The TVL Six-Lens Framework

How to conduct a Triple Materiality Assessment

The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) requires companies to conduct a Double Materiality assessment. However, many companies struggle with Double Materiality reporting by addressing too many issues simultaneously, leading to an overload of information and scattered efforts that fail to generate meaningful impact or business results. In extreme cases, overpromising and underdelivering may result in accusations of greenwashing from stakeholders and watchdogs. Moreover, if the data gathering takes place without the buy-in from staff and other stakeholders, the CSRD compliance process can have a profound negative impact on the engagement of staff and the organization at large.

Why Does This Overload Happen?

The process of Materiality assessment involves measuring, managing, and disclosing the issues that matter for an organization in relation to its environment. Double Materiality is fundamentally about prioritization: it informs strategic planning, issues management, target setting, corporate reporting, and data disclosure. From an external perspective, materiality also helps in building an Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) methodology for raters, rankers, investors, and other stakeholders to assess firms effectively.

The problem with Double Materiality is that it takes a **transactional view** of the business and its environment, focusing on interactions between a company and its stakeholders. While this approach gathers extensive data, it lacks a reference point for determining which data points are most relevant for ESG and sustainable value creation. To address this, a **systems perspective** on value creation—incorporating context, time, and people—can help companies gain clarity and focus in prioritization, while also finding pathways for employee engagement and strengthening their sense of purpose.

Introducing Triple Materiality

Triple Materiality expands on Double Materiality by adding a systemic perspective:

- **Single Materiality** considers how an issue impacts the organization, focusing on enterprise value creation (financial materiality).
- **Double Materiality** also considers how the organization impacts people and the planet, incorporating a wider stakeholder lens.
- **Triple Materiality** introduces the systemic dimensions of context, time, and people. Leadership towards performance on sustainability issues must be assessed within scientific thresholds, planetary boundaries, and societal norms. A time-bound approach ensures goal setting for future impact, while people engagement fosters a culture of ownership, collaboration and authentic sustainability efforts.

The Six-Lens Framework

At TVL we believe that in order to prevent information overload and enhance execution, teams responsible for ESG should concentrate on no more than six issues at a time. Supported by scientific research, the TVL Six-Lens Framework helps executives focus on what truly matters for sustainability strategy, balancing internal and external tensions across six key dimensions:

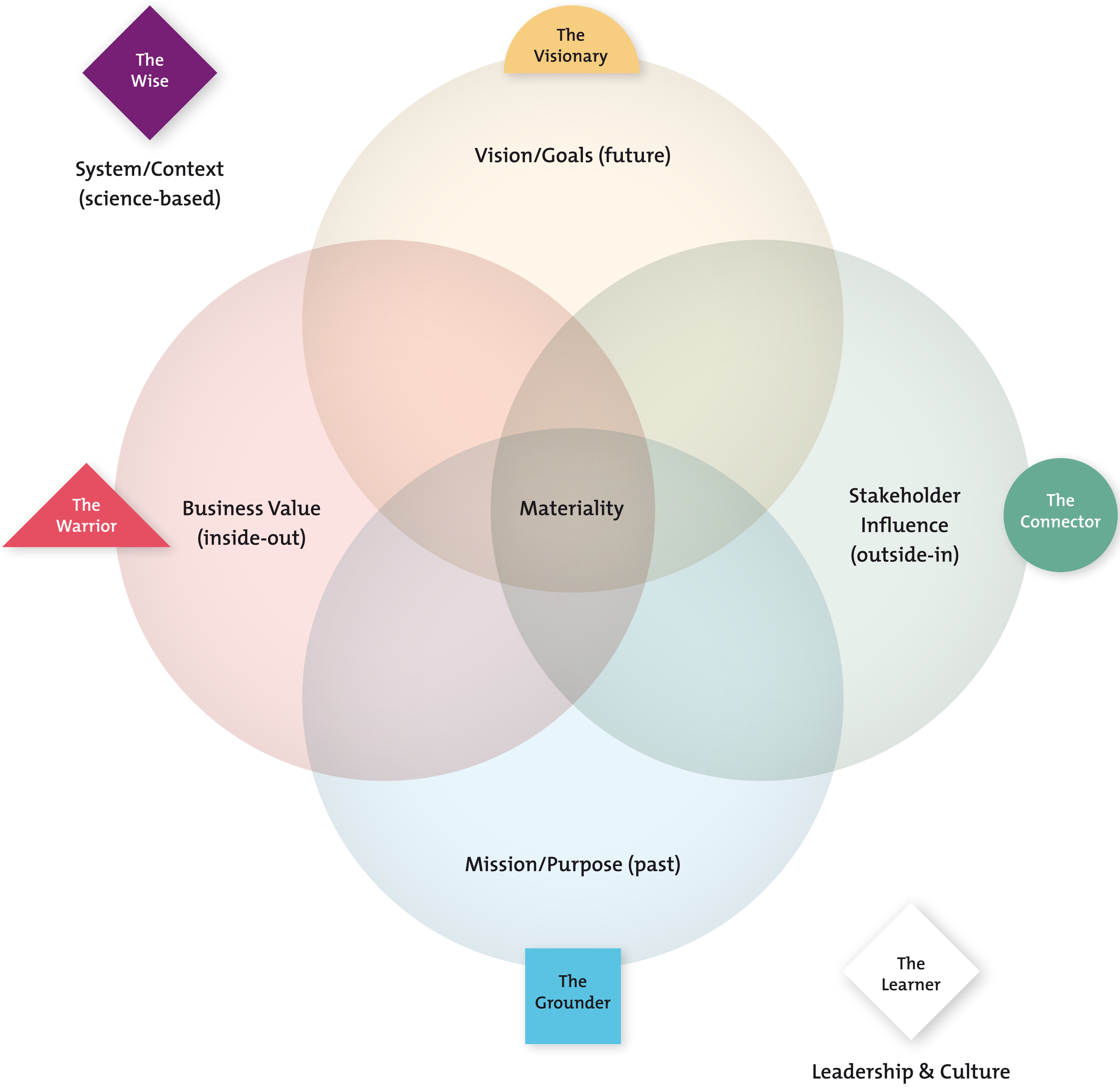
Lenses	Issue/Theme	Questions	Tools
The Warrior 1	**Business Value**	What affects our bottom line? • How do fines, fees, waste, disposal, turnover, and shrink impact costs? • When and where will customers pay a premium for sustainable practices? • What risks exist for reduced revenue or increased costs? • What intangible value can be created through ESG leadership?	*Tools:* • Cost/Benefit Analysis, • Risk Analysis • Market Research

The Connector 2	**Stakeholder Influence**	• What are internal stakeholders (employees, partners) concerned about? • What do external stakeholders (customers, investors, regulators) prioritize? • How do broader stakeholders (media, NGOs, policymakers, competitors) perceive us? • How can we gather and integrate stakeholder input more effectively? • What would nature say if it had a voice?	*Tools:* • Surveys • Round Tables • AI Sentiment Analysis
The Wise 3	**Larger Context (Triple Materiality)**	• Are we contributing to crossing planetary boundaries? • What are the net positive or negative impacts we generate? • What unfulfilled social needs in critical communities should we address? • How will planetary and societal changes affect our business? • What emerging technologies could reshape sustainability trade-offs?	*Tools:* • Life Cycle Analysis, • Climate Risk Assessment, • Technological Trend Modeling
The Grounder 4	**Purpose & Values**	• What is our purpose, and why do we exist? • What are the cultural narratives that define us? • What values guide our operations? • Do we clearly state our sense of urgency?	*Tools:* • Organizational History Analysis, • Facilitated Dialogues

The Visionary 5	**The Future**	• Given the larger context and its needs (the Wise), where do we want to go? • What would be our dream, if we could do want we really wanted to do? • What is our vision for the company, industry, and world? • What is our transition plan with 3-5 year milestones?	*Tools:* • Facilitated Dialogues • Guided Reflection Vision Boards
The Learner 6	**Leadership & Culture**	• What leadership skills do we need for the sustainability transition? • How does sustainability reshape leadership behaviors and beliefs? • What can nature teach us about resilience and adaptation? • How can HR and leadership partner to foster the right culture (recruitment, talent management, compensation et cetera)?	*Tools:* • Leadership Coaching • Culture development, • Assessments, • Dialogue Events.

By systematically applying these six lenses, companies can focus their sustainability efforts effectively, ensuring meaningful impact while avoiding the pitfalls of greenwashing and information overload. The Triple Materiality Assessment using the TVL Six-Lens Framework provides a structured approach to integrating sustainability into corporate strategy with clarity, precision, and actionability. It will set your shared compass towards a sustainable future.

> *"The broad adoption of Triple Materiality has not only driven our sustainability goals but also enhanced our brand reputation and stakeholder trust. By viewing our impact through a triple materiality lens, Unilever has unlocked new pathways for sustainable growth."*
>
> **Alan Jope, CEO of Unilever**



Source: hbr.org/2025/01/getting-strategic-about-sustainability