
Designing a Sustainability Culture Assessment Framework and Intervention Toolbox: A Mixed-Methods Case Study

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Abstract: This paper presents a three-phase, mixed-methods study examining sustainability culture at a travel e-commerce firm operating under the structural tension of selling travel while pursuing environmental responsibility. Phase 1 applied a structured artefact review using the Sustainability Culture Assessment Framework (SCAF), which integrates models from Schein (2010), Cameron and Quinn (2011), and Visser (2011), producing Current Impact Factor (CIF) scores for seven cultural dimensions. Results placed the firm at the Aspirational stage across all dimensions, with the lowest scores in Incentives and Review (1.6-1.9) and Shared Values (1.6-1.7). Phase 2 combined a company-wide survey (n = 51) measuring aspirational enablement demand with eight semi-structured interviews. Survey dimension means ranged from 3.09 to 3.85 on a five-point scale. Interviews identified four themes: a structural business model contradiction, the primacy of senior leadership commitment, a capability gap in role-specific tools, and a preference for intrinsic over formal incentive motivation. Integrated analysis identified a High Willpower, Low Enablement condition. Phase 3 produced an Intervention Toolbox structured around a dual top-down and bottom-up Pincer Strategy with a 90-day implementation plan.

Keywords: sustainability culture; organisational culture; mixed-methods; assessment framework; Tourism Paradox; High Willpower Low Enablement; Pincer Strategy; Visser; Schein; Competing Values Framework

1 Introduction

Sustainability has moved to the centre of corporate governance. The European Union's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (European Commission, 2022) obligates large firms to disclose detailed non-financial data. Institutional investors apply ESG screening criteria routinely. Public expectations about corporate environmental responsibility have intensified. Against this backdrop, a persistent and largely unexplained gap remains: organisations that articulate strong sustainability commitments routinely fail to embed those commitments in the day-to-day behaviour of their workforce (Linnenluecke and Griffiths, 2010). Strategy exists on paper. Action does not follow.

Culture is the primary explanation for this gap. Schein (2010) argues that when formal strategies conflict with deeply held organisational assumptions about what matters and what gets rewarded, the assumptions win. In the sustainability context, the result is what Morsing and Schultz (2006) call performative sustainability: visible campaigns and communications without substantive change to the processes, incentive structures, and governance mechanisms that govern actual behaviour. This paper refers to that pattern as the Promotional Trap.

The focal organisation is a travel e-commerce firm. Its commercial model creates an inherent contradiction: generating revenue depends on facilitating air travel, in direct tension with environmental sustainability goals. We term this the Tourism Paradox (Hall, 2013). The firm had developed a sustainability strategy and launched visible initiatives, yet sustainability had not been culturally embedded in operational decision-making.

The paper reports a three-phase, mixed-methods project. Phase 1 developed and applied the Sustainability Culture Assessment Framework (SCAF), a seven-dimension diagnostic instrument grounded in Schein's three-level culture model, Cameron and Quinn's Competing Values Framework, and Visser's sustainability maturity model. Phase 2 applied a company-wide survey ($n = 51$) and eight semi-structured interviews to measure aspirational demand and uncover the mechanisms behind the baseline diagnosis. Phase 3 translated the findings into a practical Intervention Toolbox. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the literature; Section 3 describes the SCAF; Section 4 presents the research design; Section 5 reports integrated findings; Section 6 presents the Toolbox in full; Section 7 concludes.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Culture and the Sustainability Implementation Gap

Culture is not simply one variable among many in explaining sustainability performance. Linnenluecke and Griffiths (2010) argue it is the primary mechanism through which sustainability strategies either become embedded in routine behaviour or remain peripheral aspirations. Kotter (2012) makes a general version of this argument: formal change programmes consistently underperform because they operate at the surface of culture rather than its deep structure.

Morsing and Schultz (2006) show that organisations investing in sustainability communications without corresponding operational change produce a say-do gap that erodes both internal and external credibility. Escaping the Promotional Trap requires a precise diagnosis of which specific cultural domains constrain change, and interventions that target the structural mechanisms that enable behaviour rather than the motivational

foundations that are often already intact. This is the practical problem that the SCAF and this study address.

2.2 Schein's Three-Level Model of Organisational Culture

Schein's (2010) model remains the most widely applied framework for understanding why organisational culture resists change. It identifies three levels. Artefacts are the visible surface of organisational life: physical layouts, published documents, website language, formal policies, and observable rituals. Espoused Values are what the organisation claims to believe: the content of strategy documents, mission statements, and the declared commitments of senior leaders. Basic Underlying Assumptions are the deepest and least visible layer: taken-for-granted beliefs about what the organisation fundamentally is for, about what success means, and about how decisions should be made. These assumptions are rarely articulated, often cannot be without external prompting, and are highly resistant to change.

The model's central insight for sustainability work is structural: genuine cultural change requires alignment across all three levels. Organisations that invest in artefacts, such as a new sustainability policy or visible green campaign, without addressing the underlying assumptions that continue to privilege short-term commercial performance over environmental criteria, will achieve surface-level compliance at best. The SCAF uses Schein's model as the primary interpretive architecture for both the artefact review and the qualitative interview analysis.

2.3 Cameron and Quinn's Competing Values Framework

Cameron and Quinn (2011) classify organisational cultures along two axes: internal versus external orientation, and flexibility versus stability. The resulting four archetypes, Clan (collaborative), Adhocracy (innovative), Market (competitive), and Hierarchy (controlling), each have distinct values orientations and definitions of effectiveness. In commercially driven firms, a Market-dominant culture frames all proposals through the lens of competitive positioning and financial return. This has a direct practical implication for sustainability: interventions framed as intrinsically valuable for environmental reasons will not penetrate a Market culture. They must be translated into the language of risk reduction, regulatory compliance, operational efficiency, and brand differentiation to achieve traction. The CVF profiling items in the survey confirmed a strong Market orientation in the focal organisation, and this finding shaped the design of the Intervention Toolbox.

2.4 Visser's Sustainability Maturity Model

Visser's (2011) model traces an organisation's development across five stages: Absent, Aspirational, Promotional, Structural, and Integrated. Each stage is characterised by a specific configuration of leadership engagement, process integration, measurement sophistication, and cultural normalisation. The Aspirational stage is marked by genuine enthusiasm and some visible leadership commitment, but without formal process embedding, role-specific accountability, or performance management integration. Reaching the Structural stage requires sustainability criteria to be encoded in procurement, job design, key performance indicators, and governance mechanisms. Visser's model

provides the scoring rubric for the SCAF and the developmental trajectory that the Intervention Toolbox targets.

2.5 Research Gap

No existing framework integrates Schein's depth architecture, the CVF's typological profiling, and Visser's maturity trajectory into a single, scored, multi-dimensional instrument deployable in a live organisational context. Ketprapakorn and Kantabutra (2022) demonstrate that incentive structures and feedback loops are critical to institutionalising sustainability culture, while Assoratgoon and Kantabutra (2023) show that psychological safety and leader modelling are prerequisites for bottom-up sustainability innovation. Neither study provides an integrated diagnostic tool. This is the gap the SCAF addresses.

3 The Sustainability Culture Assessment Framework

3.1 Design Logic

The SCAF was developed in four steps. First, the conceptual architecture of the three theoretical models was reviewed to identify cultural domains most relevant to sustainability integration. Second, these were cross-referenced with empirical literature to identify which had the strongest evidence base. Third, seven dimensions were specified covering the depth of cultural embedding (Schein), the typological orientation of the organisation (CVF), and the developmental trajectory (Visser). Fourth, survey items and artefact coding criteria were written for each dimension, anchored to Visser's five maturity stages Absent (1), Aspirational (2), Promotional (3), Structural (4), and Integrated (5) to enable direct translation into CIF scores.

The behavioural-anchor format, in which respondents select the description that best fits their organisation rather than rating agreement with a positive statement, was chosen to reduce social desirability bias.

3.2 The Seven Dimensions

Table 1 presents the seven SCAF dimensions, their focus areas, theoretical anchors, and key constructs.

Table 1 The Sustainability Culture Assessment Framework: seven dimensions

<i>Dim.</i>	<i>Dimension Name</i>	<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Primary Theoretical Anchor</i>	<i>Key Construct</i>
D1	Leadership Commitment	Sustainability visible in leader actions, strategy, resource allocation	Schein (artefacts, assumptions)	Enacted values
D2	Employee Engagement	Active, empowered participation; psychological safety;	CVF (Clan); Assoratgoon and Kantabutra (2023)	Ownership

		beyond passive awareness		
D3	Knowledge and Skills	Role-specific capability; practical tools and training accessible to all functions	Schein (espoused values)	Capability gap
D4	Daily Work Integration	Sustainability criteria in procurement, approvals, KPIs, and project workflows	Linnenluecke and Griffiths (2010); Visser Structural stage	Operational embedding
D5	Communication and Transparency	Two-way nature, honesty, and internal coherence of sustainability communications	Morsing and Schultz (2006)	Say-do coherence
D6	Incentives and Review	Sustainability in performance management, recognition, and accountability	Ketprapakorn and Kantabutra (2022); CVF (Market)	Reinforcement loops
D7	Shared Values and Purpose	Collective identity; sustainability as core assumption rather than compliance requirement	Schein (underlying assumptions); Visser Integrated stage	Identity coherence

Source: Authors' own compilation. CIF scoring rubric: 1 = Absent, 2 = Aspirational, 3 = Promotional, 4 = Structural, 5 = Integrated (Visser, 2011).

4 Study Design

4.1 Case Context

The focal organisation is a travel e-commerce firm operating through two business entities in Germany. One entity manages package holidays and shared services operations; the second handles flight booking and ticketing. Together they employ approximately 350 people in Germany. The Tourism Paradox is not peripheral at this company: generating commercial revenue requires facilitating air travel, whose environmental footprint stands in direct tension with the firm's stated sustainability goals. This made it a demanding test case for the SCAF and a theoretically generative setting.

At the time of data collection, the firm had published a sustainability strategy, allocated dedicated budget, appointed a sustainability management function, and launched several employee-facing initiatives including a cycling challenge, a waste reduction programme, and an internal sustainability knowledge repository. Leadership communications frequently referenced sustainability. Yet the cultural integration of sustainability into operational processes had not kept pace with these surface-level investments. The organisation requested the assessment precisely because it recognised this gap.

Data collection followed ethical procedures consistent with Leipzig University guidelines. Participation in all phases was voluntary. Survey responses were anonymous.

Interview data were anonymised prior to analysis. The organisation reviewed a draft summary of findings for factual accuracy before the paper was finalised.

4.2 Research Architecture

The study used a sequential mixed-methods design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018) across three phases. Phase 1, conducted primarily through document and artefact review, established the current state CIF baseline. Phase 2 combined a quantitative survey with qualitative interviews, sequenced so that survey patterns could inform interview probing. Phase 3 integrated findings and produced the Intervention Toolbox. Case study methodology was adopted (Yin, 2018) because the research question requires understanding a complex phenomenon within its specific organisational context.

4.3 Phase 1: Artefact Review Protocol

Materials reviewed included: sustainability strategy and policy documents, one year of internal communications, all active job descriptions across functions, the sustainability working group terms of reference, the supplier code of conduct, project approval templates, and publicly available sustainability reporting. Two researchers independently applied the SCAF coding schema to each document against each of the seven dimensions. Inter-rater agreement reached 84%; discrepancies were resolved through structured discussion.

4.4 Phase 2: Survey

A 31-item survey was distributed to employees of both entities via an anonymous online platform over three weeks in July and August 2025. The survey was offered in both English and German. Items were written as aspirational statements measuring the degree to which employees would welcome or value specific structural enablers, using a five-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The design was deliberate: it measured aspirational enablement demand rather than current cultural state, producing both a map of where motivational capital is available and a prioritisation of the structural interventions most likely to activate it. A total of 51 valid responses were received.

Non-response analysis compared early and late respondents on entity affiliation and found no significant distributional differences, suggesting the sample is broadly representative of the workforce sampled. Six additional CVF-derived items profiled the organisation's general cultural orientation. These confirmed a strong Market-dominant culture with secondary Hierarchy elements, and Clan and Adhocracy scores substantially lower.

4.5 Phase 2: Interviews

Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted using purposive sampling to achieve variation across hierarchical level, functional area, and company entity. Participants are identified throughout this paper as Interviewees 1 through 8 (I1-I8) to protect confidentiality. Interviews lasted 22 to 32 minutes each, were conducted in English, and were audio-recorded and transcribed with participant consent. The interview guide was structured around five thematic sections corresponding to the SCAF dimensions, with probing questions designed to surface the underlying assumptions Schein identifies as the deepest cultural layer.

4.6 Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed descriptively. Means, standard deviations, and full Likert frequency distributions were computed for each of the 31 items and for each of the seven dimensions. Interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), producing four themes cross-validated against the SCAF dimensions. Integration followed convergent triangulation (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018): quantitative CIF scores and qualitative themes were placed in a side-by-side matrix and examined systematically for convergence and divergence.

5 Fieldwork and Results

5.1 Phase 1: Artefact Review

Figure 1 visualises the dimensional profiles. The Phase 1 Current Impact Factor (CIF) scores and Expected Impact Factor (EIF) targets for both entities. The EIF reflects the medium-to-long-term aspirational state identified through leadership documentation and sustainability strategy. All CIF scores fall between 1.6 and 2.4, placing both entities in the Absent to Aspirational range across all seven dimensions. Entity B scores marginally higher on Leadership Commitment and Daily Work Integration, reflecting the presence of some structured sustainability roles and formalised operational guidelines. Entity A scores lower on most dimensions, particularly Incentives and Review and Shared Values.

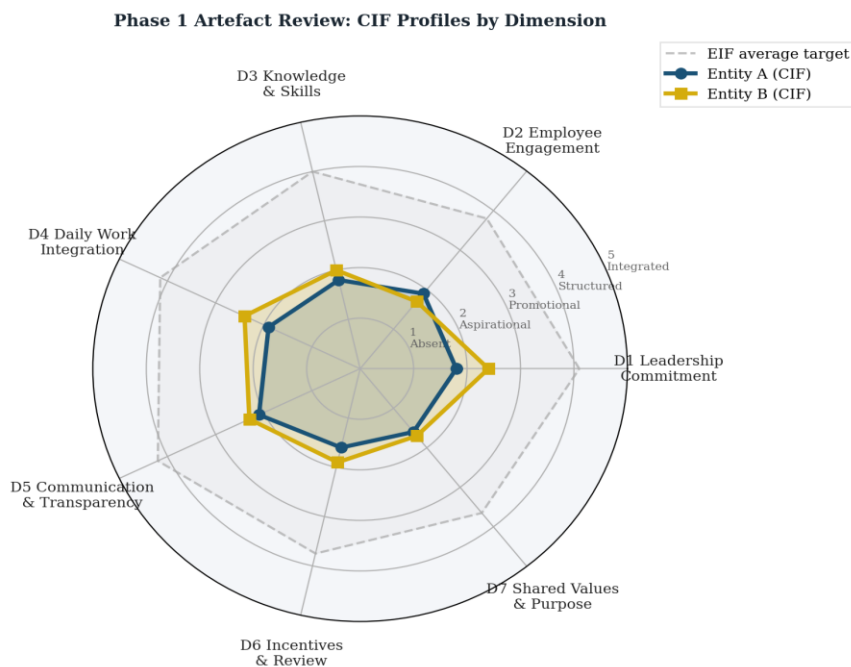


Figure 1 Phase 1 artefact review: CIF profiles by dimension, Entity A and Entity B. Dashed line = combined EIF target. Scale: 1 = Absent, 5 = Integrated.

5.1.1. Key Findings on Phase 1

D1 Leadership Commitment (Entity A: 1.8, Entity B: 2.4). Both entities exhibit a disconnect between strategic intent and operational leadership behaviour. While both have sustainability budgets and dedicated management roles, these structural elements are not reflected in regular governance agendas, leadership KPIs, or visible decision-making. Entity B scores higher owing to some formal sustainability reporting to leadership, but neither entity integrates sustainability into core leadership metrics.

D6 Incentives and Review (Entity A: 1.6, Entity B: 1.9). This is the lowest average dimension across the framework. No formal connection between sustainability performance and employee evaluations, bonuses, or recognition systems exists in either entity. Participation in sustainability initiatives is entirely passion-driven. The combined average CIF of 1.75 places this dimension at the boundary between Absent and Aspirational.

D7 Shared Values and Purpose (Entity A: 1.6, Entity B: 1.7). Despite published strategy documentation, sustainability is perceived across both entities primarily as a compliance requirement rather than a core element of organisational identity. The Visser scoring places both entities at the Absent to Aspirational threshold, meaning sustainability is not yet consistently communicated or operationally embedded at the level of shared basic assumption.

D5 Communication and D4 Daily Work Integration. These dimensions score marginally higher, reflecting the company's investment in sustainability communications and the presence of some structured operational guidelines in one entity. However, as the qualitative findings demonstrate, the Communication score conceals a one-directional, broadcast-only communication pattern that employees experience as disconnected from operational reality.

5.2. Phase 2: Quantitative Findings - Survey Results

5.2.1 Sample Description

Table 2 presents the respondent profile. The tenure profile is notable: 58.8% of respondents have been with the organisation for more than five years. The survey, therefore, primarily captures the aspirational demand of an established, long-tenured workforce who have direct experience of the gap between the company's sustainability promises and its operational behaviour.

Table 2 Survey respondent profile (n = 51)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Entity	Entity A (Travel)	27	52.9%
	Entity B (Flights)	24	47.1%
Top departments	Marketing	9	17.6%
	Customer Service	8	15.7%
	Business Operations and Development	5	9.8%
	Technology and IT	6	11.8%

	Finance, HR, Other	23	45.1%
Tenure	More than 5 years	30	58.8%
	Less than 1 year	7	13.7%
	1-3 years	7	13.7%
	3-5 years	2	3.9%
	Not reported	5	9.8%

Source: Authors' primary data.

5.2.2. Dimension-Level Descriptive Statistics and Item-Level Analysis

Table 3 presents dimension-level CIF scores derived from the survey. These scores measure aspirational enablement demand rather than the current state. Higher scores indicate a stronger desire for structural change in that dimension.

Table 3 Dimension-level descriptive statistics: survey CIF scores (n = 51, scale 1-5)

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean (CIF)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Demand level</i>
D1 Leadership Commitment	51	1.00	5.00	3.85	0.959	0.919	Highest
D5 Communication and Transparency	51	1.00	5.00	3.69	0.905	0.818	High
D7 Shared Values and Purpose	51	1.00	5.00	3.66	0.936	0.877	High
D3 Knowledge and Skills	51	1.00	5.00	3.50	0.925	0.855	Moderate
D4 Daily Work Integration	51	1.00	5.00	3.36	0.896	0.803	Moderate
D2 Employee Engagement	51	1.00	5.00	3.33	0.882	0.778	Moderate
D6 Incentives and Review	51	1.50	4.75	3.09	0.763	0.583	Lowest
Overall mean	51			3.50	0.893		

Source: Authors' primary survey data. Dimension scores are the mean of constituent item scores within each dimension.

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics for all 31 survey items, grouped by dimension. Items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Mean scores and standard deviations are reported to indicate central tendency and response dispersion, respectively. Items marked with * reflect the highest agreement within their dimension; items marked with + reflect the lowest agreement or highest internal division, as indicated by elevated standard deviations. Across dimensions, mean scores cluster between 2.84 and 4.28, suggesting a workforce that broadly supports sustainability in principle but shows measurable resistance at the points where formal accountability

structures are introduced, particularly in Dimension 6 (Incentives and Review) and in items linked to performance management.

Table 4 Item-level descriptive statistics: all 31 survey items (n = 51)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Statement (abbreviated)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
D7: Shared Values and Purpose			
Q7.1	Governance structure for sustainability as core value	3.43	1.09
Q7.2	Communicated values would inspire work integration	3.61	1.21
Q7.3	Purpose beyond profit would motivate me	3.67	1.25
Q7.4	Formal systems to guide sustainable decisions (important)	3.53	1.11
Q7.5 *	Acting sustainably as unquestioned core assumption	4.04	0.99
D1: Leadership Commitment			
Q1.1 *	Leadership demonstrating commitment through visible action	3.94	1.07
Q1.2	Sustainability as part of company vision and strategy	3.92	1.10
Q1.3	Meaningful encouragement from leaders	3.59	1.14
Q1.4 *	Leaders open to env./social impact in key decisions	3.94	1.13
D5: Communication and Transparency			
Q5.1	Monthly progress updates would keep me motivated	3.49	1.07
Q5.2	Clear feedback channels would increase my engagement	3.31	1.04
Q5.3 **	External messages should reflect internal practices	4.28	1.05
D2: Employee Engagement			
Q2.1	Contributing to sustainability goals is personally important	3.41	1.12
Q2.2	Sustainability culture would encourage informal collaboration	3.37	1.14
Q2.3	Freedom and support for daily sustainability initiatives	3.47	0.96
Q2.4 +	Formal sustainability in job description would empower me	3.02	1.20
Q2.5	Clear channels to propose sustainability ideas	3.35	0.99
D3: Knowledge and Skills			
Q3.1 *	Dept-specific training and goals would help	3.82	1.12
Q3.2	Active promotion of sustainability knowledge repository	3.29	1.04
Q3.3	Structured ongoing learning opportunities	3.43	1.07
Q3.4	Time and support to explore sustainability trends	3.41	1.18
Q3.5	Additional guidance would help me do more	3.55	1.09
D4: Daily Work Integration			
Q4.1 *	Defined guidance and tools for sustainability in decisions	3.69	1.08
Q4.2	Structured environmental monitoring tools	3.45	1.18
Q4.3 +	Regular feedback/sustainability in performance reviews	3.02	1.13
Q4.4	Clear sustainability goals in KPIs or dashboards	3.37	1.05
Q4.5	Sustainability embedded in dept. decision-making	3.28	1.01
D6: Incentives and Review			

Q6.1 +	Sustainability in performance feedback would motivate	2.98	1.29
Q6.2 +	Sustainability valued without formal incentives (perception)	2.96	1.01
Q6.3 +	Annual reviews linked to promotion opportunities	2.84	1.14
Q6.4	Monetary bonuses for sustainability would motivate	3.57	1.09

*Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. * = highest-scoring item within dimension. ** = highest-scoring item across all dimensions. + = lowest agreement or highest response division within dimension.*

Three patterns are analytically significant. First, D1 Leadership Commitment is the highest-demand dimension (mean 3.85), with Q1.1 and Q1.4 reaching 75-80% Agree+ — employees want visible leadership action on sustainability decisions, not more verbal commitment. Second, Q5.3 is the single highest-scoring item across the entire survey (mean 4.28, 84% Agree+): employees near-unanimously agreed that external sustainability messaging should reflect actual internal practices, naming the say-do gap in their own terms. Third, D6 Incentives and Review is the most divided dimension (mean 3.09), with Q6.3, sustainability linked to annual reviews, producing the lowest item mean in the survey (2.84, 35% Disagree). The interview data explain why.

5.3 Phase 2: Qualitative Findings - Interview Analysis

Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted. Participants were selected across hierarchical level, functional area, and company entity. Table 5 presents the profile. All identifying information beyond role level has been removed to protect confidentiality. Participants are referred to as I1 through I8 throughout.

Table 5 Interview participant profile (n = 8)

ID	Entity	Functional Area	Hierarchical Level	Duration (mins)
I1	Entity A	Technology / Projects	Senior	27
I2	Entity B	Technology / Development	Middle	24
I3	Entity A	Marketing	Middle	22
I4	Entity A	Operations / Management	Senior	31
I5	Entity B	Operations	Middle	28
I6	Entity A	HR / People and Culture	Middle	26
I7	Entity B	Commercial / Sales	Operational	23
I8	Entity A	Leadership / Management	Senior	32

Source: Authors' primary data. All identifying information has been anonymised.

5.3.1 Theme 1: The Business Model Contradiction

The most immediate and consistent theme across all eight interviews was a deep-seated dissonance between the organisation's commercial identity and its sustainability goals. Every interviewee referenced the tension between selling travel and promoting environmental responsibility; all eight did so without prompting, and all did so in their

opening response to the first interview question. The responses ranged from resigned pragmatism to active frustration.

"It is a necessity for survival, not an option. But we need to do more. It requires caring and leadership from the top." (I1)

"An absolute nightmare. There is a mismatch between what we sell and what personal sustainability choices look like. I feel handicapped in my role." (I2)

"The primary barrier is the conflict with short-term revenue. The whole company must commit to the long-term good, not just the sustainability team." (I3)

This theme maps directly to D7 (Shared Values and Purpose) and explains the ambivalence in survey items Q7.1 through Q7.4. The strong result on Q7.5, acting sustainably as an unquestioned core assumption, reflects genuine personal aspiration. But it coexists with substantial uncertainty about whether a travel-selling firm can ever credibly inhabit that aspiration. The dissonance is not resolved by better communications. It requires an honest internal acknowledgment of the contradiction and a credible narrative about what the organisation can realistically commit to changing.

Several interviewees also raised what one described as a disconnect between external, ad-hoc sustainability activities and the core business operations. Visible events such as cycling challenges and community activities were appreciated but seen as unrelated to the firm's environmental footprint.

"The disconnect between these external activities and the core business is the problem. I ask myself: what does that have to do with our sustainability footprint?" (I2)

5.3.2 Theme 2: The Primacy of Senior Leadership Commitment

Every interviewee identified senior leadership commitment as the single most important prerequisite for whether sustainability would be taken seriously. This was not framed as desirable. It was framed as necessary: the condition without which all other efforts are perceived as performative.

"It should come from the top management, the directors, talking to the whole team. Then team leads make it specific for their teams." (I1)

"If C-level says no budget, it is dead in the water." (I4)

"C-level makes the final decision on budget and profit. They need a change of mindset beyond monetary constraints." (I2)

This theme explains the specific composition of D1's survey demand. The high-agreement items, Q1.1 and Q1.4, concern visible leadership behaviour and openness in key business decisions. The lower-agreement item, Q1.3, concerns communication and encouragement. Employees have heard the verbal commitments. What they want is evidence that those commitments have shaped actual decisions about budget, supplier choice, or product design.

The theme also explains the D6 survey results. The strong resistance to linking sustainability to HR review systems (Q6.3: 35% Disagree) is not indifference to accountability. It reflects a specific logic: employees do not trust HR-integrated sustainability accountability systems because the company's foundational commitment is

not yet secure. Adding individual accountability for sustainability before that foundation exists feels like adding responsibility without organisational backing.

"When I do not perceive that sustainability is genuinely valued by the company, I default to the only motivation language that gets taken seriously here: money."
(I2)

5.3.3 Theme 3: The Capability Gap

Every interviewee confirmed genuine personal motivation to act on sustainability in their professional roles. The frustration was not motivational. It was consistently structural: the absence of role-specific tools, guidance, and formal authorisation to act. This is the qualitative foundation for the High Willpower, Low Enablement diagnosis.

"The skills exist in the teams. The problem is not a lack of skills. It is a lack of permission and mandate to use them." **(I2)**

"I need to go beyond basics. I need a mindset shift and skills for deep integration, not just what goes in the recycling bin." **(I1)**

"I need a tool to measure the impact of a marketing campaign in terms of CO2, not just sales. How do I compare two options without that?" **(I3)**

The specificity of what interviewees requested is analytically significant. They were not asking for more general sustainability awareness training. They asked for role-specific checklists, CO2 measurement frameworks applicable to their function, project acceptance criteria that include sustainability questions, and tools for evaluating supplier environmental performance. These are operational enablers, not motivational interventions. This is consistent with the survey finding that Q3.1 (department-specific training and goals) was the highest item in D3 (mean 3.82, 73% Agree+) and Q4.1 (defined guidance and tools) was the highest in D4 (3.69, 71% Agree+).

"A checklist of questions to ask during project development: Is this consuming more data? Could it be optimised for energy? That is what I need." **(I1)**

"The project acceptance criteria, defined by project managers from the top, would force consideration. Otherwise it stays optional forever." **(I2)**

5.3.4 Theme 4: Intrinsic over Formal Motivation

The fourth theme concerns how employees want to be motivated. The survey's D6 finding showed strong resistance to HR-integrated incentives (Q6.3: mean 2.84) alongside relatively stronger support for monetary bonuses (Q6.4: mean 3.57). The interviews explain this not as a straightforward preference for money, but as a consequence of the value vacuum identified in Theme 2.

"The motivation comes from genuine, aspirational leadership that frames sustainability as the only way forward. Not from a bonus." **(I1)**

"Making sustainability part of the high-level strategy and giving it a real budget, that proves it is important. That is what motivates people." **(I4)**

"More freedom to try things and to not be penalised if you spend time on this rather than your immediate deliverable." **(I2)**

When employees perceive that sustainability is not genuinely valued at the organisational level, they default to the only reward language that is treated as non-negotiable: financial compensation. This is a rational response to a perceived value vacuum, not an expression of their actual motivational preferences. The interview data consistently suggest that credible C-level commitment would shift the motivational calculus: intrinsic, collective motivation becomes viable once the foundational commitment is established.

A secondary finding within this theme was a clear rejection of traditional classroom-style training formats. Multiple interviewees requested short, engaging, and gamified learning: quizzes, scenario exercises, and experiential formats tied to their specific roles. This finding shapes the design of Intervention I8 in the Toolbox.

5.4 Integrated Analysis

Table 6 presents the convergent triangulation of findings across all three data sources.

Table 6 Triangulation matrix: Phase 1 artefact review and Phase 2: survey and interview findings by SCAF dimension

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Phase 1 CIF</i>	<i>Survey Mean</i>	<i>Key Survey Pattern</i>	<i>Interview Theme(s)</i>
D1 Leadership	2.10	3.85	Highest demand; Q1.1 and Q1.4 both 75%+ Agree+; Q1.3 notably lower	T2 (C-level as prerequisite); T1 (credibility gap)
D5 Communication	2.20	3.69	Q5.3 highest item overall (4.28, 84%); authenticity demand	T1 (say-do gap); T2 (one-way communication culture)
D7 Shared Values	1.65	3.66	Q7.5 strong aspiration (80%); Q7.1-7.4 more divided	T1 (identity crisis; model contradiction)
D3 Knowledge	1.90	3.50	Q3.1 highest in D3 (73%); practical role-specific tools desired	T3 (capability gap; specific tools named)
D4 Integration	2.15	3.36	Q4.1 highest (71%); Q4.3 contested (33% Dis-)	T3 (enabling tools welcomed; controlling metrics resisted)
D2 Engagement	1.80	3.33	Q2.4 most contested item overall (37% Dis-)	T3 and T4 (motivation present; mandate feared)
D6 Incentives	1.75	3.09	Lowest and most divided; Q6.3 lowest item (2.84); Q6.4 highest (3.57)	T4 (value vacuum drives monetary proxy preference)

T1-T4 = interview themes. Source: Authors' integration of primary data.

Three components define the integrated diagnosis, which this paper terms High Willpower, Low Enablement. First, genuine and broadly distributed employee aspiration: Q7.5 (80% Agree+), Q5.3 (84%), Q1.1 (80%), and unanimous qualitative accounts confirm that authentic sustainability motivation exists across functions, hierarchical levels, and both

entities. Second, pervasive structural enablement deficits: Phase 1 artefact scores of 1.6-2.4 confirm that no operational process — procurement, project approval, performance review, job design — incorporates sustainability criteria. Employees who want to act have no formal structure to act within. Third, the say-do gap as an erosive force: the combination of high aspiration and absent structure produces persistent inconsistency between what the organisation claims to value and what it rewards, which employees have independently diagnosed (Q5.3 near-unanimity).

This configuration is distinct from Low Willpower, Low Enablement, which would require motivational intervention first, and from High Willpower, High Enablement, which represents achieved integration. The High Willpower, Low Enablement profile has a direct prescription: building more awareness will not address the primary constraint. The correct intervention target is structural.

6 The Intervention Toolbox

6.1 The Pincer Strategy

The diagnostic findings define a specific design brief. The organisation has genuine workforce motivation. What it lacks entirely is the structural scaffolding through which that motivation can become operational behaviour. Any intervention that adds to motivational messaging without changing structures will miss the target. Any intervention that imposes accountability without first establishing C-level credibility will face the same legitimacy deficit that currently undermines employee trust.

The Toolbox is built around a Pincer Strategy: the simultaneous deployment of two streams, one top-down from leadership, one bottom-up from employee workflows. The logic derives from Schein's (2010) finding that cultural assumptions change when leaders visibly behave differently and when formal structures reinforce those new behaviours. Kotter (2012) makes the same point about durable change: both a strong guiding coalition and a large enabling coalition must be active concurrently. One without the other either stalls (top-down mandate without enabling structures) or marginalises itself (bottom-up effort without governance backing).

Interventions I1 through I4 are the top-down governance stream. They establish leadership credibility, create visibility, and make sustainability measurable alongside commercial metrics. Interventions I5 through I8 are the bottom-up enablement stream. They provide the practical tools, peer networks, and learning pathways through which employees can act on sustainability in their specific roles without waiting for a directive. Table 7 maps the full Toolbox before each intervention is described in detail.

Table 7 The Intervention Toolbox: diagnostic mapping and design rationale

<i>ID</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Target Dimensions</i>	<i>Vector</i>	<i>Design Rationale</i>
I1	Sustainability Vision and Traction Organiser (SVTO)	D1, D7	Top-down	One-page strategic alignment connecting sustainability goals to the commercial planning cycle, reviewed quarterly with C-level sign-off. Directly addresses the absence of sustainability in governance rhythms.

I2	C-Level Commitment Declaration	D1	Top-down	Explicit, public declaration of C-level commitment including resource allocation and accountability. Addresses the value vacuum at source. Required before any other intervention has credibility.
I3	Weekly Leadership Sustainability Huddle	D1, D5	Top-down	15-minute structured item in the weekly leadership meeting. Builds cadence and provides visible evidence of leader modelling, the specific signal most demanded across interviews.
I4	Sustainability Culture Scorecard	D6, D4	Top-down	Lean monthly measurement tool embedding CIF indicators alongside commercial metrics in standard reporting. Frames sustainability in Market-culture language: risk, efficiency, and performance.
I5	Role-Specific Sustainability Toolkits	D3, D4	Bottom-up	Practical department-specific guides co-designed with functional teams: decision checklists, CO2 impact frameworks, supplier assessment templates. Directly responds to capability gap in Theme 3 and Q3.1, Q4.1.
I6	Operational Sustainability Checkpoints	D4	Bottom-up	Embeds sustainability criteria in procurement, supplier selection, project approval, and event planning. Uses enabling checkpoint format, not punitive audit, consistent with Q4.3 data.
I7	Staff Champions Network	D2, D7	Bottom-up	Formalises existing informal enthusiasts with mandate, budget, and access to leadership. Creates peer influence without imposing formal job description changes, consistent with Q2.4 findings.
I8	Gamified Learning Programme	D3	Bottom-up	Replaces generic e-learning with short, role-specific, engaging formats: quizzes, scenario exercises, and experiential activities. Implements learning preferences expressed by I4, I5, and others.

Source: Authors' own design, grounded in triangulated Phase 1 and Phase 2 findings.

6.2 Top-Down Interventions: The Governance Stream

6.2.1 II: Sustainability Vision and Traction Organiser (SVTO)

Target dimensions: D1, D7. The SVTO is a structured single-page strategic alignment tool that converts sustainability goals into the short planning cycles, named accountabilities, and quarterly milestones the organisation already uses for commercial planning. It is not another strategy document. It is a translation mechanism: it makes sustainability operationally legible in the language the organisation already speaks.

The SVTO has five fixed components. First, a one-sentence sustainability vision statement agreed and signed by the CEO. Second, three to five annual sustainability objectives, each with a named functional owner and a quantitative or milestone-based

success criterion. Third, a quarterly priority list: the three sustainability actions taking precedence in the current quarter, reviewed and reset every three months alongside commercial priorities. Fourth, a department accountability grid showing which sustainability objective each function is responsible for contributing to. Fifth, a constraints log: an honest list of resource, structural, or commercial constraints currently preventing deeper integration, reviewed quarterly to reduce the list over time.

The SVTO is reviewed at every quarterly leadership meeting in a 20-minute standing agenda item, then shared with all employees with honest commentary on progress and setbacks. This creates the specific evidence trail interviewees consistently demanded: visible proof that sustainability is influencing real decisions, not just appearing in communications. It directly addresses D7 (Phase 1 CIF 1.65) by giving the organisation's aspiration a concrete, internally visible form, and D1 (CIF 2.10) by embedding sustainability accountability in the governance cadence that already drives commercial performance.

Success indicators: SVTO published and signed within 30 days of launch; quarterly reviews conducted and shared with all staff; at least one structural constraint in the constraints log resolved per quarter within 12 months.

6.2.2 I2: C-Level Commitment Declaration

Target dimension: D1. Eight of eight interviewees named C-level commitment as the prerequisite for any other intervention to carry credibility. The value vacuum identified in Theme 4, in which employees default to financial incentives as the only reliable motivation, is a direct symptom of absent perceived C-level commitment. The Declaration addresses this at source before any other intervention is deployed.

The Declaration is not a general expression of values. It consists of four specific, verifiable commitments communicated to all employees at an all-hands meeting within the first two weeks of the 90-day plan. Commitment one: a named budget line for sustainability operations, communicated in internal reporting. Commitment two: sustainability as a standing agenda item at board level with a named executive accountable. Commitment three: at least one visible operational decision per quarter made explicitly on sustainability grounds, reported to all staff. Commitment four: a first SCAF re-measurement within 12 months to assess CIF score progress against Phase 1 baseline.

These are not aspirations. They are specific, named, verifiable actions to which leadership will be accountable. The audience is employees, not external stakeholders. Without this step, employees will experience subsequent interventions as further evidence of the promotional sustainability pattern they have already diagnosed. With it, the Declaration unlocks the authentic intrinsic motivation that Theme 3 and Theme 4 show is already present but currently blocked.

Success indicators: Declaration published at all-hands meeting within two weeks; named budget line confirmed in next internal financial communication; first operational decision attributed to sustainability criteria reported to all staff within 90 days.

6.2.3 I3: Weekly Leadership Sustainability Huddle

Target dimensions: D1, D5. Visible leader behaviour is the primary mechanism through which cultural assumptions change (Schein, 2010). The Huddle creates regular, observable evidence of that behaviour without requiring significant additional time from leadership.

The Huddle is a structured 15-minute segment added to the existing weekly leadership meeting. It follows a fixed three-question format. Question one: what specific sustainability commitment was acted on this week? This forces evidence of action, not intent, and prevents the Huddle from becoming a discussion of sustainability in principle. Question two: what barrier to sustainability integration was encountered this week? This normalises the acknowledgement of structural constraints, creates a log that feeds back into the SVTO constraints register, and prevents blame-shifting to employees for non-integration. Question three: is there a decision to be made this week where a sustainability criterion should be considered? This embeds sustainability into decision-making before decisions are made, not as an audit afterwards.

The Huddle produces two outputs. A brief action log is maintained and shared with the Sustainability Manager, who updates the Scorecard accordingly. A quarterly summary of decisions where sustainability played a role is shared with all employees. This is the specific evidence trail interviewees named when asked what would change their perception of leadership commitment. It addresses D5 (Phase 1 CIF 2.20) by shifting internal communication from broadcast to evidence-based, and D1 by creating a consistent weekly signal.

Success indicators: Huddle held at 80% or more of scheduled meetings; action log maintained and reviewed quarterly; at least three sustainability-influenced decisions documented and communicated to all staff per quarter.

6.2.4 I4: Sustainability Culture Scorecard

Target dimensions: D6, D4. The CVF finding that the organisation has a strong Market-dominant culture shapes this design directly. In a Market culture, what gets measured gets taken seriously. Sustainability metrics that exist in a separate sustainability report accessed by those already interested have no cultural impact. Metrics embedded in the standard management reporting pack cannot be ignored.

The Scorecard is a single page published monthly covering two types of indicator. Leading indicators measure cultural change: training completion rates by department, participation in Champions Network activities, number of procurement decisions with sustainability screening applied, number of sustainability ideas submitted through the Champions Network and acted on. Lagging indicators measure operational outcomes: progress against the carbon tracking target, supplier sustainability ratings where screening has been applied, quarterly pulse check results on SCAF dimension scores.

The Scorecard does not link individual employee performance to sustainability metrics. This is a deliberate response to Q4.3 and Q6.3, which showed strong resistance to individual sustainability accountability. The Scorecard operates at team and organisational level. Individual accountability is a Phase 2 objective, implemented once the foundational commitment of I1 and I2 has been established and employees can verify that sustainability is genuinely valued at the organisational level.

Success indicators: Scorecard published monthly without gaps from month 2; all seven CIF dimension scores tracked against Phase 1 baseline; at least two leading indicator categories showing a positive trend within six months of launch.

6.3 Bottom-Up Interventions: The Enablement Stream

6.3.1 I5: Role-Specific Sustainability Toolkits

Target dimensions: D3, D4. The Capability Gap finding is the most consistent theme in the interview data: seven of eight interviewees named it explicitly. The blockage is not willpower. It is that employees who want to integrate sustainability into their work have no practical guidance on how to do so in their specific function. General sustainability awareness training, which the organisation already provides, does not address this. Role-specific, operationally usable guidance is needed.

Each Toolkit is a short, practical reference document co-designed with two to three employees from the target function and the Sustainability Manager. The co-design process is itself culturally significant: it signals that employee knowledge of their function's sustainability dimensions is valued, and it produces tools employees are more likely to use because they recognise their own workflows in them.

The Marketing Toolkit includes: a CO2 equivalence reference for common campaign decisions (digital advertising data load, physical materials, event transport), a checklist for reviewing sustainability claims made to customers, and a guide for raising sustainability as a design criterion in campaign briefs. The Technology Toolkit includes: an energy and data-efficiency checklist for project approval, a guide to assessing the data centre impact of technical decisions, and a template for including sustainability as a non-functional requirement in sprint planning. The Operations Toolkit includes: a three-question supplier sustainability screening template (environmental certification, carbon reporting, labour practices), a sustainable event planning checklist, and a short guide to identifying sustainability improvements in procurement decisions. The Commercial Toolkit includes: talking points for discussing sustainability with suppliers and partners, and criteria for incorporating climate considerations into platform and product decisions.

Toolkits are reviewed annually. Champions Network members from each function flag when content becomes outdated or insufficient. Success indicators: Toolkits complete for top three functions within 60 days; at least one documented example per function of toolkit use influencing a decision within 90 days.

6.3.2 I6: Operational Sustainability Checkpoints

Target dimension: D4. The artefact review found that no existing operational process in either entity incorporated sustainability criteria: not procurement, not project approval, not event planning, not supplier selection. The Checkpoints intervention changes this directly, embedding short sustainability prompts into the processes where decisions with environmental consequences are already being made.

Checkpoints are additions to existing forms and processes, not separate processes. This matters. A new sustainability review process would signal that sustainability is additional work. A question added to the procurement form signals that sustainability is part of procurement. The format is enabling, not auditing: the question is "have you considered sustainability criteria?" rather than "has this received sustainability approval?"

The Procurement Checkpoint adds three questions to the existing supplier evaluation template: Does this supplier hold an environmental certification? Do they disclose emissions? Are their labour practices consistent with our code of conduct? These do not override commercial criteria; they make sustainability visible in a process where it was

previously invisible. The Project Approval Checkpoint adds two questions to the existing form: Does this project have a material environmental dimension? If yes, who is the sustainability accountability owner? The Event Planning Checkpoint adds a carbon estimation step and a sustainable catering guideline to the existing event planning protocol.

These Checkpoints create a data trail that the Scorecard reports on. They normalise sustainability as a dimension of operational decision-making, which is the structural definition of embedding. Success indicators: Checkpoints operational in procurement and project approval within 60 days; event planning Checkpoint within 90 days; percentage of decisions with sustainability screening reported monthly on the Scorecard.

6.3.3 I7: Staff Sustainability Champions Network

Target dimensions: D2, D7. Survey and interview data confirm that sustainability enthusiasts already exist, distributed across functions and entities. The Network formalises this existing informal resource, giving it structure, resources, and access to leadership. This is not a new initiative. It is the organisational recognition of people who are already motivated and the removal of the barriers that currently prevent them from acting.

The Network comprises one or two Champions from each department, selected through a voluntary expression of interest process. Champions commit to four protected hours per month, managers are explicitly instructed this time is not available for other tasks. Champions have three responsibilities: they surface sustainability ideas and barriers from their teams, feeding these into the Scorecard and quarterly SVTO review; they pilot new Toolbox elements in their departments; and they act as peer educators, sharing what they learn from I8 with their colleagues.

Champions meet monthly for 45 minutes. Quarterly, they meet with the Sustainability Manager and at least one member of the leadership team. This access is significant: it creates a formal channel through which employee knowledge of sustainability barriers reaches decision-makers, closing the feedback loop that interviewees consistently identified as entirely absent. The Network addresses D2 (Phase 1 CIF 1.80) by creating structured, empowered participation rather than the passive, voluntary engagement currently available, and D7 by building a visible community of practice around sustainability.

Success indicators: Network established with representation from all major departments within 30 days; monthly meetings held; at least five sustainability ideas submitted and formally reviewed per quarter.

6.3.4 I8: Gamified Learning Programme

Target dimension: D3. The capability gap is partly a knowledge gap and partly a confidence gap. The organisation's existing sustainability training is generic and fails to connect abstract sustainability concepts to specific work employees do. The Programme replaces this with short, engaging, and role-relevant formats, responding directly to the learning preferences expressed across interviews.

The Programme has three formats. The Monthly Quiz is a 10-minute online module with five scenario-based questions set in a specific department context, rotating across functions quarterly. Employees answer individually; department scores are aggregated and shared on the Scorecard, creating a light competitive dynamic without individual performance pressure. The Quarterly Challenge is a department-level sustainability

initiative run over four weeks, designed and facilitated by the department Champion with Sustainability Manager support, examples include a department carbon footprint challenge, a supplier evaluation exercise, or a campaign sustainability audit. The Annual Learning Event is an experiential full-day activity such as the cooking or scenario-simulation format requested by interviewees, designed to build collective understanding through hands-on engagement rather than instruction.

Role-specific micro-credentials are available optionally: employees who complete a defined learning pathway for their function receive a digital badge noted in the internal skills system. These are not required for any performance outcome they recognise voluntary engagement, consistent with the intrinsic motivation preference identified in Theme 4.

Success indicators: Monthly quiz participation rate above 60% within three months; quarterly challenges completed in all departments by end of 90-day plan; self-reported sustainability capability confidence improving against Phase 1 baseline in 12-month SCAF re-measurement.

6.4 How the Interventions Work Together

Each intervention addresses a specific diagnosed gap. The Toolbox is designed as an integrated system, not eight separate programmes, and the connections between interventions matter as much as the individual components.

The SVTO (I1) defines what organisational sustainability success looks like. The Scorecard (I4) measures whether it is being achieved. The Commitment Declaration (I2) establishes the organisational credibility that makes the Scorecard meaningful rather than performative. The Huddle (I3) creates the evidence of leadership behaviour that employees said they need to see before trusting the process. These four form a mutually reinforcing governance architecture: the SVTO sets direction, the Declaration establishes trust, the Huddle produces evidence, and the Scorecard tracks progress.

The Toolkits (I5) and Checkpoints (I6) create the structural channels through which employees can act on sustainability. The Champions Network (I7) surfaces information about where those channels work and where they need refinement. The Learning Programme (I8) builds the knowledge required to use the tools effectively. Without the tools, learning has nowhere to go. Without learning, the tools will be used inconsistently. Without the Network, problems with the tools remain invisible to decision-makers.

The Pincer Strategy's core design principle is that both streams must run simultaneously. If the top-down stream is activated first without the bottom-up enablement stream, employees receive stronger signals of leadership intent without gaining the capacity to respond enthusiasm without tools produces frustration. If the bottom-up stream is activated first without top-down governance, employee efforts continue to lack organisational backing tools without governance produce isolated activity that marginalises itself over time. Simultaneous activation, even at low initial intensity, is the design requirement.

6.5 The 90-Day Kickoff Plan

Table 8 presents the three-phase implementation sequence. The Foundation phase is designed to produce visible evidence of C-level commitment within the first two weeks: this is the single most demanded signal across all interviews. Without this, subsequent

structural interventions will face a legitimacy deficit that process design alone cannot repair.

Table 8 90-day implementation plan

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Days</i>	<i>Key Actions</i>	<i>Accountability</i>
Foundation	1-30	C-Level Commitment Declaration published internally. SVTO drafted and signed by executive team. Weekly Leadership Huddle launched. Champions Network identified and briefed. Scorecard baseline established.	CEO, Sustainability Manager
Build Momentum	31-60	Role-specific toolkits for top two departments co-designed and piloted. Procurement sustainability checkpoint introduced. First Scorecard report published to all staff. First Champions Network meeting with leadership access.	Department Heads, Sustainability Manager
Embed and Expand	61-90	Gamified learning module launched. Checkpoints extended to project approvals and supplier selection. First quarterly SCAF re-measurement against Phase 1 baseline. SVTO reset for next quarter. Honest 90-day report published internally.	HR, Full Leadership Team

Source: Authors' own design.

The Foundation phase (Days 1–30) is therefore oriented entirely toward generating observable signals, published declarations, signed documents, and an active weekly huddle, rather than toward process redesign. This is not caution; it is a deliberate sequencing decision based on the Phase 2 finding that employees have been conditioned to treat sustainability announcements as temporary until proven otherwise.

The Build Momentum phase (Days 31–60) introduces the first bottom-up tools: the role-specific toolkit pilot and the procurement checkpoint. These are deliberately piloted in a single department before scaling, for two reasons. First, co-design at the pilot stage increases adoption rates and reduces the 'top-down mandate' perception identified in Phase 2. Second, a visible pilot creates a proof-of-concept that champions can reference when advocating for broader rollout. The first Scorecard report published to all staff in this phase is equally deliberate: it signals that sustainability is now part of the business reporting infrastructure, not a side initiative.

The Embed and Expand phase (Days 61–90) introduces the highest-complexity tools, the Gamified Learning Programme and the extended checkpoint system, only after the governance infrastructure has been established and a pilot cohort of champions and toolkit users has been created. The first quarterly SCAF re-measurement in this phase provides the empirical baseline for the next iteration, closing the continuous improvement loop that distinguishes a cultural operating system from a one-time change programme. The honest internal 90-day report, published to all staff, serves as a transparency signal: it demonstrates

that leadership is willing to report accurately on progress and setbacks, directly addressing the authenticity deficit identified in Phase 2.

7 Conclusions and Discussion

This paper addressed a specific and practically important problem: how can an organisation accurately diagnose its sustainability culture and design an evidence-based response? The SCAF provided the diagnostic instrument. Applied through a three-phase mixed-methods study, it produced a clear finding: the focal organisation is in a High Willpower, Low Enablement condition, characterised by genuine, broadly distributed employee aspiration constrained by the near-complete absence of formal structural enablers. Phase 1 artefact review produced CIF scores between 1.6 and 2.4 across all seven SCAF dimensions. The survey confirmed high aspirational demand, with the strongest convergence on the authenticity of external sustainability messaging (Q5.3) and leadership demonstrating commitment through visible action (Q1.1). Eight interviews identified a business model contradiction, a C-level commitment prerequisite, a capability gap, and a preference for intrinsic over formal motivation as the four primary explanatory themes.

The resulting Intervention Toolbox targets the two most structurally critical gaps through eight interventions organised via a Pincer Strategy, with a phased 90-day implementation plan. The argument underlying both the diagnosis and the response is direct: most organisations that fail on sustainability are not failing because their people do not care. They are failing because their formal systems provide no practical channel through which that care can become operational action. That is an organisational design problem, and it has an organisational design solution.

7.1 Theoretical Contributions

This paper makes three theoretical contributions. First, the SCAF integrates Schein's (2010), Cameron and Quinn's (2011), and Visser's (2011) models into a single, scored, operationally deployable diagnostic instrument. Prior work has used these models individually in the sustainability culture literature. Combining all three in a unified scoring architecture and applying it in a live organisational context is new.

Second, the High Willpower, Low Enablement construct names a specific configuration of the sustainability implementation gap that has not been clearly distinguished in the literature. This is more than a descriptive label. It carries a direct intervention prescription: an organisation in this condition does not need motivational programmes. It needs structural enablers. Organisations that misread the pattern and respond with more communications and awareness campaigns are, in the framework of this paper, reinforcing the Promotional Trap rather than escaping it.

Third, the study extends Morsing and Schultz's (2006) communicative sustainability framework to the specific context of firms with inherent business model contradictions. At the focal organisation, the primary sustainability communications challenge is not stakeholder credibility management in the conventional sense. It is internal identity coherence: building a credible and honest organisational narrative about what the Tourism Paradox means for what the company can and cannot realistically commit to changing. External communications remain implausible to employees until that internal narrative is settled.

7.2 Practical Implications

For managers in commercially oriented organisations, the key practical lesson is diagnostic before prescriptive. The conditions for effective sustainability intervention vary significantly by organisational type. The appropriate response to a High Willpower, Low Enablement diagnosis differs fundamentally from the appropriate response to a Low Willpower, High Enablement context or to a context where neither motivation nor enablement is present. Deploying generic sustainability best practices without first understanding which configuration applies is why so many sustainability initiatives underperform despite genuine resources and visible management support.

The CVF finding has a specific practical implication. The organisation's Market-dominant cultural orientation means that sustainability interventions framed in terms of environmental or social value will face structural resistance. This is not cynicism. It is cultural architecture. Interventions framed in terms of risk reduction, regulatory compliance, operational efficiency, and talent retention have a substantially better chance of gaining and sustaining leadership sponsorship in this setting. The Scorecard and Checkpoints in the Toolbox are designed with this explicitly in mind.

7.3 Limitations

Three limitations should be noted. This is a single-organisation case study, which limits the generalisability of the empirical findings. The survey sample of 51 is small in absolute terms, limiting statistical power for sub-group analyses. The data are cross-sectional: no outcome evidence on the effectiveness of the Intervention Toolbox is available at the time of writing. A longitudinal follow-up tracking CIF score changes following toolbox implementation would provide the outcome evidence this study cannot offer.

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