

NBM 2021

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**Assessing the  
Sustainability  
Performance of Entities**

A review and classification  
of tools, methods, and  
approaches



**Measuring What Matters Most**

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# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

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- This study develops a set of **criteria** useful in the identification of **approaches** to empirical SBM assessment by invoking a **strong sustainability stance**, *i.e.* informed by the FSSD (Broman & Robèrt 2017).
- Follows a comprehensive analysis of 856 articles spanning the last 15 years, including the most prominent literature that informs the theory, tools and techniques of SBMs, from the **nano to the macro scale** (Baue 2019).
- Recognizes differences in terminology (given **fragmented & trans-disciplinary nature** of the sciences) (Lang et al. 2012), examines the similarities and differences (Pourdehnad & Bharathy 2004).
- **Systems thinking approach** (Williams et al. 2017) seeking to categorize: identifying characteristics, attributes, and features of the various approaches.
- Aims to compare and contrast approaches (Von Wehrden et al. 2017). Basis for **fair comparisons in performance** (Willard & Upward 2013).

# METHODOLOGY & RQs

- Sustainable performance measurement has emerged as a promising avenue to increase sustainable development.
- Sustainability performance can be measured on many entity levels.
- Numerous approaches pose increasing difficulty in tracking progress and structuring existing knowledge. \*

## Research Questions:

*(1) What approaches to measuring sustainability performance of entities can be identified from an analysis of existing literature?*


*(2) How can these approaches be classified?*

# FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

	Type of provider	Explicit Data Sources (Yes/No)	Public Data (Yes/No)	Explicitly Public Methodology (Yes/No)	Multi Entity Levels (Yes /No)	Includes Entity Model (Yes/No)	Perspective	Entity Level (7Cs)	Context-based (Yes/No)	Determines Impact or Sustainability (Yes/No)	Score type	Single or Multi Topic / Multi-capital / TBL	Topic Alignment	Output
<b>Corporate Knights</b>	Platform	No	Yes	No	No	No	Corporate	Company	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Standard	Report
<b>GRI Reports</b>	Framework	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Corporate, Investors, Governance, Society Stakeholder	Company	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Disclosure	Tool
<b>IIRC &lt;IR&gt;</b>	Framework	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Corporate	Company	No	Yes	Qualitative	Multi Topic	Standard	Tool
<b>SASB</b>	Framework	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Corporate, Investors	Company	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Disclosure	Tool
<b>SDGs</b>	Platform	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Consumer, Corporate, Stakeholder, Governance, Society	Company, Country	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	TBL	Standard	Report
<b>THRIVE Platform</b>	Platform	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Consumer, Corporate, Stakeholder, Governance, Society	Creature, Company, Community, City, Country, Continent, Cosmos	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Standard AND Self-defined	Platform

FIGURE 1. ILLUSTRATIVE CONSOLIDATED COMPARISON TABLE BETWEEN APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS INNOVATION STRATEGIES.

# FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

	Type provided		Includes Entity Model (Yes/No)	Perspective	Entity Level (7Cs)	Context-based (Yes/No)	Determines Impact or Sustainability (Yes/No)	Score type	Single or Multi Topic / Multi-capital / TBL	Topic Alignment	Output
Corporate Knights	Platform		No	Corporate	Company	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Standard	Report
GRI Reports	Framework		Yes	Corporate, Investors, Governance, Society Stakeholder	Company	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Disclosure	Tool
IIRC <IR>	Framework		Yes	Corporate	Company	No	Yes	Qualitative	Multi Topic	Standard	Tool
SASB	Framework		Yes	Corporate, Investors	Company	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Disclosure	Tool
SDGs	Platform		No	Consumer, Corporate, Stakeholder, Governance, Society	Company, Country	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	TBL	Standard	Report
THRIVE Platform	Platform		Yes	Consumer, Corporate, Stakeholder, Governance, Society	Creature, Company, Community, City, Country, Continent, Cosmos	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Standard AND Self-defined	Platform

Example of entity models:

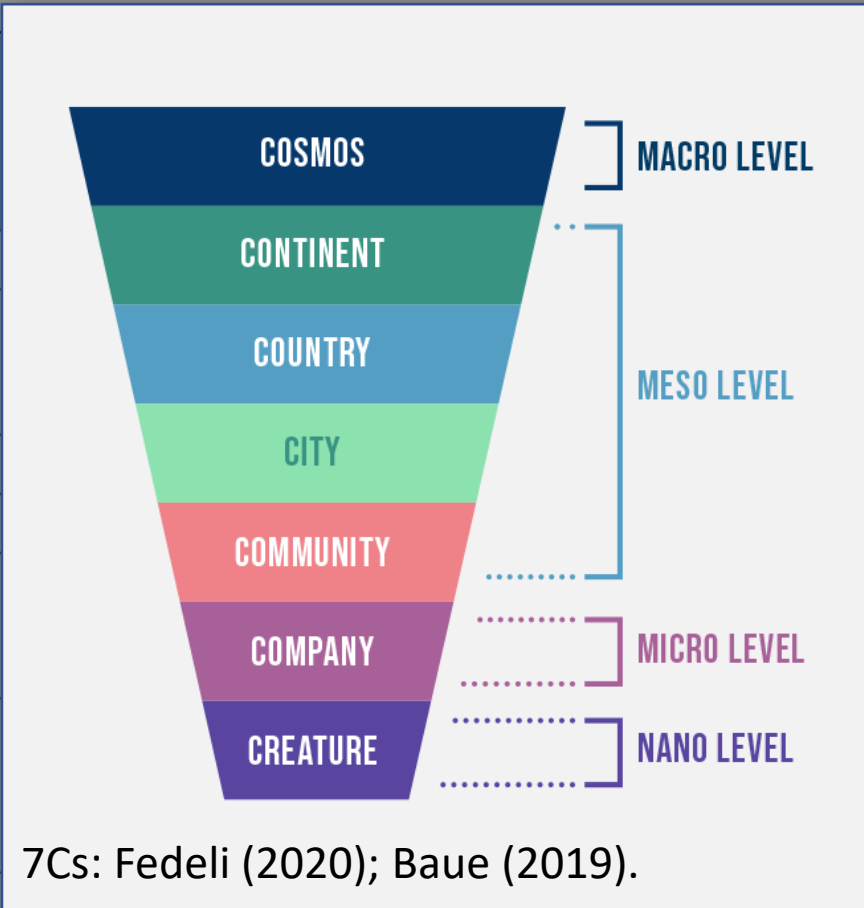
- Business model
- Sector model
- Bio-regional model
- Governance model

Florian Lüdeke-Freund (2018);  
The Future is Now (2019)

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# FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Type of provider
Corporate Knights
GRI Reports
IIRC <IR>
SASB
SDGs
THRIVE Platform



Entity Level (7Cs)	Context-based (Yes/No)	Determines Impact or Sustainability (Yes/No)	Score type	Single or Multi Topic / Multi-capital / TBL	Topic Alignment	Output
Company	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Standard	Report
Company	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Disclosure	Tool
Company	No	Yes	Qualitative	Multi Topic	Standard	Tool
Company	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Disclosure	Tool
Company, Country	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	TBL	Standard	Report
Creature, Company, Community, City, Country, Continent, Cosmos	Yes	Yes	Quantitative	Multi Topic	Standard AND Self-defined	Platform

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Corporate Knights	Platform	No	Yes	No	No	No
GRI Reports	Framework	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
IIRC <IR>	Framework	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
SASB	Framework	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
SDGs	Platform	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
THRIVE Platform	Platform	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Score may be quantitative or qualitative. Commonly reviewed literature discusses the following:

- Disclosure only
- Qualitative results (relative/referential terms)
- Qualitative results (objective terms)
- Quantitative (relative/referential terms)
- Quantitative (objective terms)

WBCSD (2017)

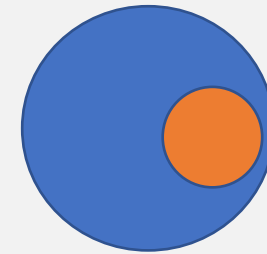
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THRIVE Platform	Platform	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Consumer, Corporate, Stakeholder, Governance, Society	Creature, Company, Community, City, Country, Continent, Cosmos	Yes	Platform

Context-based indicators showing (weight adjusted) actual impact over nominal impact. \*



$$WGM \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sqrt[n]{\prod_{i=1}^n \tilde{s}_i \cdot \tilde{\omega}_i}$$

$$AMPI_i^{+/-} = M_{r_i} \pm S_{r_i} cv_i$$

$$r_{ij} = \frac{(x_{ij} - \text{Min}_{x_j})}{(\text{Max}_{x_j} - \text{Min}_{x_j})} 60 + 70$$

Haffar & Searcy (2018);  
Baue (2019).

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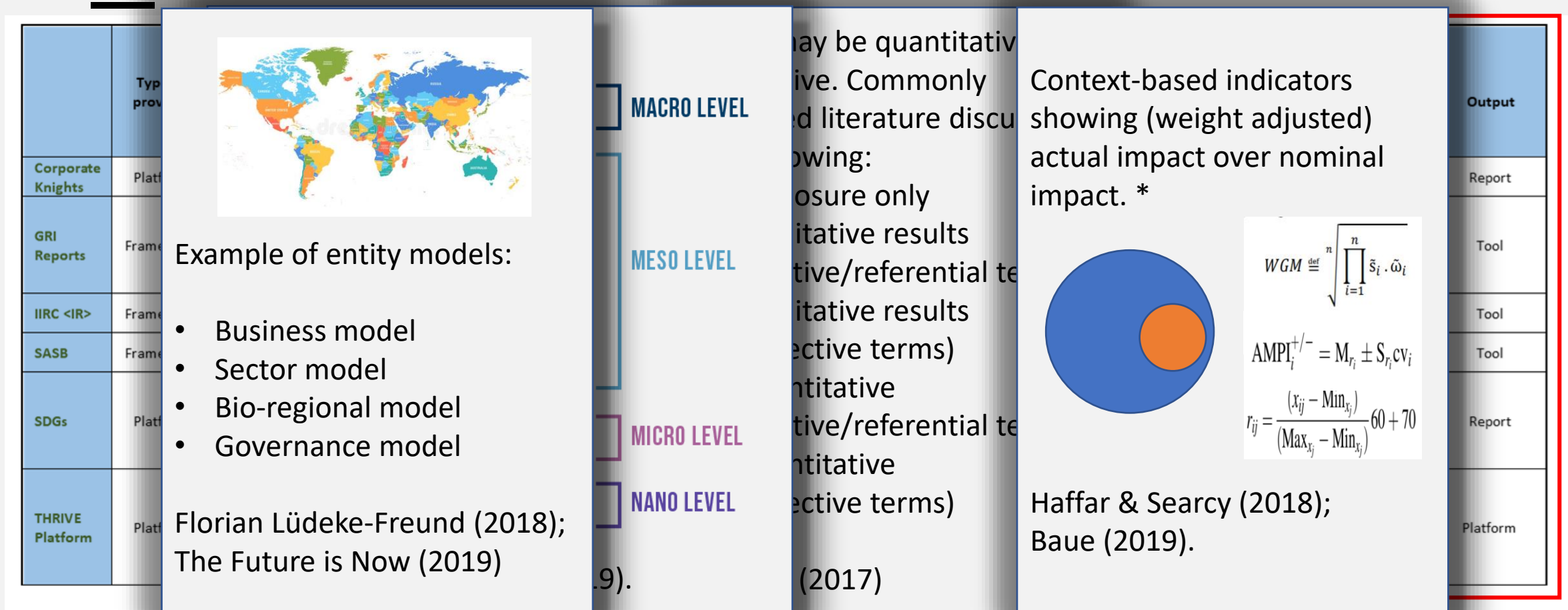
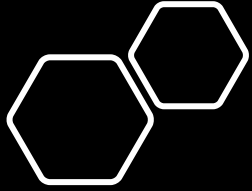


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# CONCLUSION & CONTRIBUTION

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- This study ***explores and categorizes*** criteria pertinent to established sustainability performance assessment approaches across ***14 identified criteria and 22 approaches***.
- Help researchers and practitioners to find the most appropriate approach.
- Creates a basis for researchers and practitioners to use, compare, and combine those approaches that best meet their requirements. Used to ***inform future theory, tools, and techniques***:
  - Looking at some level of congruency, such as a common methodology, or measurement method (Fedeli 2019).
  - Consolidation through a holistic, harmonized, uniform, universal approach (França, Broman, Robèrt, Basile, & Trygg 2017).
  - Integrated holistic approach to resolve our strong sustainability challenges (Winter & Butler, 2011; Sala et al. 2015).
- Invites ***future development*** of coherent universal integrated comparative frameworks towards sustainability performance assessment.



THANK YOU

For further information  
email [morris@fedeli.nu](mailto:morris@fedeli.nu)  
or visit [strive2thrive.earth](http://strive2thrive.earth)



**Measuring What Matters Most**

***There are no sustainable entities  
on an unsustainable Earth***

**- Morris D Fedeli**