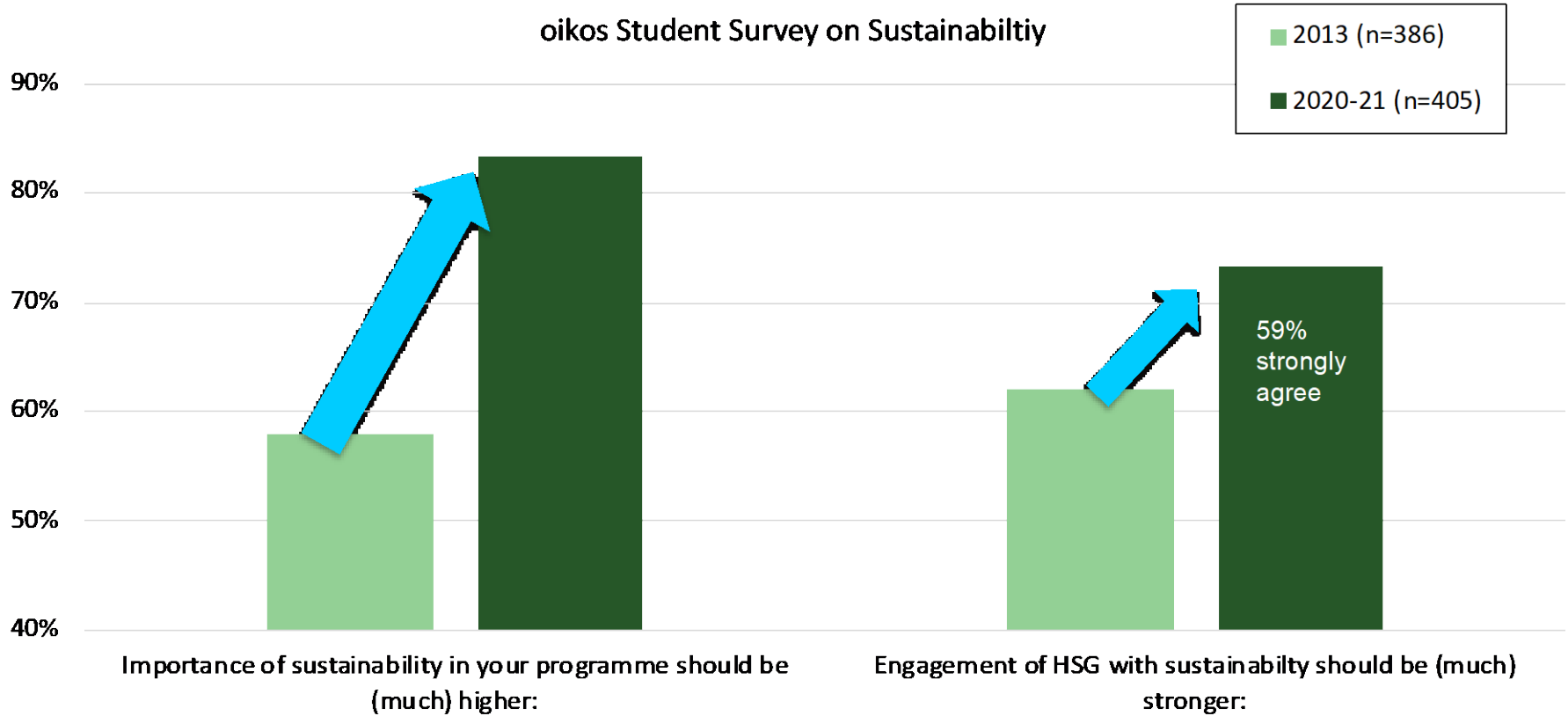


**SPATIAL FINANCE INITIATIVE**



# HSG students are well-aware of these trends and are asking for sustainability to be embedded in the curriculum

oikos Student Survey on Sustainability



53%

want more sustainability content

What should the university “**continue**” or “**start**” doing:

- Create new sustainability programmes and courses
- Teach alternative business models like circular economy and sustainable investment
- Make sustainability mandatory in teaching
- Praxis oriented sustainability workshops

36%

lament that teaching methods and content are outdated

What should the university “**stop**” doing:

- Treating sustainability as a separate topic
- Focusing on ‘business as usual’ and sustainability as a disclaimer
- Focus on maximizing profit as sole purpose of business
- Encouraging values that are not beneficial to future generations

# HSG is facing increasing external pressure to embed sustainability into their teaching and research

## RANKING AND RATING AGENCIES



Logos of ranking and rating agencies: aaq+ (swiss agency of accreditation and quality assurance), FT (Financial Times), THE (Times Higher Education), WWF, and POSITIVE IMPACT RATING FOR BUSINESS SCHOOLS.

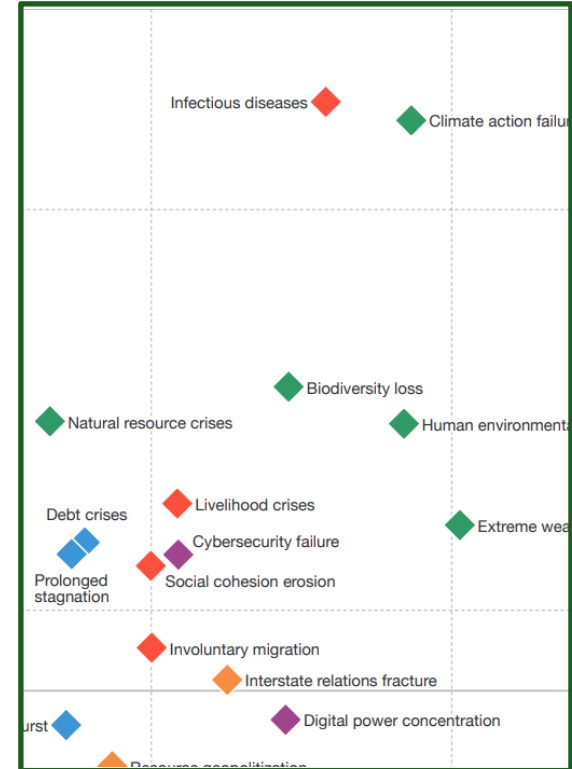
## LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES



Logos of local and international communities: swissuniversities and Kanton St.Gallen.

The SDG Accord  
The University and College Sector's Collective Response to the Global Goals

## INDUSTRY



**New addition to Article 2 (Zweckartikel) of the Universitätsgesetz**

Sie setzt sich im Bewusstsein der geschichtlichen Entwicklung mit gegenwärtigen und zukünftigen Herausforderungen von Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft und Staat sowie der internationalen Zusammenarbeit auseinander. Sie fördert das Verantwortungsbewusstsein der Universitätsangehörigen gegenüber Mensch und Umwelt und bereitet die Studierenden darauf vor, in Beruf und Öffentlichkeit nach wissenschaftlichen Methoden und Erkenntnissen sowie nach ethischen und nachhaltigen Grundsätzen zu handeln.

The **SHSG** is working with oikos and EConnect to establish a **Sustainability Charta** for all university student clubs:

- From Insight: “no Planet B”
- To Impact: environmental, social & entrepreneurial
- So far 30 student associations on board (goal = 130); kick off 2 weeks ago

**HSG Vision & Roadmap 2025:**

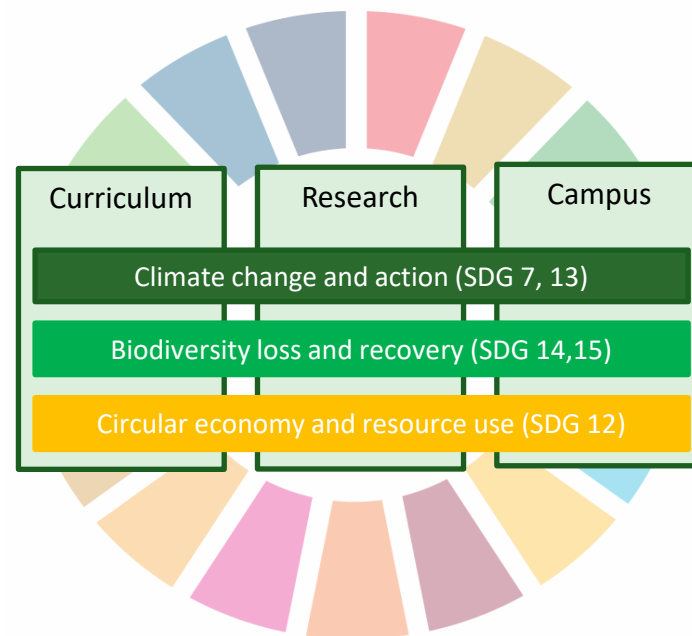
- “We inspire people acting in an ethical and **socially-responsible** manner”
- and we want to: “take up a leadership position in finding solutions to socially-relevant problems”

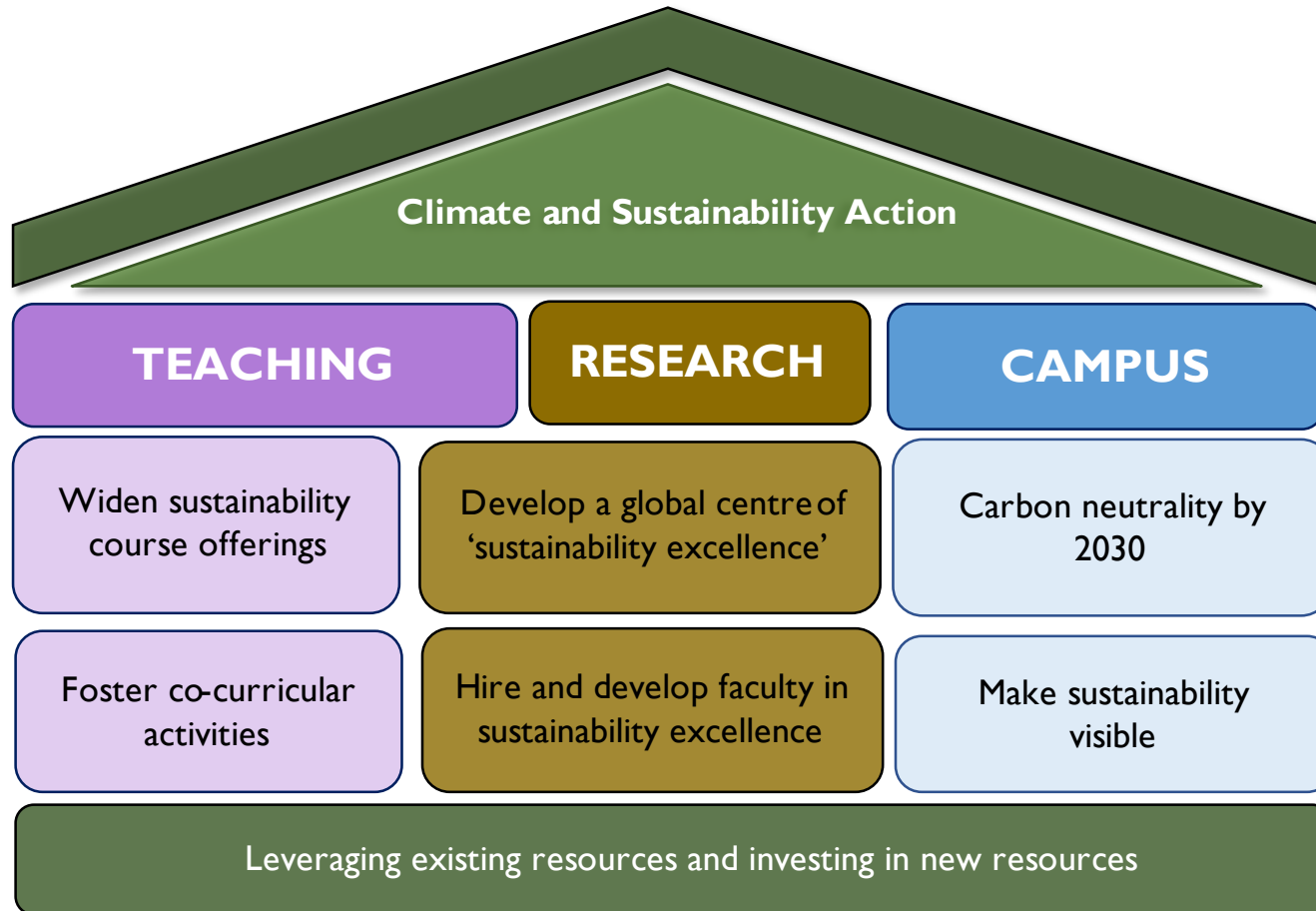
2

**The new HSG (environmental) sustainability  
strategy (2021-2025)**

In order to preserve its competitive and attractive position as a leading business school, the HSG's environmental sustainability strategic goals include:

1. **Preparing our students** to become organizational leaders in a world that must solve severe environmental crises such as climate change and biodiversity loss; and,
2. **Leading by example** and becoming carbon neutral by 2030, in order to mitigate our own environmental footprint.







Area	Goal	New developments and leveraging existing structures
Teaching (curriculum)	1. Widen sustainability course offerings across programmes and levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Embed</b> sustainability within existing programmes and courses</li> <li>• <b>Develop new</b> sustainability courses (esp. Bachelor's)</li> <li>• <b>Support faculty and programme managers to embed sustainability through training</b></li> <li>• Create teaching <b>incentives</b> (awards, etc.)</li> <li>• <b>Collaborate</b> with HDZ and TIL teams</li> </ul>
Teaching (co-curricular)	2. Foster “NextGen Sustainability” co-curricular activities to support student engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a sustainability mentoring programme to connect students to sustainability practitioners</li> <li>• Establish a sustainability careers programme</li> <li>• Establish sustainability campus credit scheme</li> <li>• Collaborate with Studies &amp; Academic Affairs, Career Center and HSG Alumni teams</li> <li>• Co-create with students sustainable campus initiatives, e.g. MaCS programme (see “campus”)</li> </ul>

Area	Goal	New developments and leveraging existing structures
<p><b>Research</b></p>	<p>3. Hire and develop faculty in sustainability excellence</p> <p>4. Develop a global centre of 'sustainability excellence' (stretch goal)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire and develop sustainability expertise across disciplines within the HSG</li> <li>• Build a sustainability research community (events, seminars, prizes/awards, etc.)</li> <li>• Invest in data resources on sustainability to support research</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Campus</b></p>	<p>5. Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030</p> <p>6. Make sustainability visible on campus</p>

3

**Embedding sustainability into existing  
programmes and courses**

- Goals
  - Embed sustainability into existing programmes and courses
    - Bottom-up approach
    - Develop a “culture” of sustainability
    - All levels: Assessment, Bachelor, Master, PhD
    - Across all disciplines
    - Give all students the opportunity to learn about sustainability
  - Create new sustainability courses
    - Especially at the Bachelor’s level
    - Match student demand
    - Prepare students for job market (e.g. sustainable investment, sustainability reporting/accounting, climate risk and insurance, sustainability consulting, etc)

- Collaborate with HDZ and TIL
  - Series of workshops for programme managers and faculty
- Support service at the Delegate R&S team
  - Dedicated “sustainability workshop manager” until 2025
  - Developing content, resources, and methods (e.g. online support platform)
  - Regular follow up events for workshop alumni – build a teaching community
- Overarching goal:
  - Create a ripple effect
  - Sustainability becomes embedded, self-sustaining across programmes and courses

4

**Interactive workshop: your input on embedding  
sustainability in teaching**

1. What are the natural touchpoints for sustainability in your course or programme (i.e. where you can envision sustainability to be embedded), e.g.:

***Please rank according to perceived importance***

- Disciplines: consumer behavior, policy, finance, marketing, .....
- Topics: circular economy, supply chain management, climate action, ...
- Issues: palm oil, plastic, mining, .....
- .....

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1eqF-F5wBaaJfKVOOnM-KB3NIY2hwyG-73evwUOQMeeRI/edit?usp=sharing>

2. How do you envision embedding sustainability into your course or programme, e.g.:

***Please rank according to perceived importance***

- Structure: kick-off week, topic leads take responsibility, ...
- Practical applications : capstone projects, case studies, context/examples in courses, debates, dialogue, panels ...
- Ties to practice: guest speakers, live cases, site visits ...
- Methods: action-based learning, case studies, simulations, model action (e.g. model UNFCCC), field trips ...
- ...

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3. What type of support you would need from us to help you in this process:

***Please rank according to perceived importance***

- Basic content: what is sustainability, resources/reports, trends in sustainability/business, teaching materials ...
- Methods: case studies, simulations, model action (e.g. model UNFCCC), field trips
- Justification/motivation: market information, job/career prospects, .....
- Theories: sustainability management, political science, HRM/OB, social entrepreneurship, etc...
- Data access: MSCI ESG ratings (KLD), RepRisk, Trucost, Sustainalytics ....
- ...

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## **Feedback round – from each group, your most important insights on:**

1. Touchpoints with sustainability
2. How to embed
3. Type of support needed
  
4. In your opinion, where should we start first?
5. What should we keep in mind while we roll this out?

- Set of sustainability communities at HSG
  - Student: EConnect
  - Research: HSG Impact Scholar Community
  - Teaching: in process, as part of these workshops
  
- Contact information
  - Judith Walls: [judith.walls@unisg.ch](mailto:judith.walls@unisg.ch)
  - Jost Hamschmidt: [jost.hamschmidt@unisg.ch](mailto:jost.hamschmidt@unisg.ch)

# THANK YOU



As a leading business university we set global standards for research and teaching by promoting integrative thought, **responsible action** and an entrepreneurial spirit of innovation in business and society.

– *VISION 2025*