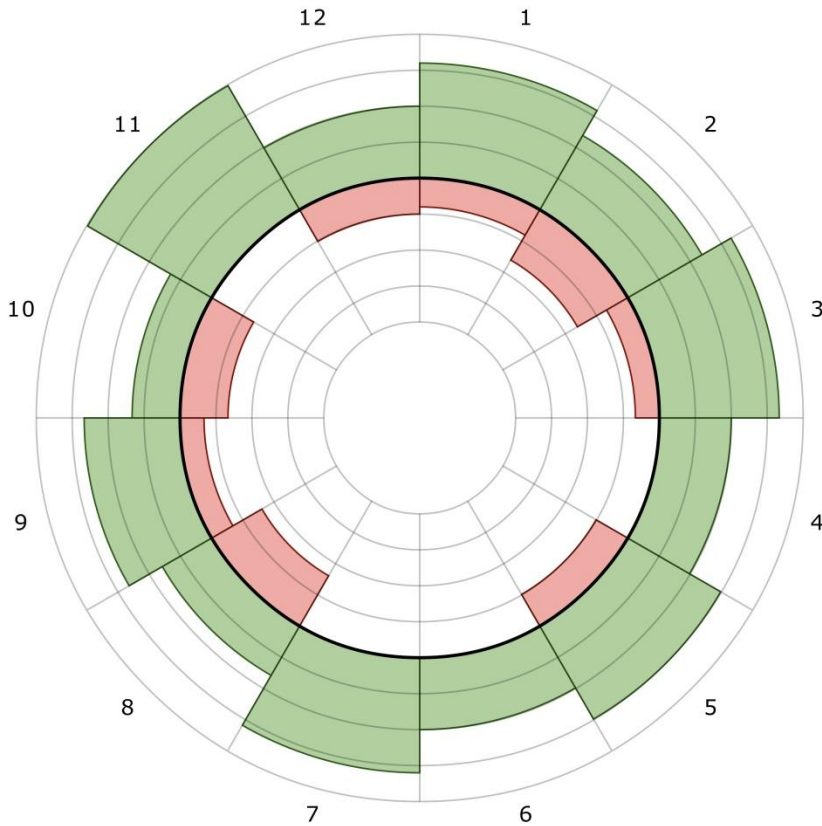Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment

Overcoming Lock-in? Sustainability Check:
a new tool for sustainability assessment early in the planning process

Amar Sjauw En Wa

Jos Arts

IAIA 2015 Florence
Sustainability assessment sessions at IAIA15
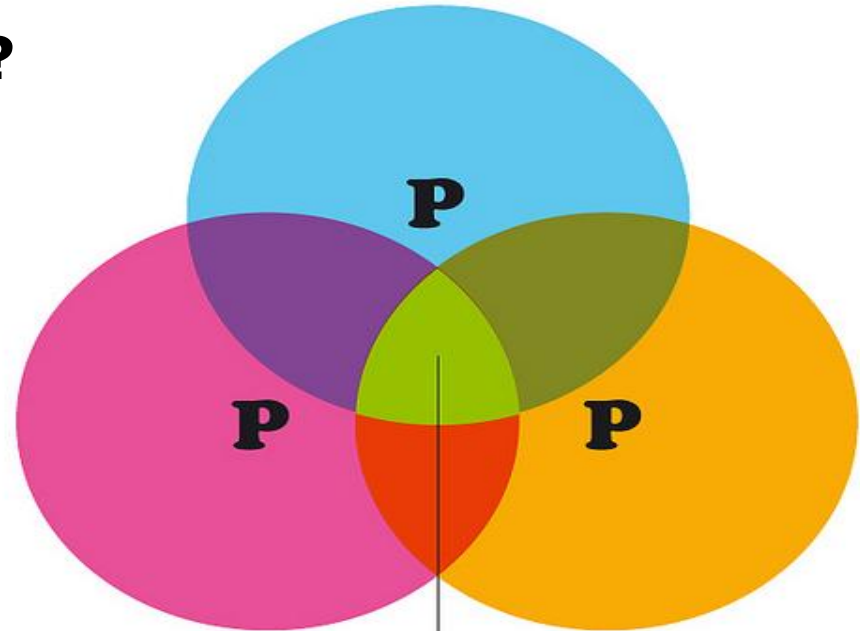
What is sustainability?

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Overcoming Lock-in? Sustainability
Check:

What is sustainability?

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Overcoming Lock-in? Sustainability Check:

What is sustainability?

People, planet and profit.

Sustainability is the connector of any enterprise's bottom line initiatives.

Sustainability

http://sustainablebusinessforum.com/roi-triple-bottom-line
Design by Christian Guthier : http://www.efekt.net

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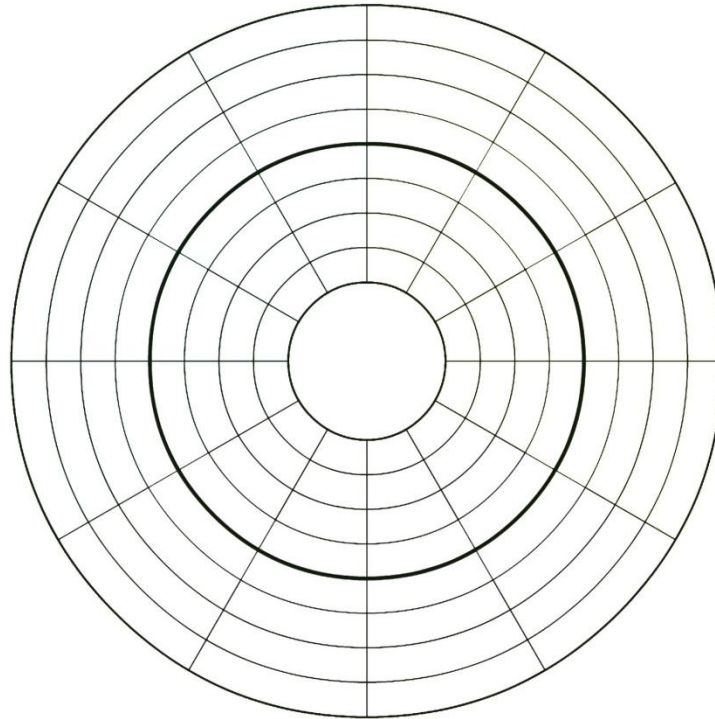
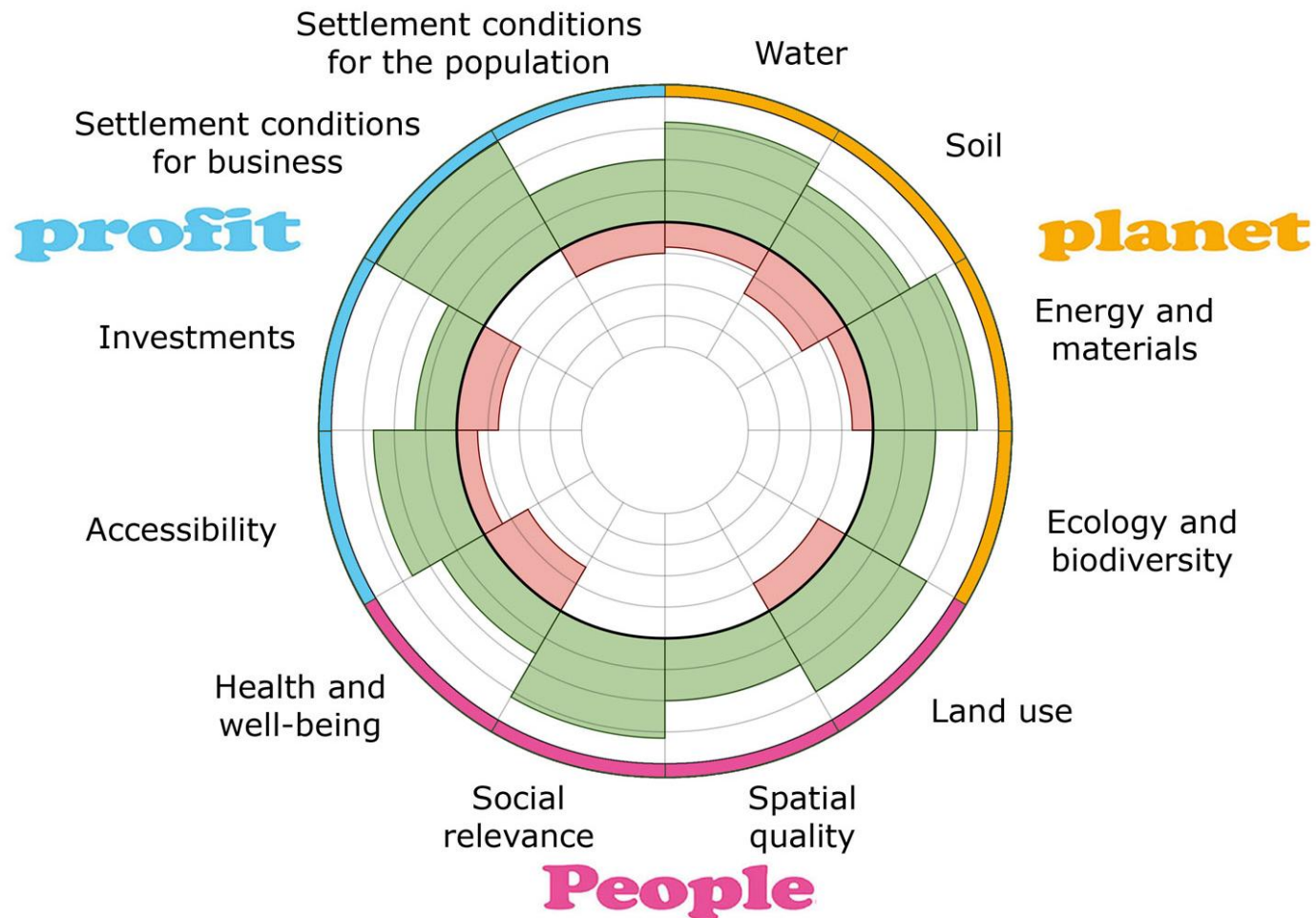# Sustainability Check: Multi facetted nature of sustainability

Sustainability Check: Multi facetted nature of sustainability

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Overcoming Lock-in? Sustainability
Check:
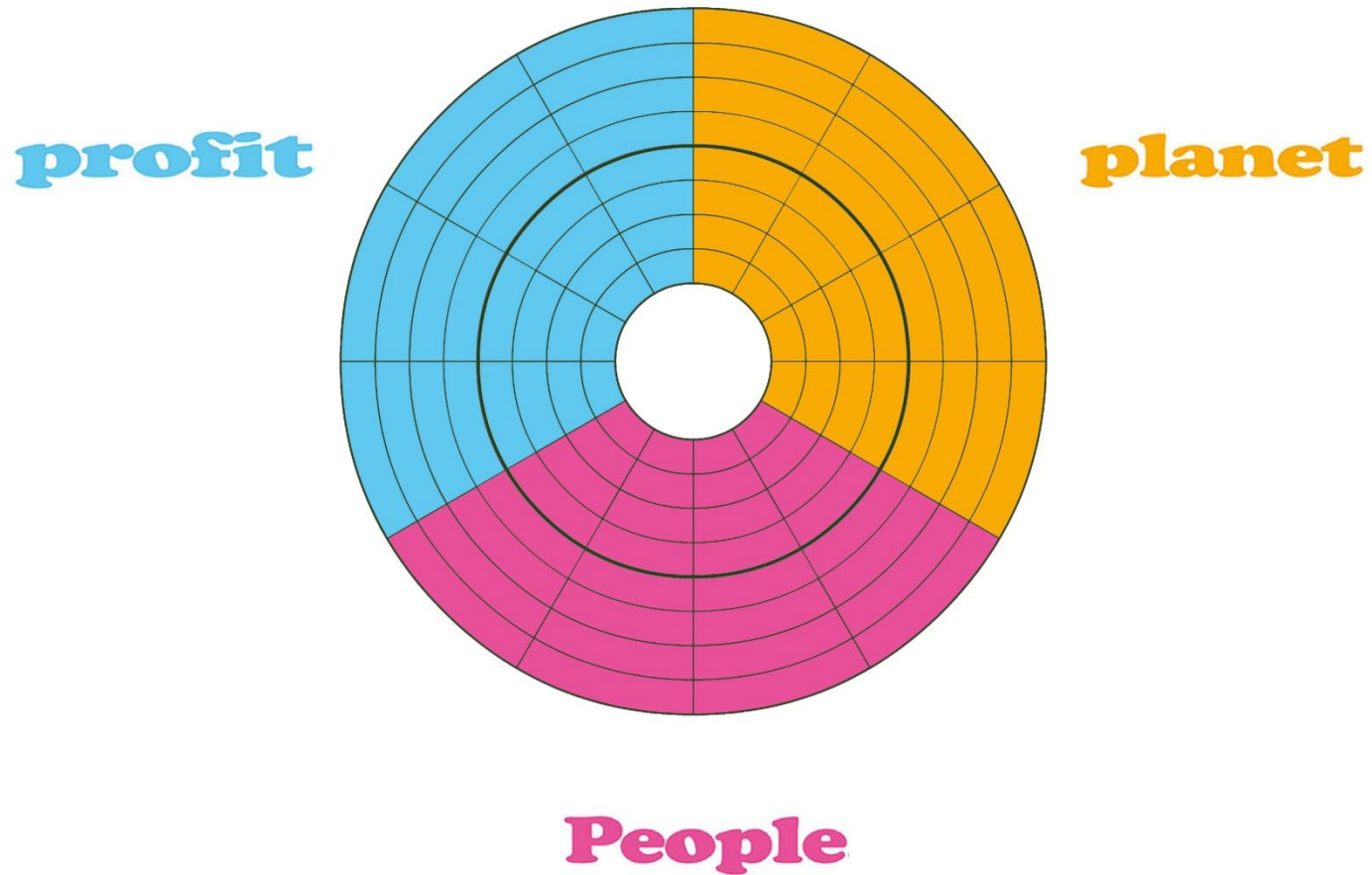
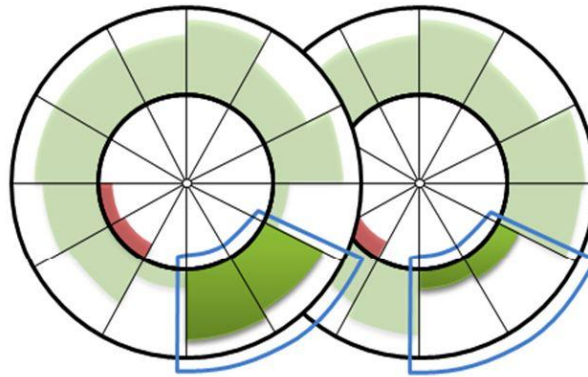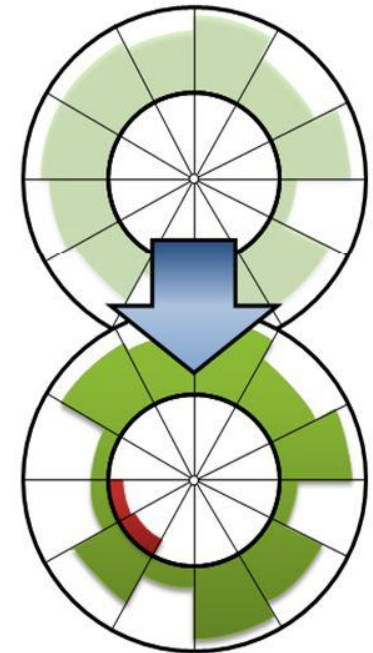# Sustainability Check: Multi facetted nature of sustainability

Different purposes of the Sustainability Check:

a) checklist

b) comparing alternatives

c) consistency between stages

Different tools compared:

	Sustainability Check	Cost Benefit Analysis	Environmental Impact Assessment	BREEAM (infra or area)
Functional scope (content of assessment)	Broad, 12 themes clustered around economic, social and environmental issues	Primarily economic benefits and costs. To certain extent also issues such as energy and martials used, ecology, wellbeing	Primarily environ-mental themes, although often also social and sometimes economic issues included	Broad range of environmental and social themes, minor attention to project finances
Quantitative or qualitative measures	Qualitative indication	Quantitative	Usually primarily quantitative, sometimes also qualitative	Quantitative
Testing and/or generating alternatives	Testing and generation of alternatives	Primarily testing alternatives	Primarily testing alternatives	Primarily testing, more specifically rating. Applicable in early stages for comparing alternatives
Attention to process in assessment	Explicitly developed as a tool for facili-tating discussion and collective decision-making	Until now very little (process influence is currently being researched, see Beukers)	Originally mostly content, but last decade much attention for process	The instrument is a means for discussing sustainability in a common language

Position Sustainability Check:

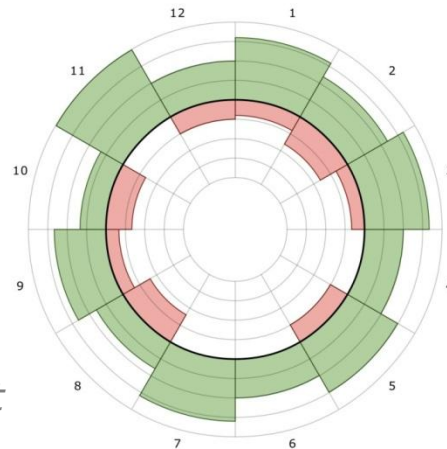A "**hybrid**" instrument between analytical and process tool:

- No quantitative outcome like analytical tools (sCBA or EIA)
- Gives more course, ambition and structure than a process tool

Analytical tool	*Sustainability Check*	*Process tool*

Social Cost-Benefit Analysis

Environmental Impact Assessment

Stakeholder involvement

Participatory instruments

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Check:

Strategic Regional Development Agenda Zeeland *Strategic (SEA) level*

- Describes what 12 themes imply for spatial development.

- Results of the Sustainability Check gave insight in different topics that can have conflicting interests when translated into regional spatial development proposals.

- Helps to show the relationships between different spatial problems or initiatives and between strategic and operational decision-making about project proposals.

Regional development agenda Zeeland
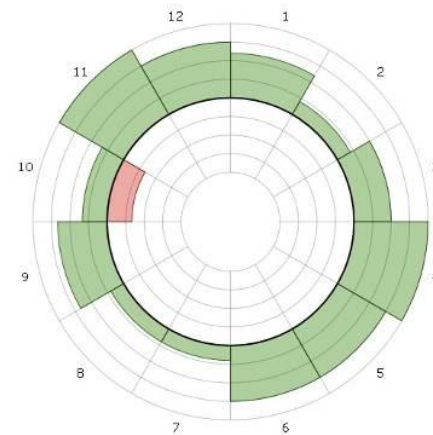
Analysis of regional development agenda

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Check:

N309 't Harde

(sub)regional level

- Alternatives are compared: a route through the city centre and some bypasses around the city.

- At first it seemed that redirecting the traffic out of the town-centre would be the best solution.

- SC made clear thah the traffic that currently goes through the centre is the largest source of income for small and medium businesses.

Current situation and proposed bypass.
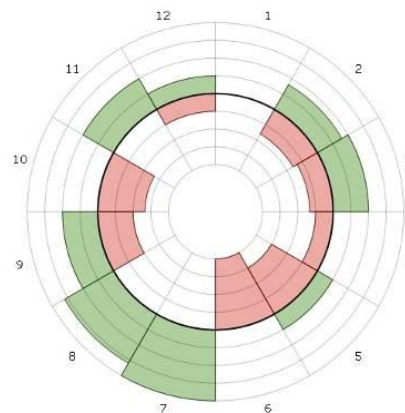
Analysis of bypass proposal

Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment

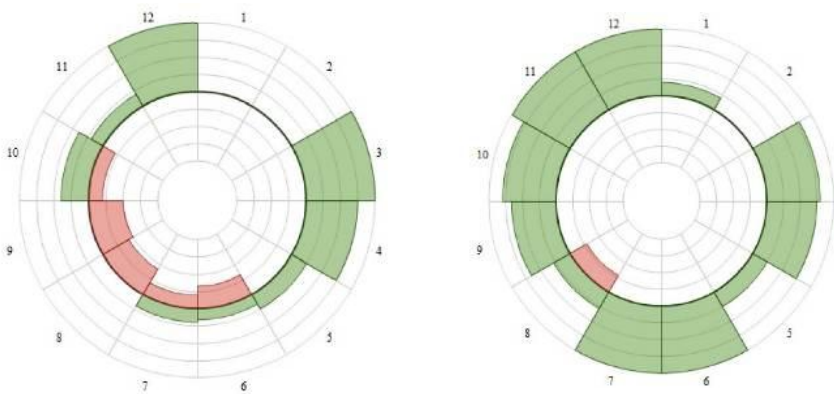Overcoming Lock-in? Sustainability Check:

Gerrit Krol bridges, Groningen   *project/local level*

- The bridge is the town of Groningen's biggest traffic bottleneck.
- Sustainability Check highlighted the different issues making them easier to discuss. This increased our understanding of the project.
- All the parties involved now look at the project with that same understanding

Two different scenarios compared (scope vs ambitions)

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Overcoming Lock-in? Sustainability Check:

Analysis and results

Strength	• Instrument is simple to use • Broadly accepted within NL • Applicable in multiple phases of a project, best applicable at the scoping phase • Shows which stakeholder(s) should be involved • Outcome can be used well for communication	**Weakness**	• Only a first impression on how sustainable a project can be • Outcome based on expertise of participants (selectiveness); lacks quantitative insights • There has to be a development proposal in the area as a starting point • Proves to be difficult to assure the outcome for sustainability in following steps and phases
Opportunity	• Goes beyond silo's; an integrated approach • Much experience has gained with different types of projects and stakeholders • Broadly applied at different scales and projects • Becoming a standard in the Planning Programming Budgeting system for infra ("MIRT")	**Threat**	• Only one of many other instruments • It is used for almost every purpose; also for processes that don't fit the tool • Discussion on sustainability proves to be a stand-alone goal in discussions about project relevance

- Check if various aspects of sustainability are addressed.
- The tool also may help to address conflicting interests or connect common goals in an area.

Conclusion

- Application of the Sustainability Check assumes intrinsically that there is an **ambition** present in the project that goes beyond just meeting legal requirements.

- **Important lessons** are: **start together** at the core of a problem (scoping) and work together to find a sustainable solution. A solid basis for sustainability is not always available: sustainability often has no solid base in the original scope.

- **Smart combinations of the instruments** available for evaluation and assessment (such as the Sustainability Check, CBA, EIA, BREEAM etc) should support the complete cycle of intelligence collection about the problem, collective design of multiple alternatives, choice for an alternative and careful implementation.

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Check: