MASTER

How corporate social entrepreneurship acceleration programs can support supply chain collaboration for sustainability

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How Corporate Social Entrepreneurship acceleration programs can support supply chain collaboration for sustainability

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Management Summary

The aim of this master thesis project was to explore methods for a Corporate Social Entrepreneurship-focused acceleration program to foster supply chain collaboration with a focus on sustainability. This is a very new and under-examined research area, and also suffers from little documented empirical and practical evidence. On the academic note, this thesis aims to contribute to literature on acceleration programs, and the process of setting up supply chain collaborations for sustainability. On a more practical level, this study aims to provide a useful and unambiguous tool to foster the setup of supply chain collaboration. To this end, the research presented here was structured to answer one main research question: How can CSE acceleration programs help in fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability? The actual study to find answers to this question was characterized by three phases. First, a thorough search in existing literature was performed to get a proper theoretical background for further analysis. Then, an empirical phase was done in which an iterative and exploratory approach was adopted to find root causes and possible solution directions. Lastly, one solution direction was elaborated on in the design phase, which resulted in a final, practically useful process-design.

Theoretical background

The focal company of this paper is a business development consulting firm that has a specific focus on setting up acceleration programs to foster Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE). CSE is a rather new research area, but can be seen as the successor of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In this thesis, CSE means a corporate organization’s transition from an organization with no environmental and/or social impact to an organization that creates both economic, environmental and social impact through corporate entrepreneurial efforts (Austin & Reficco, 2009; Bode & Santos, 2013).

Literature on CSE has highlighted organizational antecedents that increase the chances of success of CSE initiatives. These antecedents can form the basis of selection for candidates for an acceleration program. Moreover, the antecedents suggest that the impact of the CSE acceleration programs could be vastly increased if the focal company’s external environment would be part of the programs too. It is often argued in literature that truly sustainable business resides within entire supply chains and not just one company, as its reach is simply too limited (Abbasi & Nilsson, 2012; Porter & Kramer, 2011). Hence, supply chain collaboration is required.

Supply chain collaboration is defined as the continuous and long-term attempt of supply chain partners to tackle issues at the root of the problem, in this thesis we explicitly talk about sustainability related challenges; a precondition for collaboration is goal congruence (Cao & Zhang, 2013). We discuss drivers, opportunities and challenges for engaging in supply chain collaboration. Drivers here can be knowledge, innovation, sustainability, (internal) cost reduction, and the sharing of mutual benefits and risks. Opportunities for collaboration can be found in openness and trust, long term strategic thinking, clear coordination and explanation of tasks and accountability principles for all partners. Automatically, the lack of these aspects brings along challenges such as complexity, uncertainty, lack of trust and operational issues.

The empirical part of the thesis started to show that the precondition of goal congruence was often not met in collaborations. Therefore we investigated this topic in more detail through literature.
Goal congruence means that different partners in a collaboration have compatible, if not the same goals for their efforts for sustainable developments. Goal congruence helps in building trust and decreases uncertainty. Goal congruence comprises a process of aligning all partners’ desires and requirements, and the actually setting a of jointly defined goal. With regards to the process, the GROW model (Whitmore, 2009) provides valuable insights for this thesis to build a design on. The actual goal setting can be realized by the use of S.M.A.R.T. goal setting (Doran, 1981).

However, the question of whether or not an acceleration program may be of value in this process remains unanswered by literature. Literature on corporate acceleration programs is non-existent, but literature on seed-accelerator companies (who focus on start-ups) shows that these programs can aid companies in becoming successful through mentoring and process directing by the acceleration company (Hoffman & Radojevich-Kelley, 2012). This thesis aims to find out what the role of accelerator programs can be for corporates who want to setup collaboration with supply chain partners.

**Empirical research**

The empirical phase of this study is characterized by a design research method, and is exploratory in nature, due to the relative unknown topics addressed here. We turn to industry experts to gain knowledge on supply chain collaboration for sustainability. An important insight here is that there seems to be a vast difference in company attitudes towards the importance and implementation of sustainability within the company. Some companies have no urgency at all to address sustainability and only do the bare minimum. On the other hand we see some companies embedding sustainability in every action, process and product of their company; sustainability is in their veins. The various company attitudes can be placed on a continuum and the big difference illustrates a clue on why some companies are better at pursuing sustainability than others; attitude towards sustainability by top and operational management.

One of the reasons for these differences can be found in company culture, an aspect hardly investigated by current literature. Many interviews point towards a ‘risk avoiding’ and ‘secrecy preserving’ culture as the core of the problem for not truly pursuing sustainability. It also becomes clear that companies often have no clear internal consensus for themselves on why the company engages in collaboration and what the key drivers are. As a result, companies keep changing their desires and requirements throughout the collaboration, which decreases trust and increases uncertainty at other collaborating partners. It also decreases the commitment of the participants and even undermines the feasibility of any plan that is made during the program. All of these consequences are, as also supported by literature, detrimental to collaboration. We find one dimension of setting up collaboration that seems to integrate all of these issues; a lack of goal congruence stands at the basis of future problems between partners and forms a root cause for problems in setting up collaboration. Companies do not deliberately pay attention to the process of converging to one shared long-term vision and goal and keep changing what they want far after a goal has been set. An important precondition is thus often not met.

The business development consultancy firm also supports this root cause finding and thus goal congruence is seen as an aspect that should be addressed by an acceleration program. Furthermore, we find out that the business development consultancy firm can fulfil three specific roles within an acceleration program; as process director, trusted third party and as a mentor. The industry experts
support the notion that acceleration companies can play a valuable role in setting up collaborations and arguably also for achieving goal congruence. They see most value added in the role of process director and trusted third party. These insights provide enough inspiration for the design phase.

**Design phase**
The design phase is done by following the Delphi method; this is an iterative approach that jumps back and forth between expert opinions and preliminary designs with the aim to find consensus on a final design in the end (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). We set up a list of design principles based on CIMO logic which helps in defining a list of design requirements. We also set up a list of design parameters that aid in structurally designing a process-method for the acceleration company. A preliminary design is validated in a first round with both industry experts and acceleration company employees. The design embodies steps that encourage companies to achieve internal consensus first, then explore joint opportunities for tackling sustainability challenges and then, after a deeper analysis, reach a S.M.A.R.T. goal definition. After two rounds of validation, we propose an iterative process-design solution that expresses the different steps towards setting a shared goal, clarifies which players are necessary at each step and what the role of the acceleration company is in this process.

**Conclusion**
This thesis contributes to the literature on acceleration companies and the setup of collaborations between supply chain partners. We show support that acceleration programs that focus on existing corporates can be a valuable addition in setting up collaboration and have multiple roles to fulfil. We also find that goal congruence is not a singular act or state; it is a process that requires multiple elements to converge together. To reach goal congruence, we see that addressing internal consensus, feasibility, commitment and shared long-term vision is key for any further negotiation, and that the goal at all times should be supported by top and operational management. Though the knowledge generated here is exploratory in nature, it offers new directions for future research and it may already provide practical insights for corporates to help them set up collaborative efforts with their suppliers.
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1. Introduction

The call for a more sustainable way of doing business is ever growing stronger these days. With the obvious effects of climate change in sight and the awareness of exhaustive natural resources, society is urged to come up with different, more sustainable ways of pursuing growth and success. The corporate business life is one of the big players that has a major influence in this, but the transition towards a sustainable economy proceeds very slowly.

The focal company of this paper, Outside Inc. (OI), focuses on accelerating sustainable business models from within existing corporate organizations. It does so by empowering employees and management in becoming more entrepreneurial, and to come up with innovative and sustainable ideas for new business, products and services. Often, this is achieved through acceleration programs; these are step-by-step programs that guide a business towards new ideas within a given time period, often with a big event at the start and end to create excitement, enthusiasm and publicity within the company.

However, the impact of these programs and of OI’s impact could be vastly increased if the client-company’s supply chain would be part of the acceleration programs too. It is often argued in literature that truly sustainable business resides within entire supply chains and not just one company, as its reach is simply too limited. Yet, the step for acceleration programs to reach out towards collaboration with supply chain partners is often a stretch too far and has not been properly investigated yet.

The goal of this research will be to provide insights in how an acceleration program can help in the set-up of collaborations for sustainable efforts between companies and their current supply chain partners. The aim is to design a new method that OI can use when setting up acceleration programs for companies that look for sustainable supply chain collaboration.

To this end, we analyze both industry experts and OI’s opinions and insights on the challenges and opportunities for (the setup of) collaboration for sustainability. We analyze OI’s capabilities and core business with the required steps necessary to set up fruitful collaborations and synthesize our insights and cross-validate insights between industry experts and OI. Subsequently, we form a solution direction for properly setting up supplier collaborations. This solution direction results in a preliminary design, which will be validated and is then re-designed into a final design.

1.1. Company Description

OI is a business development consultancy firm that aims to grow new ventures with a social or sustainable goal; ventures with impact. With this goal in mind, OI believes in the value of Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE). CSE comprises a strategy for the process to create an environment within the corporate firm that allows employees to undertake their own social-entrepreneurial activities (Austin & Reficco, 2009; Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006). It is a process strategy that helps to transform a company’s strategy into one with more sustainable and social goals whilst remaining commercially viable. CSE helps a company to create opportunities for itself to explore new business areas and innovate like young start-ups do, all in the context of social/sustainable business.
OI is convinced of the idea that innovating with a social/sustainable goal requires multiple partners and networks to cooperate and sees this as the basis for CSE, and this is backed by literature evidence (SustainAbility, 2008; Grayson, McLaren, & Spitzeck, 2014). Together with numerous partners and clients, OI sets out to speed up the development of new impact-driven ventures through acceleration programs, innovation events, bootcamp sessions and business development support. By doing so, they form a valuable partner for both large companies as well as start-ups, allowing these parties to find each other and cooperate. As a result, new businesses arise through partnerships between established companies and young start-ups, supported by OI.

OI has been founded in 2012 as a joint venture by Enviu and Kirkman Company. Being only three years old, OI is itself still in a startup phase, and as yet has not been able to invest considerable time and resources in research. Currently, the company consists of two owners, both employees as well, one full-time employee, two student interns and a team of five part-time freelance business developers. It has already reached a profitable status, but is looking to further define their business proposal and extend their expertise in related areas. Hence, this research aims to contribute to this goal.

1.2. Outline

The thesis is structured as follows. First we address the main and sub-research questions that provide the backbone for this study’s analysis. Subsequently, a theoretical background on the necessary topics will be provided, that will guide the analysis and design phase. Thirdly in chapter four, the method of research and analysis will be described, after which the actual results will follow in chapter five. As this paper applies a design science based method, the next phase consists of the design of a practical tool that aids in answering the research question. The design, development, testing and evaluation will be discussed in the sixth chapter. The research concludes with a discussion and conclusion on the entire process, and offers directions for further research as well as theoretical and managerial implications.
2. Research Question Definition

OI’s (OI’s) goal in business is to make their business aware of the value of CSE as a strategy. Considering the increasing attention customers place on sustainability and social business, these partners can easily see the value CSE brings to the company. However, these companies are not the sole actor in the development of the product they sell; amongst other partners, their supply chain partners form an important group that influences how social/sustainable the product is (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Starting from the first supplier in the value chain, each consecutive supplier can increase or decrease the impact the product has on the environment (either social or environmental). Yet, not all of these partners are aware of this impact or place the same urgency to it. This can be due to their position in the value chain, their role, their knowledge of the value chain or simply their own stance in social and sustainable challenges and corresponding strategy. For companies focusing on social sustainable business, interacting with suppliers that do not have the same sustainability goals can be detrimental to their success and the effectiveness of the collaboration (Vachon & Klassen, 2008). Thus the question arises of how to gather and engage different industry partners in the pursuit of conducting social/sustainable business.

Literature has not given a satisfying answer to this question. Though much literature exists on ‘green supply chains’ or ‘green logistics’, this mainly focuses on the logistics part of the business; joint planning tools, reversed logistics and information sharing on batch sizes and customer demand is increasingly being used throughout several industries. On the contrary, little to no literature has made clear on how to set up collaborations specifically for a social or sustainable cause. A process-overview misses that illustrates how to bring partners together and how to create the right conditions for these collaborations. This research aims to contribute to the fulfilling of this gap.

Additionally, in practice too, the initiatives for objective programs that help businesses to collaborate on more sustainable initiatives are scarce, if almost non-existent. Therefore, OI has little best practices to rely on. More specifically for OI, the question becomes how they can help in fostering collaboration with suppliers for CSE initiatives through their methods of acceleration programs and innovation boosters. As indicated before, the current methods of OI mainly focus on either the internal employees of a company or fostering the connection with start-ups through acceleration programs. However, OI recognizes the value that supply chain collaboration within CSE initiatives can have, yet has no clear idea on how to foster and facilitate this within their programs. Hence the research question is as follows:

**How can OI foster more supply chain collaboration through their Corporate Social Entrepreneurship acceleration programs?**

In order to give more structure in addressing this question, we will try to come up with a design after answering the following sub-questions:

1. **What is CSE and what does it require from companies to engage in successful CSE?**

2. **What is OI’s core business and expertise?**
3. **What is OI’s current approach in their acceleration programs and how can this be an inspiration for fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability?**

4. **What are current challenges to achieve supply chain collaboration for sustainability?**

5. **What are opportunities to achieve successful supply chain collaboration for sustainability?**

Please note here that the topic of collaborations is viewed from OI’s viewpoint; this means that since OI is not a specialist on - for example - detailed supply chain logistics or sustainable finance solutions, these more in-depth dimensions of collaborations are out of scope for this research. However, it does require that we thoroughly analyze current capabilities of OI, to be sure that the eventual design is a feasible one.
3. Theoretical Background

This chapter reviews the literature on the relevant topics addressed in the research (sub)questions. We first dig into the topic of Corporate Social Entrepreneurship, addressing its definition and the necessary antecedents for companies to engage in it (Sub-question 1). We then link this to the topic of supplier collaborations for sustainability, exploring drivers, challenges and opportunities (sub-questions 4 + 5). Next, we shortly discuss the phenomenon of acceleration programs to find hints for acceleration programs for collaboration. We provide a short summary and conclusion of the theory and add CIMO-logic\(^1\) based design principles derived from this literature that may provide solution directions for the final design.

3.1. Corporate Social Entrepreneurship

In recent years, firms have increasingly started to address societal matters alongside their goals for making profit (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Whereas companies were primarily focused on satisfying their shareholders during the early years of the industrialization, they now address other possible stakeholders as well. This behaviour, in which firms take up a responsibility to minimize their damage to the environment, has been coined Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

However, in many firms, this term has become more of a necessary evil than a true positive attitude towards the environment (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Companies often embed CSR in their practices by adhering to the minimal legal restrictions put up by government, and consequently feel limited in their actions for profit making. As Porter and Kramer (2006, p.6) put it: companies doing CSR often “focus on the tension between the business and society rather than their interdependency”.

3.1.1. Sustainability challenges for business

Yet, doing good for your environment can give rise to a myriad of opportunities, and do not necessarily need to restrict profit making. More importantly, the UN has made a list of urgent social and sustainability goals that are necessary for the proper further development of our global society and environment. These are called the UN Social Development Goals and comprise sixteen areas that business (but also governments, NGOs and society at large) can use for sustainable and social strategy making. Examples of these goals are ‘Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns’ and ‘Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development’ (Sustainable Development Goals, 2016); the full list of goals can be found in Appendix A. Looking at this list, it is clear that ‘doing good’ is not only about ecological matters, but this study is, for the sake of scope, solely focused on ecological sustainability. For business, these clearly formulated and distinct areas provide some grips on the topic of sustainability, and may help them defining their own goals within these larger areas.

Sadly, it appears that many companies struggle with making their business, products and processes more sustainable. There are a number of reasons mentioned in literature which are briefly outlined below, loosely categorized along the lines of an article at GreenBiz.com (Perera & Putt del Pino, 2016):

- **No insight in environmental impact** (Abbasi & Nilsson, 2012): most traditional companies lack a good insight in the environmental impact of their business due to inadequate

\(^1\) CIMO logic will be explained later on in this chapter.
measurement tools. Not many measurement tools are available and every company needs, to some extent, a personalized version of a measurement tool for his business. Consequently, companies find it hard to set criteria and goals for future operations.

- **The span of sustainability issues reaches beyond company boundaries** (Grayson, McLaren, & Spitzeck, 2014): sustainability issues like air pollution or water scarcity are often due to many more actors than just the focal company. Often a company or entire industry needs to reach deep into its supply- and value chain to see where the root cause of these issues lies. This is an extensive, and sometimes very difficult task to do which many companies do not have the resources nor the power for. It requires overview, insight and collaboration between many actors to get to the root of the problem. This specific issue is a central theme throughout this thesis.

- **The Return on Investment in sustainability efforts is different from that of traditional business** (Kuehn & McIntire, 2014): In some cases, like battling air pollution, the return on investment for the company takes very long, beyond the timespan the financial accountants have in mind. Hence, sustainability challenges demand a long-term strategy that does not always fit in current short- and midterm focused business. Moreover, sustainability returns are often not financial but become manifest in natural returns such as a never ending pool of resources due to recycling, continuous and secure supply of energy, or the safety of the employees working with less polluting materials. Traditional companies have difficulties translating these benefits into their profit statements.

- **Current business culture hinders new approaches** (Michelini, 2012): many companies will acknowledge the importance of sustainability within their business, yet do not address it with effective strategies. Often, this is due to an incompatible company culture. As mentioned above, sustainability challenges demand more collaboration and coordination between companies, governments and other actors in the environment. This means that they have to open up towards each other; share knowledge and insights, jointly explore challenges and opportunities. However, traditional culture is based on secrecy and competition, rather than open innovation and collaboration (Chesbrough, 2003).

Yet, in spite of these challenges, there are also positive examples. An increasing number of companies (like Grameen-Danone, Vodafone M-Pesa and Odebrecht Brazil) has taken up the Social Development goals and used the principle of corporate entrepreneurship to integrate social, sustainable business models within their organizations, as they come to see the opportunities hidden there (Grameen Danone Food Ltd., 2015; M-Pesa, 2015; Spitzeck, Boechat, & Leão, 2013). These companies are trying to turn the tables by enabling their employees and management to set up new projects and ventures addressing social matters. This process is called Corporate Social Entrepreneurship (CSE). In the next paragraph we will explain the concept further, delineate drivers for CSE and identify organisational antecedents that support it. Austin et al. (2006, p.170) define CSE as “the process of extending the firm’s domain of competence and corresponding opportunity set through innovative leveraging of resources, both within and outside its direct control, aimed at the simultaneous creation of economic and social value”. In other words, CSE entails the process through which larger commercial corporations undertake activities to not only increase economic profit but also increase the added social value of their offerings through innovative business proposals. It entails making social business part of the strategy and enabling employees to explore this area for
new business opportunities. In a sense, CSE enables the firm to reach a more powerful form of CSR and can be seen as the extension of CSR into the actual strategy of a firm (Austin & Reficco, 2009).

3.1.2. Organizational Antecedents for CSE

Engaging in CSE requires a specific set of organizational capabilities and characteristics to make the initiatives a success. Based on the model of Spitzeck, Boechat and Leão (2013), we constructed the following framework that highlights five core categories that have to be embedded in a company’s strategy, see Figure 1.

![Figure 1 - CSE Antecedents model based on Spitzeck, Boechat and Leão (2013)](image)

**Strategy**, based on the writings of Austin et al. (2006) and Grayson et al. (2014), forms the centerpiece of the framework, since this dimension is the guideline for all other practices and processes within a company. Additionally, both former mentioned articles repeatedly mention the importance of integrating sustainability efforts into the company’s strategy as this will provide it with enough weight and importance to actually be picked up on by all employees and management levels (Grayson et al., 2014). The strategy should have the notion embedded that social value capturing is equally as important as economic value capturing, and that both make their own specific contribution to the company’s success (Bode & Santos, 2013). Moreover, with regard to strategy,
the company should be able to use and subsequently leverage their own core competencies rather than focus on the development of completely new ones, (Austin et al., 2006). Partnering is seen as an essential factor in strategy, as this can open up new markets and resources for the focal company, as well as innovative new business configurations (Austin et al., 2006).

**Leadership and management** together form one of the pillars most essential to conducting effective CSE. From a company’s point of view, enacting proper leadership with a clear vision may help to align all company member’s perspectives in the same direction. Once this vision is established, it legitimizes the start and pursuit of new projects focusing on social or sustainability issues (Austin et al., 2006). Reward systems, the recognition of success on the one hand and the celebration of failure on the other should act as extra motivational methods for social or inclusive business efforts (Elkington & Hartigan, 2007; Grayson, McLaren, & Spitzeck, 2014). Without (top) management support the struggle for legitimacy of the project will grow too tough and will discourage other intrapreneurs (SustainAbility, 2008).

**Company Culture** is that which is set up by top management but then has to be carried out by the entire company. For example, SustainAbility (2008) mentions the importance of the celebration of failure; at each level of business and new projects, failure should not be avoided at all costs. They should be seen as learning points and as addition to the company’s knowledge on social business projects. In addition, Grayson et al. (2014) propose the D.A.R.E.S. cultural disciplines; Dialogue, which allows employees to openly discuss their ideas throughout the process with various company members; Autonomy for employees to develop their own ideas; Risk-taking attitude that allows for failures and time to solve these problems; Experimentation with new ideas, resources and business models should be common across all business divisions; and Sustainability, which should be a normal thing to talk about at the office, just like financials or market forecasts.

**Resources** are perhaps the most essential practical issues when considering the actual setup of social/inclusive business models. Bode and Santos(2013) even argue that financial resources are the first aspect a project should ensure for the future, before pursuing any other efforts. Other vital resources for the project’s success are time, knowledge and skills, and even slack resources. A company should allow for time and space for employees to experiment, fail and try again (Grayson, McLaren, & Spitzeck, 2014; SustainAbility, 2008). Knowledge, in general, is a crucial element to start any project with. Therefore, one should start thinking of new projects from the basis of what the company already knows and is capable of.

**Organisational processes and infrastructure** form the supportive processes that will enable CSE; cross-functional and –departmental collaborations should be fostered, as they can give rise to new insights for business creation (Grayson et al. 2014; Austin et al, 2006; SustainAbility, 2008). The same authors argue for a flat hierarchy within the company. Based on Mednick’s (1962) insight that idea generation is positively associated with flatter hierarchies, they state that flatter organisations may possibly be a better enabler for idea and business generation. In line with this, power imbalances should be avoided and bureaucracy too should be minimized to keep the efforts focused on idea generation rather than paper work, especially since social efforts and results are often hard to concretize in documents and excel sheets.
Lastly, the **External Environment** plays a crucial role in the development and success of CSE (Grayson et al. 2014), resonating with the lower column about “Collaborations” in the model by Spitzeck et al (2013). Both SustainAbility (2008) and Austin et al. (2006) support this notion in several ways. Also, it may provide a solution to the sustainability challenge mentioned in chapter 3.1.1. (The span of sustainability issues reaches beyond company boundaries). In the most direct sense, the external environment can provide the company with new talented employees and new business ideas (Austin et al. 2006; Grayson et al. 2014). Obviously, the external environment can also bring inspiration for business to the focal firm. Exploratory activities into the external environment in search of new knowledge or business opportunities is essential in preventing the company from getting stuck in its own world too much. Possibly even more important are the possible partnerships that may arise from various players in the environment; the government, NGOs and even competitors may offer a multitude of options to participate in business networks or consortia (Austin, Leonard, Reficco, & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Grayson, McLaren, & Spitzeck, 2014; SustainAbility, 2008; Austin & Reficco, 2009). In this research, we focus on industry and supply chain partners.

### 3.2. Supply Chain Collaboration for Sustainability

Many firms and research papers have emphasized supply chain collaboration as key to company success (Singh & Power, 2009; Vachon & Klassen, 2008, Cao & Zhang, 2013). Collaborations then often take place as a means to achieve more efficiency, better synchronization of-, and insight in the supply chain, and to tackle the growing complexity of today’s business. Additionally, the research on Open Innovation has increasingly placed attention to the value of suppliers as a knowledge source for innovation (Chesbrough, 2003; Gassman & Enkel, 2004). Suppliers possess detailed knowledge of areas that the focal firm has little expertise in, such as the source of its products, production techniques and new technologies. Vachon and Klassen (2008) have already attributed benefits from supplier collaboration for environmental purposes to manufacturing performance, quality and flexibility. Therefore, the thought arises that these suppliers may also play a valuable role in partnering with the focal firm on CSE initiatives.

**3.2.1. Collaboration vs Cooperation**

Before identifying drivers for collaboration, the concept of collaboration needs some further detailing. Currently, research is divided on what collaboration actually means, and a plethora of sub-definitions and synonyms exists that all mean something slightly different, for example; coordination, cooperation, co-creation, co-innovation, integration and joint value creation. We base our definition of the term ‘collaboration’ on the explanation given by Cao and Zhang (2013). This explanation makes a clear distinction between cooperation, coordination and collaboration; coordination is about synchronizing decision making due to interdependence of tasks between one another. Cooperation is defined as having the same direct incentives for doing business with each other, e.g. risks and cost sharing. Collaboration then, is the situation where goal congruence exists and companies have integrated efforts with each other to reach this larger goal (Cao & Zhang, 2013). It is pursued, usually, through informal relationships and focuses on making everyone’s share and benefits larger through collaboration. This definition also resembles that which most CSE initiatives focus on; it is the same idea of tackling a problem by adopting an inclusive and cross-disciplinary, cross-partner approach that jointly creates new solutions. To be clear, collaboration is thus more than, say, sharing demand planning or logistics information, and it is more than sharing risks and benefits; it is about jointly defining, analysing and solving a jointly defined business challenge. We
chose this explanation as it fits with the demands sustainability challenges come with, taking a more long-term and partnership-intense perspective that can tackle these challenges at the root, not the branches. Since goal congruence is a precondition for collaboration, we zoom in on this a bit more in the next section to get a good understanding of what goal congruence entails.

### 3.2.1.1. Goal Congruence

Though much has been said about the importance of openness and trust, it is not very easy to achieve this between two partners. Choosing the right partners can already benefit the level of trust, but this effort is in vain if partners do not agree on the final goal; when there is no goal congruence. Goal congruence has repeatedly been mentioned in literature as a facilitator for building trust between companies and it is argued that setting cooperative goals mediates the relationship between shared vision between partners and opportunism (Locke & Latham, 2006). Goal congruence exists when two or more companies envision compatible or even identical goals to be achieved in the future (Jap & Anderson, 2003). Much of the existent body of literature on the topic of inter-organizational goal congruence agrees that goal congruence can help in preventing opportunism (Minagawa, 2010), results in more trust, and less uncertainty in the collaboration (Cuevas, Julkunen, & Gabrielsson, 2015). Moreover, negative effects of power asymmetry may be diminished by goal congruence through an increase in confidence of achieving the final goal that is beneficial for all (Cuevas, Julkunen, & Gabrielsson, 2015). Though not much literature focuses on the actual practice of achieving goal congruence, a synthesis of articles shows that achieving goal congruence begins with a shared corporate vision (Badaracco, 1991), organizational motivation (Hamel, 1991) and long-term strategy (Lasher, Ives, & Jarvenpaa, 1991). Naturally, an element of achieving goal congruence is the actual goal setting; the definition of a clear goal that all participators can support. Taking a look at what this body of research has to say about what is necessary to effectively set a goal can help in determining what is necessary for the process of achieving goal congruence. In the next paragraph we explore this in more detail.

#### 3.2.1.1.1. Higher performance through effective goal setting

Drawing on the insights of the literature on goal setting, the effects of goal setting have also been supported in various articles. Most important for this review is the supported notion that setting goals in a participative setting, with all those involved who will be affected by it, results in higher rates of accomplishment. The argument here is that by engaging all players, the goal is internalized and partially becomes the players’ own goal, thereby stimulating motivation. This also raises their commitment towards the goal, and this has been found to also increase the goal performance (Seijts & Latham, 2000). Sometimes, inspirational talks and education by leaders also increase commitment, as it can set the right example for an entire organization (Locke & Latham, 2002); this marks the importance of having an influential leader, possibly even top management, supporting the goal.

Additionally, setting the goals rather specific also increases the goal performance; it is argued that setting goals very generally results in only idiosyncratic frames of reference, in which all kinds of levels of achievement can be acceptable, since there are no clear definitions. On the contrary, making the goals clear and specific will help in guiding the efforts to collectively agreed desirable results. However, it must be noted here that this specificity does not automatically mean that it should be easier or more on short-term focus. Rather it is argued that setting the bar high will also result in more effort to reach that goal and thus eventually also has better outcomes than setting
easy goals. The more long-term related the goals are, the more complex they inherently become as they become a subject of time and unexpected events. A well-known technique for setting such specific goals is the SMART framework, commonly attributed to G.T. Doran in 1981 (Doran, 1981) which proposed the following criteria that makes up a proper goal:

- **Specific**: the goal should make the requirements apparent that are necessary to achieve the goal.
- **Measurable**: the goal should be formulated in such a way that there progress can be clearly and unambiguously measured.
- **Attainable**: The goal should be within reach of the goal-setter’s abilities and should include a statement of how the goal can be reached.
- **Relevant**: The goal should be a realistic solution to a challenge that it is within the lines of each goal-setter’s objectives.
- **Time bound**: The goal should state explicitly when the goal needs to be accomplished.

Moreover, it is agreed that within dyadic goal setting (i.e. goal setting between two separate players) can benefit from information sharing between the partners (Locke & Latham, 2002). Though providing good insights in what a good goal comprises, this framework does not consider the process towards reaching such a goal when multiple players are involved. In that respect, another well-known model called the GROW-model by John Whitmore (Whitmore, 2009) focuses a bit more on what needs to be considered before setting the goal:

- **Goal**: Thinking about what the actual endpoint is a player wants to achieve, the SMART criteria can help in defining this.
- **Reality**: This considers the current situation of the player versus the desired situation in terms of requirements and challenges.
- **Obstacles and Options**: This step analyzes the challenges and opportunities that exist between the current state and the desired end goal.
- **Way forward**: This step considers the actual concrete steps necessary towards the goal, and provides an action plan to achieve it.

The GROW model has been widely used in the coaching and advisory branch, but has mainly been applied to individuals rather than a combination of different companies. Still, the insights and the relative success of the model may serve as an example for a multi-company situation.

### 3.2.2. Drivers for collaboration

Following the Knowledge Based View, which contends that a company’s competitive advantage is derived from the way it creates, stores and deploys knowledge, we argue that a prominent driver for interfirm collaborations is **knowledge**. Gaps within the company between its own knowledge base and the envisioned product portfolio can be aided by knowledge exchange with external partners, increasing firm performance (Heiman & Nickerson, 2002; Lawson, Petersen, Cousins, & Handfield, 2009). Moreover, interfirm collaborations also reduce the risks of not being able to meet future knowledge requirements due to the changing environment (Grant & Baden-Fuller, 2004; Grant & Baden-Fuller, 1995); firm partners may already possess the right expertise to tackle this. Hence, this could also be beneficial for CSE initiatives to lower the initial perceived risk.
Increasingly often, the sheer topic of sustainability (Porter & Kramer, 2006) is a motivation for collaboration, as companies come to see that they are not the only one struggling with regulations and ever growing public concern about corporate sustainability efforts. Furthermore, they also acknowledge the fact that sustainability issues often reach beyond their own control, though they do bear the responsibilities for it. The globalizing industry calls for more unified action and goal setting to overcome these problems.

**Cost reduction** (Cao & Zhang, 2013; Heiman & Nickerson, 2002) can also be a motivator for supply chain collaboration, as joint processes can vastly increase the efficiency of logistics and other operations. Continuing with this idea, an entire supply chain may become more efficient through collaboration, which possibly may result in competitive advantage of the entire chain, this too can be a driver. Besides the more operational sides, gaining expertise or market access through another firm can take away the costs of exploring and exploiting themselves.

On a more creative and constructive level, **innovation** (Cao & Zhang, 2013; Dyer & Singh, 1998; Grant & Baden-Fuller, 2004) can be a driver for collaboration. Through merging knowledge-bases or organizational production capabilities, new possibilities for products and services may arise. With the growing significance of innovation for companies to sustain competitive advantage and growth, this driver is becoming increasingly important as a stimulus for collaborative efforts.

A last, but very interesting driver for collaboration with close supply chain partners resides in the **mutual sharing of risks and benefits** (Cao & Zhang, 2013). It is widely agreed upon that the accruing benefits and risks of collaboration should be split fairly according to investment and that every party should benefit from the collaboration. The even splitting of risks can be a motivator to pursue a project that one company alone would otherwise have found too risky.

### 3.2.3. Opportunities and challenges for collaboration

Now that possible motivations for collaboration have been clarified, we will shortly turn to some existing opportunities and challenges in collaborations that have already been identified by literature. Note that these are additional challenges to those that were mentioned in the light of reaching more sustainability in business.

Regarding collaborations in general, we see that the extent of openness is determinant for the extent of knowledge sharing; being open about what the company will use the knowledge for, will help in building trust, and this will encourage knowledge sharing (De Jong & Klein Woolthuis, 2008). Trust, as a dimension on its own, is critical for long term collaboration (Cao & Zhang, 2013; Cuevas, Julkunen, & Gabrielsson, 2015). Yet, a company should not be ignorant of the dangers too much openness proposes; knowledge sharing without appropriate mechanisms for protecting the ideas that arise may result in opportunistic behaviour of partners, especially when one of the partners foresees short-term gains within a long-term collaboration (Laursen & Salter, 2006). Hence, proper coordination of efforts and managing the right appropriation mechanisms that ensure that all partners benefits are equally spread are of the essence, and it is therefore not strange to see that many companies are reluctant of collaboration precisely because of lack of them (Dekker, 2004).

Uncertainty in general proposes a major challenge in collaboration; it is impossible to know every detail of each other’s exact capabilities and intentions before the start of the collaboration, and besides that, governmental regulations can also form a basis for uncertainty (Abbasi & Nilsson,
With special attention to sustainability collaborations, Abbasi and Nilsson (2012) also point out that complexity, costs, operationalisation and strategy can be obstacles within collaborations. Complexity is argued from the point of view that supply chains themselves are increasingly becoming more globalized and harder to overview and coordinate. Operationalisation resides in the actual merging and coordination of activities of two collaborating companies; slow decision making and unclear accountabilities are paramount to this. Then there is the issue of costs; companies often argue that they should obtain financial benefits for being green, and otherwise there is no point in doing so. Being green requires investments of which the return may lay in the far future, which results in the fact that these investments are not seen as such, but as costs. This attitude along with an often short- or midterm focused strategy hardens the process of designing feasible business cases, since sustainability issues are often tackled in more long-term oriented business models. As mentioned, the prevailing trend of short-term focus operations and strategy can be detrimental to long-term collaboration as well as sustainability related success.

Opportunities for collaboration for sustainability thus reside in openness and trust, long term strategy thinking, finding proper business cases that satisfy both short- and long term cost demands, clear coordination and explanation of tasks and goals for the sake of operationalisation and accountability principles for all partners to overcome the complexity issue. Furthermore, focusing on the creation of openness, decrease of uncertainty and increase in trust between partners, we found that finding and working with the right partners is crucial. However, the secrecy that companies keep in fear of giving away their competitive edge, thwarts the process of finding out the true intentions, goals and meanings between partners. This challenges the extent of trust partners have towards each other, and thus finding the right partner and knowing his intentions is key to build trust.

With regards to the long-term and complex character of sustainability issues, and the need for in-depth problem solving, close relationships are preferred over arms-length relations (Grayson, McLaren, & Spitzec, 2014; Michelin, 2012). Close relationships with suppliers are often characterized by long-term orientation and commitment (Cao & Zhang, 2013; Van de Vrande, Lemmens, & Vanhaverbeke, 2006). The sheer endurance of this relationship is already a facilitator of increased knowledge exchange compared to arms-length suppliers. Accordingly, a main driver for close relationships for both sides is the exchange of deep and specific, and in some cases tacit knowledge (Hansen, 1999). Other drivers pertain to the goal both companies have, especially with regard to social or environmental goals, a long-term orientation is inevitable. Again, please note the relevance of goal congruence as a precondition for collaboration. Conclusively, having close relationships with the supply chain partners represents an opportunity for supply chain collaboration for sustainability.

### 3.3. Accelerator Programs

Acceleration companies are a rather new phenomenon that have increasingly gained popularity since the first seed-acceleration program company, Y-Combinator, was founded in 2005. Since the area is very young, research about it is scant, and so also a comprehensive definition is amiss. Generally though, acceleration companies set up acceleration programs which aim to help, fund and educate young startups. Oftentimes, this is a short-term process of approximately 12 weeks (this may differ per company), in which the startups are assisted with mentorship of entrepreneurial
professionals, network opportunities, office space, internet and other necessary business facilities (Hoffman & Radojevich-Kelley, 2012). The role of the actual acceleration company resides in monitoring and guiding progress of the participants, serving as an independent and objective partners who is there to help. The programs usually consist of different phases and culminate into a public event where all startups can pitch their business ideas (Cohen & Hochberg, 2014). Though evidence is scarce, both Hoffman and Radojevich-Kelley (2012) and Cohen and Hochberg (2014) find that startups coming from acceleration programs have higher success rates and more often get follow-up funding than other startups, and most of the success is attributed to the mentor-role the acceleration company takes.

So far, we have discussed the idea behind acceleration programs for startups. However, the scope of this research does not consider startups, but established companies that have vested connections, ties and responsibilities in existing supply chains. Literature on this type of program is, to the best of our knowing, non-existent, and even a search into practical examples of such programs yielded no results. Further analysis through data collection should shed a light on the possibilities, challenges and conditions for such programs.

3.4. Conclusion and CIMO-logic design principles

This literature review has zoomed in on three major relevant issues for this research: CSE, supply chain collaboration for sustainability and acceleration programs. We provide a short summary and conclusion here, and through CIMO logic attach design principles to these findings. CIMO (logic) stands for Context, Intervention, Mechanism, Outcome. CIMO logic represents a design support method that helps to develop design propositions after analysing contexts. The general idea of a CIMO-based design proposition is the following prescription: in a given context (C), use a certain type of intervention (I) that triggers a generative mechanism (M), which will result in a desired outcome (O) (Denyer, Tranfield, & Van Aken, 2008). In this research, the context will be acceleration businesses aiming to increase supply chain collaboration for sustainability. The desired outcome, obviously, would be increasing the extent of supply chain collaboration for sustainability. The Intervention and Mechanism-part will have to become clear from literature and data analysis.

Literature on CSE has highlighted organizational antecedents that increase the chances of success of CSE initiatives. The most important antecedent is found in the company’s strategy, where sustainability should have a central place. These antecedents can form the basis of selection for candidates for an acceleration program. If none of the above antecedents are present in either of the participating companies for a supply chain collaboration program, success rates of the program may fall short of expectations. If one of the companies does not possess a certain antecedent, conflicts (based on a difference in commitment, way of organization or resources) may arise which can be detrimental to the collaboration.

In addition, current challenges were addressed that hinder corporate businesses from accurately taking action to become more sustainable. These challenges represent focus areas that corporates and their supply chain partners should be aware of, so that they can actively try to tackle these and jointly develop solutions. These may serve as an example or end goal that can be kept in mind when trying to achieve goal congruence.
Building on the CSE antecedent of collaboration with the external partners, the literature proceeded with an analysis on supply chain collaboration. Drivers here can be knowledge, innovation, sustainability, (internal) cost reduction, and the sharing of mutual benefits and risks. Then we discussed the challenges and opportunities for collaboration. Openness and trust, long term strategic thinking, clear coordination and explanation of tasks and accountability principles for all partners were mentioned as antecedents for collaboration. Openness and trust foster knowledge and information sharing and are the basis of close cooperation.

Design Principle 1: An acceleration program for supply chain collaboration for sustainability (C), should focus on creating openness and trust (I) which will trigger companies to share knowledge (M) which will contribute to fostering and maintaining a mutually fruitful collaboration for sustainability (O).

Long term strategic thinking is essential since most sustainability issues can only be tackled in the long term. Moreover, partnerships are intensive undertakings which also cost resources, which are only worthwhile if it lasts in the long run. Having a long term strategy prevents short-term opportunism at either side since both companies benefit more from a long-term close partnership than achieving a short-term personal win, and will therefore not jeopardize this by pursuing short term personal goals.

Design Principle 2: An acceleration program for supply chain collaboration for sustainability (C), should embed long term strategic thinking in the company’s business model (I) which will prevent short term opportunism by companies and facilitates the embedding of long-term sustainability goals (M) so that long term collaborations for sustainability can be fostered (O).

Lastly, proper task division, coordination and responsibility delegation are essential to keep track of progress and maintain control. It is the only way to tackle the often complex matters of sustainability issues that can span global distances, multiple cultures and diverse tasks.

Design Principle 3: An acceleration program for supply chain collaboration for sustainability (C) should guide companies in installing clear coordination mechanisms and task explanation (I) so that operational complexity is reduced (M) which will foster collaboration for sustainability.

Hence, we see that many challenges exist that call for joint problem solving. A first element that could decrease issues is the relationship with partners. It was found and argued that having close relationships with a long-term perspective between partners are a more promising method of collaborating than relationships that have a more arms-length character.

Design Principle 4: An acceleration program for supply chain collaboration for sustainability (C), should direct partners towards a close and long-term relationship (I) which will increase trust, openness, and knowledge sharing (M) which will foster collaboration for sustainability (O).

A second element that might simplify collaborations is goal congruence, which was already stated as a precondition for collaboration. Goal congruence means that different partners in a collaboration have compatible, if not the same goals for their efforts for sustainable developments. Goal congruence helps in building trust and decreases uncertainty. Moreover, it has been found that goal congruence can mitigate power asymmetry and also decrease opportunism by other players. The literature on goal setting provided some directions that partners trying to reach goal congruence
bear in mind. For example, the SMART framework helps in defining the final goal, and it was stated that jointly creating a shared vision also supports reaching goal congruence. Moreover, the GROW model can aid in the coaching towards reaching such specifically defined goals.

Design Principle 5: An acceleration program for supply chain collaboration for sustainability (C) should increase goal congruence between partners (I) which would trigger more trust and decrease uncertainty(M), which will foster supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).

This provides insights for an acceleration company on how to design the step-by-step program. However, the exact methods of how to reach goal congruence between multiple supply chain partners was not well understood yet, as most literature focused on individual coaching and personal incentives. The complications as described in the challenges for sustainability collaboration are not addressed here, and it is not clear what role exactly would best suit the acceleration company in this process.

Lastly, we explored the literature on acceleration companies and programs, only to find out that all literature was focused on seed-accelerations, rather than accelerations for existing corporates. Still, some insights suggest that the seed-acceleration programs do have a positive influence on the start-ups they guide, and this is a hopeful insight for other acceleration companies. This research will have to empirically investigate whether other types of acceleration companies also have a positive effect on their participants.
4. Research Method

In this chapter, we describe the research method as a whole, and subsequently the methods of data collection and analysis.

The method of research employed here is design based research, as we are looking for a solution to the question of how to initiate Corporate Social Entrepreneurship in combination with supply chain collaboration through the use of acceleration programs. So far, little research is done on acceleration programs; only the topic of ‘seed accelerations’, which specifically focus on the acceleration of start-ups has had some attention of the academic world. However, research on accelerations aimed at already established companies and in the light of Corporate Social Entrepreneurship is non-existent, let alone this in combination with supply chain collaboration. Moreover, also the topic of Corporate Social Entrepreneurship is not very broadly and deeply researched. Hence, an exploratory approach to this topic is most applicable, and to this end, a qualitative research method is chosen. More specifically, we will follow the Design Cycle (based on (Polya, 1945)), as depicted in Figure 2. Congruent with design thinking, an iterative approach will be most effective in finding the best solutions. Though iterative in nature, for sake of clarity, the process as illustrated in Figure 3 is presented as chronological, and consists of three main parts; data collection, data analysis and design. In the next sections we will describe data collection and analysis in more detail, before proceeding to an actual description of the analysis results.

![Design Cycle](image)

**Figure 2 - Design cycle**

**Figure 3 - A divergent and convergent process covering the data collection, analysis and design phases**

### 4.1. Data collection

Data collection is done in an iterative fashion, to allow the researcher to start with a broad topic, and through iterations converge on one specific area. This means that in between the different moments of data collection, analysis already takes place on the previous ones. The first two phases are directed at identifying main topics and challenges, and hence is a divergent step; gathering as much insights as possible. The two later phases are directed at convergence towards one specific topic.
Phase 1: Gathering insight in OI’s capabilities, approach and challenges
First, semi-structured interviews with OI are held. Based on some clues about the business found on the company website, a semi-structured interview offers the options to address very specific elements with narrowly defined answer-space, but also leaves space for new topics that may surface through open conversation. The interviews with the two founders of OI are directed at finding out what the current business exactly is and how this business is being realized in practice. This is necessary to find out the company’s current capabilities and those areas where improvement can be realized. Furthermore, questions regarding the use of an acceleration program for supply chain management will be asked. Appendix A contains the actual interviews that were kept with OI.

Phase 2: Gathering insight on the topic of supply chain collaboration in practice
The other group of interviewees consists of experts from several companies and current customers of OI that preferably already have some experience with acceleration programs. For this group, the aim is to extract expert statements on what would be the best ways to achieve supply chain collaboration based on case examples. To this end, open, semi-restrictive interviews are the method used here; this means that questions and directions for topics are prepared, but that the interviewer is free to deviate from this and spontaneously ask new questions as they pop up during the conversation. As a result, no interview is the same and not all questions are evenly addressed at all participants. Through snowball-sampling, a group of ten people is selected that have different functions related to supply chain, procurement and sustainability. Snowball sampling is the process of selecting interviewees by defining certain selection criteria, and subsequently finding new interviewees through the connections of the first group (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). This approach results in a broad view on the topic of collaboration and can help in finding topics for further literature review. Moreover, having different experts is also representative of the current customer base of OI, which is quite diverse in terms of size and industry. The first group of participants is selected based on their role within the company. Company and individual’s names are anonymized for the sake of privacy. Below in Table 1 follows an overview of the type of people interviewed, Appendix B contains the interview protocol for this group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Procurement manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Offshore</td>
<td>Sustainability advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Maritime</td>
<td>Supply chain manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Textile &amp; Carpet</td>
<td>Sustainability manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Construction &amp; Architecture</td>
<td>Contract manager procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Construction &amp; Architecture</td>
<td>Sustainability manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consumer Electronics</td>
<td>Sustainable procurement manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consumer Electronics</td>
<td>Sustainability advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Sustainability project manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Sustainability communications manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 - Overview of industry experts
Phase 3: Consolidating the insights from both types of interviews

The interviews with industry experts and subsequent analysis thereof in combination with literature research, bring new insights that raise new questions for OI. Therefore, a second interview is held to dig deeper into the topic of how OI could assist in fostering supply chain collaboration, this interview can be found in Appendix A. Since it is expected that views and approaches differ between OI and the industry experts, OI is asked in a semi-structured interview to argue which of the industry expert outcomes they recognize from experience and have become apparent in other programs. This will bring up new challenges and topics to discuss. Moreover, this phase allows us to ask more in detail which way OI sees itself as a contribution to the setup of collaborations.

Phase 4: Converging to a specific challenge area

This phase is again based on interviews with both respondents from the previous phase but also new industry experts; an overview can be found in Table 2. However, the interview is this time guided by a rough visualization of the current approach OI actually takes in practice. This visualization helps in directing the interviews to deeper topics and clearer argumentation on the utility and importance of some of the phases represented. This provides confirmation for a few notions earlier found in interviews but that lacked explicitness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>OI</td>
<td>Business development consulting</td>
<td>Acceleration program designer, CSE expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>OI</td>
<td>Business development consulting</td>
<td>Acceleration program designer, sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Textile &amp; Carpet</td>
<td>Sustainability manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consumer Electronics</td>
<td>Sustainable procurement manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Sustainability project manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Sustainability communications manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Circular infrastructure</td>
<td>Supply chain management young professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Packaging industry</td>
<td>Supply chain management young professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Business &amp; strategy consulting</td>
<td>Over 20 years experience in procurement consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Over 15 years experience in supply chain management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 - Overview interviewees phase 4
4.2. Data analysis methods

Interview quantitative analysis: As a first attempt of seeing important elements in the set of interviews in each phase, a simple quantitative study was performed; how many people say more or less the same thing and how does this differ per company type? Though the number of respondents is never enough to attribute any significance to these numbers, they do give a hint about the more and less important or prominent issues at hand.

Interview transcription and coding: During all phases, interviews were analysed through transcription and coding of the conversations. This is the process of identifying keywords in the interviews that may be of relevance for the research topic (especially remarkable or repeated words or phrases are important), and then looking for overarching topics, themes or patterns (Saldaña, 2009). These themes or patterns may provide an answer to the research question, confirm literature findings, but can also highlight new directions to explore. Furthermore, similar to cross-case studies, the interviews are compared with each other to identify common answers or see where particular differences may arise. Both the codes as well as direct interview excerpts (quotes and/or stories) are also compared to findings in literature to check for inconsistency or correspondence.

Graphical representation validation: After analysis of phase 3, a graphical representation of the acceleration program process is created. This visualization was used for validation in phase 4 and aided in gaining a better and more detailed view of the process and its current challenges. This graphical representation also guided the way to the design phase, in which again graphical representation is used for analysis. However, we leave this for chapter 6 to discuss in further detail.
5. Results

In this chapter, the results per analysis phase as mentioned in chapter four are described consecutively. The chapter concludes with a final conclusion that merges the insights of all phases as well as literature insights, as a stepping stone towards the design phase which is described in chapter 6.

5.1. Phase 1 – Company analysis

The analysis of phase 1, the interviews with the founders of OI reveals the following insights concerning their core business, capabilities, approach and challenges. Conclusively, this phase ends with an analysis of OI’s capabilities to address supply chain collaboration with their CSE acceleration programs.

5.1.1. OI core business

OI’s core business is based upon stimulating Corporate Social Entrepreneurship in existing companies. Their main focus rests on established companies that are looking for innovative ways to reach more social and/or sustainable business. Their overall approach of exploiting this core business is exploited through the following three pillars:
1. Inside-out projects: where companies encourage their own employees to engage in entrepreneurial efforts that may grow out to new ventures.
2. Outside-in projects: where companies are encouraged to partner with external partners (often start-ups) for new business opportunities
3. Sprout projects: day-events that stimulate innovation and cooperation and educate companies about CSE, innovation and sustainability.

Though Outside-in projects could also encompass collaborative projects with supply chain partners, OI has little experience in it as it has mostly focused on collaborations with start-ups so far.

5.1.2. OI core capabilities

Interviews and questions about past experiences reveal that the company’s main assets are their expertise in strategy and business development, generating excitement and enthusiasm – “buzz” - about CSE, connecting the right people and companies and supporting them in business development through several phases. They exploit a strong business mindset towards their customers throughout their projects, and therein focus on both the creative and strategic dimensions of business development.

5.1.3. OI current approach

The inside-out and outside-in projects always happen in a rather co-creative fashion, with the aim to deliver customized approaches for each specific situation. Therefore, not one project exactly resembles the other, and great differences in assignments over the last three years exist. However, OI always starts off with a general approach, and adapts it along the way after conversation with the client. This approach is visualized in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 - OI project approach
• **Spark:** this phase is about defining a clear and concrete innovation challenge for the client-company in question.
• **Scout:** here OI is guiding the process towards finding the right people to be the ‘champions’ of the program: they will have to motivate others to participate, and they should be persons that have some decision making authority.
• **Sprout:** this phase is about coming up with ideas and designing preliminary business models.
• **Spin:** a selection of ideas from the sprout-phase move to the spin-stage to seriously investigate their feasibility within the company setting. Higher management is always involved in this to show commitment to the program.
• **Scale:** OI assists in business development and the actual realization of new business initiatives through mentoring, offering network opportunities and evaluation sessions.

5.1.4. Challenges
Both interviewees mention several difficulties and challenges throughout the process. The spark and scout process are both seen as the crucial elements for further progress. If the client-company cannot come up with an appealing call to action and clear goal in mind, the program will not get any support from the employees. Consequently, during the scout phase, if no ‘champions’ for the program can be found, or the responsible persons cannot agree on what the actual idea and goal behind the program is, the program cannot get started. On the other hand, the Spin and Scale phase are more representative of the actual outcomes the programs yielded, so if these phases do not bring anything new to the table, the perception of success of the program is lower. Yet companies, according to OI, often see other benefits besides the actual outcomes, such as more motivated employees and education about business development.

Moreover, though not many supply-chain related programs have been designed, there have been some programs that entailed the connections between multiple larger partners and start-ups. In the face of these challenges, the interviewees mention the tedious and difficult process of getting the larger companies on the same page, and how much this can be a bottleneck for the progress of the projects. ‘We did not account for that in the design, but in the end it took us almost half a year to get the companies on the same page with the same goal in mind for the rest of the program. Until that point, there was no way of even starting the actual program, as no one, not even the start-ups wanted to give their commitment to a program without a clear aim, or goal.’ Thus, in that specific case, the transition from ‘spark’ to ‘scout’ did not even happen until goal congruence between the companies was reached.

5.1.5. Compatibility OI’s approach for fostering sustainability collaboration
Overall, the current approach OI takes in their programs strongly resembles that of the seed-accelerations for start-ups described in the literature. Looking at OI’s core business, and the pillars they desire to build this upon, we see some compatibility with setting up acceleration programs for sustainability since the ‘Outside-In’ approach can be applied to industry partners as well, not just start-ups. Looking at the core capabilities, OI’s expertise in strategy and business development, their ability to create enthusiasm and connect the right people to each other, may also assist in bringing the right industry partners together and getting them in the same ‘buzz’ to do something with sustainability. Lastly, OI’s business mindset and strategic thinking capabilities may assist in helping the partners to focus on the larger and more long-term goals rather than the operational details.
Conclusively, there seems to be a rather high compatibility between OI and fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability.

5.2. Phase 2 – Expert opinions on collaboration for sustainability

The interviews with industry experts highlight interesting dimensions of collaboration that provide guidance in determining which aspects in literature are most important. A first insight entails the stark differences between opinions and approach concerning sustainability, which gives thoughts for a categorization of company attitudes towards sustainability. Though this is not based on scientific grounds nor scientific measure, it might give interesting food for thought. Secondly, the analysis provides insights in the very reasons why companies engage themselves in sustainability; this differs per company type. Thirdly, the analysis reveals current efforts and challenges that industry experts see in supply chain collaboration for sustainability and how these differ per company type. Lastly in the conclusion, an oversight is given of all opportunities and challenges, and root causes for a lack of supply chain collaboration for sustainability are revealed.

5.2.1. Typology: company attitudes toward sustainability

Some interviewees say that their company ‘does what it can to be sustainable, but it is not a top priority’ (Company C) or they would argue that ‘sustainability for us is not really that applicable in our industry’ (Company B). In other words, these companies do not see any necessity in sustainability yet; they can be categorized as negligent companies. Then there are companies that argue that they ‘do everything we can to obey to law and be compliant, and if possible try to be ahead of new additions on the current rules’ (Companies C & F). Characteristic here is that they aim to be compliant and ahead of regulations by forming those same regulations stricter, and holding their suppliers accountable if they did not comply with their regulations. The point is that this company is mainly trying to do ‘less bad’ rather than ‘truly right’. These companies can be called the compliant companies.

There are also companies that know sustainability can actually make a good business case, and that it is quite logical, especially in certain technologies, that making these technologies more durable will result in cost reduction, and possibly higher sales rates. This approach is more pro-active, though still characterized by a rather narrow focus, namely on sustainability per product; there is no overarching goal such as ‘saving the oceans’ in the business strategy. These companies are dubbed as ‘commercially sustainable companies’, as they focus on the financial gains of sustainability. Lastly, there are companies that mention sustainability as ‘the only logical and durable way to go, the only obviously right way’ (Company D). These companies have the more long term view, considering also the more overarching goals, and talked about ‘saving the earth, saving our society’. We call them the inherently sustainable companies, as everything is based on initiatives, products and processes that in themselves are automatically sustainable, rather than reducing negative impact. The insights are summarized in Table 3.

Congruent with literature and the antecedents mentioned in Figure 1, the negligent companies have no top management support for sustainability, nor resource commitment or sustainability as part of its strategy. On the contrary, the inherently sustainable companies showed mostly all of the antecedents. Hence, this analysis provides some exploratory support for the literature on CSE.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negligent</td>
<td>Companies that do not see the urgency of sustainability for their company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliant</td>
<td>Companies that primarily focus on being compliant to sustainability law and regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercially Sustainable</td>
<td>Companies that see commercially interesting options for sustainability, and actively look for sustainable applications that make products and processes more cost- and use efficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inherently Sustainable</td>
<td>Companies that see no other way for doing business than applying sustainability in every action, process, product and business they think of.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 - Typology of company attitudes towards sustainability

A more interesting view arises when we set these types on a continuum, where the negligent companies are in the beginner phase of sustainability, and inherently sustainable companies are at senior level. This allows for hybrid companies, something that was identified in an interview with a commercially sustainable company. In Figure 5, the different companies are mapped on the continuum.

5.2.2. Drivers for sustainability

Not surprisingly, the various company types and corresponding companies also have very different answers to questions regarding sustainability. We will go through the insights and separate them, where necessary, per category.

Two drivers stand out; achieving efficiency and cost reduction, and reducing direct environmental impact (either because the company itself thinks it is important but mostly due to regulatory compliance). Achieving efficiency is important for the negligent, compliant and commercially sustainable companies. For some commercially sustainable companies and all inherently sustainable companies, reducing direct environmental business was key. Moreover, the inherently sustainable companies were unanimous in that sustainability can assure them of future viability and ongoing business in the future.

Other more strategic dimensions are mentioned secondly, such as the long-term character of such business models and the chance of competitive advantage over others, only the inherently sustainable companies mentioned these as more or equally important to achieving efficiency. Comparing this with the drivers found in literature (knowledge creation, excellent innovative business cases and the reduction of internal costs), we see that especially the reduction of internal
costs is dominant among the interviewed companies. Interestingly, the aspect of ‘excellent business case’ is mentioned as a precondition for doing sustainability by mostly the compliant and commercially sustainable companies. All interviewees, except those from the inherently sustainable businesses argue that ‘sustainability itself cannot be a strategy’ and that it only works ‘if the final customer benefits from this somehow; either due to lower pricing or because the customer too values a low environmental impact’.

5.2.3. Sustainability collaboration efforts

Proceeding to a more in-depth view of how companies reach sustainability several aspects stand out. First of all, all companies argue that ‘it is a matter of an entire industry, not just one company’, thereby referring to the importance of a shared vision for an entire supply chain and even industry. Two of the inherently sustainable companies, A and D, go one step further, arguing that cross-sectoral collaborations are also part of the key towards sustainability. There is some literature that provides support for this, but in this literature we only focus on supply chain for sake of scope. The negligent and compliant seem to have similar approaches in pursuing sustainability in their business; reduction of CO2 emissions and water usage according to regulations is mentioned, along with periodical, pre-scheduled meetings with partners to discuss general business and environmental policies guided by formal contracts (less than once a year).

The commercially sustainable companies make efforts in synchronizing planning and logistics, and talk about ‘supplier events’ or ‘innovation days’, where partners meet up to discuss their opportunities and challenges within a certain area of interest, mostly product driven. Their focus is on improving existing ideas and maximizing efficiency. Here, joint problem solving is encouraged, but always limited to one product or process. Together with compliant companies, they mention that when it comes to collaboration, it is essential to specify the goals and its implications as clearly and narrowly as possible, to avoid ambiguity later on in the process.

Inherently sustainable companies seem to reach deeply into their supply chains and involve external partners in almost every step towards sustainability. There is at least monthly contact with their partners, dependent on the type of supplier, and they continuously share strategy, long-term vision and current issues with each other. Their contact is informal and contracts are only used when new ventures or actual merging of business takes place. Their relationship with partners is intense and based on informal relationships. They resemble what literature has called the close and informal long-term relationship. The following quote reflects this notion:

‘When it comes to sustainability we need to trust our partners and have a feeling that we are on the same page when we talk about the final goal, taking risks, dividing accountability and setting a plan for the long run. It comes to finding the right people within the other company that you ‘click’ with and have confidence that on both sides true efforts will be put in getting such a project off the ground.’ (Company D). Interestingly, Company D and A both mention setting up a very broad and unspecified call to action and keeping the goal also as broad as possible to allow new unexpected solutions to enter. Though this worked for them, Company H, also inherently sustainable, agrees with the other company types that goals should be as specific as possible to ensure fruitful collaboration.

Hence, we see that having a close relationship with the right partners and having congruent goals are again mentioned as essential elements, this is consistent with our findings in literature.
Moreover, it is also emphasised that part of becoming sustainable was ‘learning by doing’, since ‘not all risks, challenges nor opportunities can be apparent at the start of a project’.

5.2.4. Sustainability collaboration challenges

Overall, fear of the unknown is the biggest obstacle for starting collaboration (Company A,C,D,F,G), closely followed by a conservative and risk averse company culture (Company B,C,E) and lack of proper communication skills (A,D,H). Interestingly, the risk averse company culture can be associated with the negligent and compliant company attitudes towards sustainability. Proper communication skills are mostly mentioned by the inherently sustainable companies, whereas the fear of the unknown cannot be attributed to a specific type; we can argue that uncertainty always remains a main challenge for any company to overcome. This resembles findings in literature. More specific findings are described below.

Negligent and compliant companies complain about a lack of resources (time, room, material) to experiment with sustainable products; in other words, they deem sustainability infeasible due to lack of resources. Their company just does not make any resources available, even though sustainability managers ask for it (Company B,C, and E). This marks a dissonance between sustainability managers and top managers; there seems to be no internal consensus on the importance of sustainability. Related to this is the fact that these companies do not see any demand for sustainable products from their customers: ‘Look, sustainability is nice and really important and all that, but as long as our customer only looks at pricing and our competition is able to provide them cheaper goods than we can, it is not on our priority list. In a tender process, you don’t even have the chance to explain why your price is higher; then you are already out.’ (Company E).

Another issue mentioned by compliant and also commercially sustainable companies are the difficulties of getting everyone on the same page and making sure that incentives are clear and evenly spread; everybody must benefit. This issue is related to what literature calls ‘goal congruence’; having similar or compatible goals. Company E argues that sometimes not being able to reach goal congruence is due to the fact that companies sometimes keep changing their desires and preconditions along the way. Company C and F mention that feasibility is hard to estimate upfront and therefore people do not know what they sign up for, causing the project to stall later on when things become more specific. Companies B,C,E and F all mention ‘wrong partners’ as a cause; often this was supported by sayings like ‘You have to match with each other, feel that click and have the trust that your partner will do as agreed. Sometimes you just know that it is not really going to happen, either because of the person you are talking with, resource constraints or lack of support by the rest of the business. Then you have to find yourself a different person within that company or find a completely new company’ (Company E, supported by Company C and F).

The inherently sustainable companies stress that there is a lack of holistic perspective and vision throughout industries that possibly hinders collaboration for sustainability. It is argued that the lack of having a shared goal and according commitment had many times been a reason to end a partnership, as was the case when partners did not comply to already existing standards. One interviewee of an inherent sustainable company also mentions a lack of communication skills to have the right conversations for the right goals. It is argued that many of the more ‘traditional’ companies are not used to co-create, be open and transparent and share knowledge.
### Drivers for sustainability
- Cost efficiency
- Competitive advantage
- Long-term business model
- Cost efficiency
- Long-term company viability
- Decrease/avoidance of environmental damage

### Current sustainability efforts
- Compliance to regulation
- Annual meetings with partners according to contract
- Compliance to regulation, actively staying ahead
- Meetings with partners according to contracts or to discuss regulations
- Decreasing impact to decrease costs
- Sharing long-term vision with partners
- Ideation with partners for every part of the supply/value chain
- Exploring common challenges and opportunities
- Transparent communication about challenges

### Challenges for collaboration
- No resources
- No trust
- Risk averse culture
- Hard to align goals and incentives with partners, and also within company itself
- Wrong partners
- Lack of commitment
- Limited resources, limited feasibility
- Limited trust and connection between partners, wrong partners
- Lack of commitment
- Feasibility uncertain
- Customer demand for sustainability is low
- Hard to align goals and incentives with partners
- Conflicting company cultures
- Lack of commitment
- Uncertainty of ideas
- Hard to align goals and incentives with partners
- Lack of commitment

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Table 4 - Summary of phase 2 findings
5.2.5. Synthesis interviews with literature

Synthesis of literature and interviews with industry experts results in the following two figures, Figure 5 - Fishbone diagram challenges for collaboration illustrates the categories in which literature and industry experts identify challenges for collaboration in supply chains for sustainability. The main categories are the ones to the top and bottom of the picture in squares. These have been extracted from the article by Abbasi and Nilsson (2012), except Culture; this is a new category that was found when asking about challenges; company culture is one of the reasons why companies may vary in their efforts for sustainable business. In this picture, arrow shapes indicate where the finding comes from, see the legend for detailed explanation. Taking a different perspective, Figure 7 illustrates the chances as seen by companies and literature.

Figure 6 - Fishbone diagram challenges for collaboration

Figure 7 - Fishbone diagram opportunities for collaboration
Though Figure 6 provides a complete overview of both interview and literature findings, it does not separate the root causes of the secondary issues. Here, we best distinguish between causes that appear during a collaboration, and causes that appear during the setup and initiation of a collaboration, so before the actual collaboration comes into practice. Naturally, the latter type of challenges are closer to the root cause than those later in the process as they form the foundation for the rest. Hence, we identify those types of causes as root causes, and causes that appear within a collaboration as secondary causes. For example, issues like uneven spread of risks, lack of criteria and limited overview of the supply chain are issues that can be resolved through and within proper collaboration, and can thus be called secondary challenges; they come after the agreement on collaborative intent of all companies. On the contrary, interviewees indicate that topics such as finding the right partners, having a long-term strategy and having goal congruence between partners lie far more at the root of shaping collaborative efforts. Table 5 shows the root and secondary causes based on this division.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root Causes</th>
<th>Secondary Causes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Strategy: short &amp; midterm thinking</td>
<td>• Complexity: Limited overview of supply chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strategy: wrong partner</td>
<td>• Complexity: Many internal and external stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strategy: lack of goal congruence</td>
<td>• Costs: higher pricing for sustainable products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conflicting Company Cultures</td>
<td>• Costs: highest quality for lowest costs on short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uncertainty (fear of the unknown, doubts about demand, inherent risks of collaboration)</td>
<td>• Operationalisation: Uneven spread of risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Operationalisation: Lack of sustainability criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Operationalisation: Slow decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uncertainty: insource vs outsource hesitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uncertainty: doubts about quality and logistics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 - Root & Secondary causes for lack of supply chain collaboration for sustainability

5.3. Phase 3 – Validation of phase 2 with OI

The goal of this phase is to find preliminary validation of the insights of phase 2, and built on these insights to see where OI can contribute. Hence, we present the OI representatives the insights (figure 6 and 7) and analyse their feedback on these. Secondly, the opportunities and challenges OI sees itself are up for reflection, casting better light on their current approach and challenges. Lastly, it is discussed how the company type may affect the success of OI’s programs. This helps in defining whether OI can be of added value for all or just some types of companies.
5.3.1. Response to preliminary findings of phase 2

Based on Figure 7, OI points out which areas they see themselves most valuable in, and the result is shown in Figure 8, which thus illustrates the main directions for input by OI and chances to grab on to. Though culture is illustrated here too, both interviewees indicate that this is mostly a spill-over effect; it is not something OI can simply install at companies or which can be integrated through such a short process like an acceleration program. However, they can educate about the right culture, which might instigate the first small changes in mindset of the participants.

The programs of OI focus on strategy making and business development, hence the areas ‘strategy’ and ‘operationalisation’ lay close to OI’s current capabilities. The ‘Uncertainties’ section is an ambiguous topic which sparked a discussion about roles and expertise of OI. It is argued that Uncertainties is not something OI can say is an ‘expert’ in, but on the other hand they argue that their acceleration programs, because of the ‘acceleration bubble’ that they create, do reduce external uncertainties. The presence of OI also is a comforting factor for companies in the program. The interviewees confirm the difficulties mentioned in Figure 8. Both interviewees speak from experience when they address the hassle of bringing the right partners together, and then jointly guiding them towards talking about the same goals. It is argued that any progressions stall if something goes wrong in these processes. An interesting notion from both interviewees is that they were sometimes seen as the ‘trusted third party’. This role allows their customers to discuss the progress in confidentiality, and places OI in the position to tweak and turn opinions of companies by iteratively discussing the programme with the others. As a matter of fact, this is the way how they made previous programs succeed; serving as a liaison person between participating companies.

5.3.2. OI added value for supply chain collaboration for sustainability

OI’s added value can be described in two ways; in terms of expertise and in terms of role. The expertise became apparent in their know-how of connecting business, defining corporate strategies and determining the operational necessities for the execution of this strategy within the company. OI is also educated in cultural influences in the process, which they try to bring across through the methods and presentation in their programs.
Concerning roles, OI primarily sees itself in an overarching, process-overlooking position. They see themselves as guiding the processes all participants go through. With regards to some specific issues important to sustainability they also see themselves as an educator or mentor, though they do not deliberately present themselves as such; they try to bring it across through actionable exercises for the participants; learning by doing. Lastly, as discussed, they sometimes fulfil the role of a trusted third party, with whom all participants can discuss and evaluate the program and progress in confidentiality.

Table 6 below shows this division of OI’s roles and expertise as became apparent from interviews with OI itself. Though the mentor and process director role have been found in literature as well (Hoffman & Radojevich-Kelley, 2012), the trusted third party has not. Nor have industry experts indicated this to be of true added value. This deserves further research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Expertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor/Educator</td>
<td>Strategy, CSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Director</td>
<td>Operationalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusted third party</td>
<td>Corporate culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 - Roles and Expertise of OI

5.3.3. Fit of OI programs with company types

Confronted with the difference in typologies of companies as shown in table 2, OI confirms that they too had seen stark differences in how companies handle the CSE ‘philosophy’ they educated. Importantly, they argue that negligent and compliant companies, for as far their experience reached, had more difficulty with the acceleration programs as they were often very hesitant about sharing knowledge with others. Their culture, says OI, is not accustomed to open sharing, learning by doing and co-creation. The commercially sustainable companies varied in answers; knowledge sharing in terms of products is common, whereas deliberately discussing strategy towards a higher goal is not done. Also their risk aversion was quite high. With regards to the inherently sustainable companies, OI argues that often these were less interested in participating in their programs, but were glad to serve as exemplars and mentors, as they were already familiar with topics like CSE, co-creation, learning by doing and open knowledge sharing. Though the evidence is incomplete, it seems logical that the target customer for OI would be the compliant and commercially sustainable businesses. The negligent companies show too little affection with the subject and have other priorities, and an acceleration program would not be accurate to deal with the cultural as well as strategic steps these companies still have to make. The inherent companies are already familiar and may serve as a catalyst or exemplar in the programs. The compliant and commercially sustainable businesses both have some sense of urgency for sustainability and recognize the growing importance and opportunity residing in it. An acceleration program company could help make them that extra, more long-term step within collaborations. In the remainder of this thesis, by ‘participants’ or ‘participant companies’ we mean these type of companies.
5.4. Phase 4 – Validation on collaboration process with OI and experts

This phase is directed at finding consensus on the overall process of setting up supply chain collaboration and finding the true bottlenecks in that process. Moreover, the function that a CSE acceleration program can fulfil within that process is also discussed.

5.4.1. Overall process of setting up supply chain collaboration

The previous phases have highlighted challenges and opportunities for supply chain collaboration for sustainability as well as insights in OI’s current approach in acceleration programs. Also, their difficulties within these were discussed, and how their capabilities would fit with the challenges and chances for collaboration addressed by literature and industry experts (phase 2). As a result, the necessities for supply chain collaboration for sustainability could be identified, and mapped into the acceleration programs by OI. This resulted in a visualisation that captures what industry experts identify as important steps, and what OI actually does, as they run into some of the challenges mentioned by industry experts and literature, but which was not made explicit in their current approach, see Figure 8, a brief explanation per stage follows below.

| Spark | Partner identification | Goal Congruence | Sprout | Spin | Scale |

**Spark:** define a call to action in a broad sense that fits with the company’s strategy and mission; the UN Social Development Goals could help picking a sustainability goal that fits the corporate strategy.

**Partner Identification:** A list of partners is made with which OI as well as the initiating company think fruitful collaborations can take place. This can be on the basis of industry, reputation, policy or presumed knowledge, etc. etc. of the identified partners.

**Goal Congruence:** The process of getting all identified partners around the table and aiming for goal congruence through joint exploration of possibilities. During this stage, it is possible that some partners leave the program if they cannot agree to a goal.

**Sprout/Spin/Scale:** same as in previous process, see Figure 4 - OI project approach.

This figure was shown to all interview experts displayed in Table 2; these interviewees are also mapped according to their attitudes to sustainability, which can be seen in Figure 10. The figure represents interviewees rather than their companies, because an individual’s attitude may vastly differ from their company’s attitude. First of all the aim is to find confirmation for the visualization in Figure 9. Though some detailing suggestions were done, the overall outline of the process is correct and confirmed by all. Most often mentioned is the fact that such processes rarely occur so linearly as suggested here, but for sake of clarity most agree that this model is convenient and sufficiently explanatory of the process. Remarkably, little differences in answers can be distinguished between the different types of companies, this suggests that the model is applicable for all types.
5.4.2. Finding bottlenecks

Some important suggestions are worth mentioning here. Interestingly, interviewees 1, 2, 7, 9 and 10 all immediately argue that partner identification is key, but that recognizing whether the match with partners is truly right only happens after repeated contact and joint exploration, which in this schedule does not take place until the step ‘Goal Congruence’. In total, goal congruence is mentioned by 80% of the respondents as the most crucial obstacle to overcome in setting up collaborations, this supports the literature definition of collaboration, in which goal congruence is mentioned as a necessary precondition. Some combine this with stage ‘Partner Identification’ as they see this inextricably linked with Goal Congruence. The compliant and negligent companies focus more on formal assessments when identifying partners, and are also unanimous in that after goal congruence, contracting would be a good method of securing commitment to the goal. Inherently sustainable companies like OI itself and company D are less fond of contracting at this stage, arguing that it can impair flexibility later on in the process. Moreover, all interviewees claim that the process in real life is not as linear as represented here, and contains iterative loops, as during each stage, partners may exit or enter the program. Additionally, three interviewees (30% of total), from compliant, commercially sustainable and inherent companies mention the discussion of exit strategies as a crucial step for decreasing uncertainty and fear of the unknown.

Furthermore, goal congruence is also put under the loop, with all interviewees mentioning the importance of commitment and having very specifically formulated goals for achieving true goal congruence. Interviewees 9 and 10 mention that before continuing to the stage of ‘Spin’, some ideas and visions must exist on how success will be measured, and how corresponding incentives will be divided. This coincides with notions earlier made by Company E and F in phase 2. OI together with company D and F agreed that companies must first have a clear mission for themselves before entering a collaboration.

5.4.3. OI Roles within the process

Subsequently, we ask interviewees how an acceleration program can be of added value in this process. All interviewees agree that having a process director was of tremendous added value, this was the most prominent role. Some interviewees mix this up with the role of a trusted third party; ‘In such instances, having someone to talk to that keeps track of all progress objectively is truly valuable, as it makes companies feel less ‘naked’ and more protected in the program.’ The role of educator was only mentioned by three interviewees (Company G, I and K) and by OI itself. So in terms of roles, process director and trusted third party seem to have the most added value according to industry experts. For the sake of scope, only one root cause can be investigated further; Goal Congruence. This cause is picked for multiple reasons:
1. Goal congruence is a precondition for collaboration, but it appears that this is often not met.
2. Goal Congruence decreases uncertainty as it forces partners to make their aims, drivers and commitment apparent. (Minagawa, 2010)
3. Goal Congruence stimulates trust between partners. (Cuevas, Julkunen, & Gabirelsson, 2015)
4. Goal Congruence was mentioned by all types of companies (negligent, compliant, commercially sustainable, inherently sustainable) and 80% of total respondents as well as literature to be a crucial element.
5. During the process of reaching goal congruence, it will become clear whether partners are a match or not, thus forming the basis for further exploration.
6. Goal congruence is the first step where companies actually have to come to terms together in a collaborative setting, and hence is the root step of any further collaboration. Any actions before that reside within the companies individually.  

5.5. Conclusion and CIMO-logic design principles

The four phases of analysis successively provided in-depth information about current opportunities and challenges for collaboration for sustainability, as well as clarification on how OI could add value. This conclusion summarizes the most essential findings. For the remainder of this thesis, we focus on achieving goal congruence. Hence, the CIMO logic design principles, are adapted to this new and more detailed situation. Context here becomes a CSE acceleration program that aims to support the achievement of goal congruence. Naturally, the final outcome ‘fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability’ remains the same. The CIMO’s are integrated throughout this conclusion.

5.5.1. OI

The current approach OI takes in its process has been investigated step by step and challenges within these programs are identified. It was found out throughout the phases that there is a slight dissonance between the current visualization of the process versus the actual process, especially when speaking of projects that engaged multiple large companies. The actual process entails two steps that seem rather tedious and challenging, but that are not mentioned in the current process; partner identification and goal congruence. OI employees confirmed that these steps were of the essence and could take up much time before the actual program was started. The process as shown in figure 9 was endorsed by all interviewees including OI, indicating the generalizability of the model for several types of companies.

Moreover, roles and expertise areas of OI were identified, as depicted in Table 7. It was found that the role of process director had 100% support of all interviewees as well as OI itself. Secondly mentioned was the role of trusted third party, adding value by decreasing uncertainty and increasing trust for participating companies. Lastly the role of educator was found. Clearly, focusing on OI as

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1 We here discuss reasons why other root causes are not investigated:
1. Long-term strategy is something very company specific. Though an acceleration program can provide some education and guidance, formulating long-term strategy is not its focus
2. Company Culture, as discussed before, is considered a spill-over effect of the acceleration programs, it is not something that can be treated directly by OI
3. Though partner selection is key, this is part of an individual company’s actions. The focal company has many degrees of freedom in selecting its own criteria and can always adapt them if necessary.
4. Finding out whether a company has truly found the right partner only starts to show when goal congruence is reached and in subsequent steps; if a company cannot reach goal congruence with the selected partners, then they probably had no fit one way or another. This fit cannot be accurately analysed upfront.
process director and trusted third party can add value to a future design to foster collaboration for sustainability.

Design principle 6: An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should act as a process director (I) which ensures all agreements are uphold and tempo is secured, hence generating trust and certainty (M) thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).

Design Principle 7: An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should act as a trusted third party (I), generating trust and a feeling of safety among partners (M) thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).

Design Principle 8: An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should act as a mentor (I), educating the participants in sustainable business development and CSE (M), thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).

5.5.2 Industry Experts
A first interesting finding in phase 2 was the distinction in attitude towards sustainability between companies. The four types, being negligent, compliant, commercially sustainable and inherently sustainable, are depicted in Table 3 and can be placed on a continuum that indicates how committed a company is towards sustainability. Not surprisingly, the type of company affected the sustainability efforts that were pursued and the perspective a company had on how to address sustainability challenges. In phase 3, when OI was asked for validation of the findings in phase 2, it became apparent that negligent companies were not the core customer group for OI, as they had different priorities and often a too deviant culture than was preferable for CSE and sustainability collaboration. Also the inherently sustainable companies fell beyond the scope of OI’s customer focus, as they already were familiar with collaboration for sustainability. They can however be a valuable example for best practices in setting up collaborations. Hence, the customer focus for OI will be on the compliant and commercially sustainable companies, to help them make a progression in their sustainability efforts. This is an important notion to keep in mind when proceeding to the design phase.

5.5.3 Current challenges
Throughout the interviews, several challenges came to the surface as being a hindrance for proper, fruitful and long-term collaboration. Strategic matters were often occurring answers; defining joint goals, identifying the right partners and formulating a long-term strategy were difficult as most companies (negligent, compliant and commercially sustainable) focus more on the short- and midterm. All company types had difficulties with ‘getting everyone on the same page’ in collaborations; this corresponds to goal congruence. Clearly then, an important precondition for collaboration cannot be met, see Chapter 3, Theoretical Background. Additionally, negligent, compliant and commercially sustainable companies mentioned that sometimes having a clear goal in one company internally was already quite a challenge, as top management and operational management sometimes had different images of what a mission statement entailed, or different ideas about what was necessary to achieve them. This raised considerable trouble further on in the
process of collaboration as when things become specific, slowly all inconsistencies that a company deals with internally, start slowing down or even breaking up the collaboration as a whole. Moreover, organizational motivation was mentioned (Hamel, 1991) to be necessary for goal congruence, and this matches the quotes of companies B, C and E stating that company’s should have a clear and supported mission for themselves before even taking place in any collaborative project.

Design principle 9: An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should enable companies to have internally clear which goals they have for the collaboration (I) which prevents confusion and uncertainty in future processes (M), thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).

Literature addresses the uncertainties surrounding collaborations and the difference between giving commitment on paper versus showing commitment in real life, when the project is started. Interviewees too repeatedly stressed the importance of ‘true’ commitment, meaning that a person is truly dedicated to bringing the project to success.

Design principle 10: An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should focus on demanding true commitment from participants (I) which reduces uncertainty and lack of trust (M), thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).

Uncertainty about the feasibility and the commitment of others along with a risk avoiding company culture were the most often mentioned obstacles for starting a new collaboration; also inherently sustainable companies supported this from experience in their earlier attempts at becoming inherently sustainable. Working with trustworthy partners and having aligned goals can help in decreasing this, but the process of achieving this point in a collaboration is tedious and asks for more research. Uncertainties were rooted in the increasing complexity of operational issues in collaboration; having different languages between companies, not understanding each other correctly, no clearly divided responsibilities and not having specified what would happen with the risks and incentives of any idea that would sprout from the collaboration.

Design Principle 11: An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should focus on feasibility (I) which will decrease uncertainty and increase trust (M), thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).

5.5.4. Current efforts
Current efforts for sustainability with compliant and commercially sustainable companies reside mostly in, obviously, compliance to current and foreseen future regulations, and periodical meetings with supply chain partners. The commercially sustainable companies also have specially dedicated ‘innovation days’ for meeting up with partners to discuss new opportunities for new or existing products and processes. This shows a pro-active attitude in tackling current, short-term sustainability issues, but shows no real plan for long-term sustainability integration throughout the company like in inherently sustainable companies. Besides emphasizing the importance of exploring joint challenges and opportunities together, these inherently sustainable companies shared long-term visions and strategies with their partners, discussing future directions and opportunities and had frequent informal contact with them.
**Design Principle 12:** An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C), should embed a long-term vision and goal (I) which will result in a shared sustainable vision for the future that addresses complex sustainability problems at the core (M) thereby fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).

Despite the differences, all companies agreed, especially after seeing figure 9 in phase 4, that goal congruence and right partner selection were essential for further collaboration. Both steps can increase trust and increase chances of realization later on. Partner should be trustworthy, but many acknowledged that whether a partner is actually the right one only becomes clear when goal congruence is achieved. Here, goals should become as specific and measurable as possible to decrease uncertainties in responsibilities, requirements for further collaboration in terms of resources as well as commitment, this corresponds to the intent of defining S.M.A.R.T. goals that are described in Chapter 3; Theoretical Background. Only then can companies communicate effectively with each other and internally, and check the feasibility of the goal with their own business. SMART goals help in defining a very specific and feasible goal, whereas GROW aims to define a process approach through which to obtain such a specific goal by means of a gap analysis.

**Design principle 13:** An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should focus on setting a S.M.A.R.T. goal (I) to ensure clarity, decrease uncertainty and increase trust (M) which will foster supply chain collaboration.

**Design principle 14:** An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C), should help companies perform a gap analysis between the desired and current situation (I) which will decrease uncertainty about what goal entails and demands (M), which will foster supply chain collaboration.

Zooming in on setting up collaborations further, all interviewees mentioned that the process was not as linear as figure 9 suggests; it is more iterative as partners may leave and enter the process at different stages. As a result, interviewees from negligent, compliant and commercially sustainable companies argued that formulating exit strategies for when companies want to opt out is important to increase trust and decrease risk for participants. Though this is important for the setup of collaborations, it is not very logical to talk about exiting alliances when trying to be constructive and besides that not knowing yet what to exit from exactly. Hence, this is not seen as a design principle in this respect.

### 5.5.5. Goal Congruence to support collaboration

Taking into account the scope and limits of this research, goal congruence was chosen to investigate further. Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that in many cases, this precondition for collaboration is not met, or is not even consciously discussed. Interviewees emphasized that this can help to reduce the challenges that companies face in collaboration by decreasing uncertainty and increasing trust. The aim would be to make the goals as specific as possible, as most companies (80%) agreed that this was more promising for assuring that everybody knew what the goal was all about in terms of resource requirements and commitment per company. Moreover, OI confirmed that this was an area they saw fit with their expertise and wanted to know more about, especially if
they would take the role of process director in an acceleration program. Obviously, goal congruence will not tackle all of the challenges a collaboration entails. It is meant as an addition that supports the setup of collaboration. Based on the findings in this analysis phase, Figure 10 presents a cause-and-effect diagram that clarifies how goal congruence supports supply chain collaboration for sustainability. We must add here, that the causes on the left side have relevance for both individual companies internally, as well as for the set of companies within a collaboration. However, for the model below, it is non-sensical to visualize this split-up as it accounts for all four causes and would thus become a little ambiguous. Most often mentioned by industry experts as well as OI were a lack of commitment, uncertainty about the feasibility, lack of internal consensus at each individual company and the lack of a shared long term vision.

Cause & Effect diagram
goal congruence for the fostering of supply chain collaboration for sustainability

Figure 11 - Cause & effect diagram for Supply chain collaboration for sustainability
6. Design

This chapter describes the design phase. We start with formulating the design requirements, derived from literature and analysis. Subsequently, we use the Delphi method in which we propose a preliminary design, and iteratively validate and improve this through interviews with industry experts and redesign. This is done in test rounds, and the last round represents the final design.

6.1. Design requirements

A list of design requirements is set up, partially based on the CIMO logic based Design Principles (DP). An overview of these principles can be found in Appendix E. Not all design principles are one-on-one related to design requirements; the ones that do not relate to a DP are either inherent to a good design (like the requirement to have an unambiguous design), and others are due to company requirements made by OI, like the bottom three, or the scope of this research. The list of requirements and related design principles can be found in Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>DP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Functional requirements | • The design should foster achieving goal congruence between participants in an acceleration program  
                            • The design should help an acceleration program facilitate the process towards achieving goal congruence  
                            • The design should clarify which role an acceleration program has in fostering goal congruence  
                            • The design should clarify the outcomes of achieving goal congruence  
                            • The design should be unambiguous in nature; each element should be clearly distinctive of the other  
                            • The design should prevent complexity in operationalisation and communication for participants and OI | 5, 6, 7 & 8, 13, 4 |
| User requirements      | • The design should take into account a multi-participant situation  
                            • The design should allow OI to function as a process director  
                            • The design should allow OI to function as a trusted third party  
                            • The design should allow OI to function as a mentor  
                            • The design should clarify requirements, responsibilities, risks and incentives for each participant  
                            • The design should have space for each individual participants internal challenges and questions | 6, 7, 8, 11 & 10, 9 |
| Boundary requirements  | • To our knowing there are no boundary requirements |      |
| Design requirements    | • The design should cost no money  
                            • The design should be able to be executed by max. 3 people (current employee capacity OI)  
                            • The design should fit with the current expertise of OI |      |

Table 7 - Design requirements
6.2. Delphi Method

In order to validate the design solution, the Delphi method will be applied. This method is an excellent approach for reaching consensus on a real-world issue among multiple experts, combine judgements on the issue and gathering insights for new alternatives, and also educating the expert group on the findings of the research so far (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). Therefore, since we are looking for a consensus on the relevance and feasibility of the design, the Delphi method is the best way of validating the design.

The Delphi method entails that the researcher seeks consensus amongst a multitude of experts on the topic by sending each individual a series of questionnaires in an iterative fashion, through which the consensus on the topic slowly comes together.

In this specific case, the experts (approx. 10-15 people) will be introduced to the design solution (by means of a Skype conversation or clearly formulated document), after which at least two rounds of questionnaires about this design will follow. For the interviews a snowballing technique will be used, which means that insights from the first interview will be taken for validation in the next interviews, insights from the second interview will also be taken and so on. In this way, there is already a first round of consensus after having only done the interviews. A disadvantage is that for the last interviewees, their comments cannot be validated through other interviews anymore. Questionnaires should resolve this issue. The first round of questionnaires provides the input for the second questionnaires, and this will result in some final recommendations for any alterations to the design.

6.2.1. Design parameters

In order to achieve goal congruence, the findings of literature as well as the analysis phase are used to design a preliminary process-approach that OI can use within its programs. To this end, the CIMO statements from the Results provide valuable input. Keywords from this are extracted, such as ‘internal consensus’, ‘evaluate’, ‘manage expectations’ and ‘real commitment’, and re-described as design parameters, see Table 9. These parameters are those elements in a design that can be altered within a specific range to reach the desired final state of the design; in this case goal congruence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal consensus</td>
<td>The amount of internal consensus necessary</td>
<td>Low – High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>The extent to which plans are feasibility</td>
<td>Low – High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>The extent to which participants are committed to the collaboration</td>
<td>Low – High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared long-term vision</td>
<td>Definition of timespan a company’s strategy spans</td>
<td>Short, Mid, Long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity of the goal</td>
<td>The extent to which a goal is very broadly or narrowly defined</td>
<td>Broad – Narrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of OI</td>
<td>The role that OI performs throughout or in</td>
<td>Process director, Trusted third party, Mentor,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.2. Preliminary design

Finally, as a natural consequence of the number of antecedents necessary for goal congruence, a process design is chosen that provides a step-by-step method towards goal congruence. The process takes inspiration of the GROW model (Whitmore, 2009), but now includes aspects that are particularly true for collaboration between multiple interdependent partners. Due to the inspiration of the GROW model as well as the capabilities of OI, a process-approach is designed that paves the road for goal congruence. Two design parameters are not yet addressed here; the role of OI is left unclear on purpose, as it was not clear yet in which parts of the process industry experts would value the capabilities of OI most, and where OI saw itself best suited. The same accounts for the authorities involved in each step, the Delphi method should shed light on both issues for a final design. Figure 11 illustrates the preliminary design. The initial idea of the setting is that there is one corporate company that has formulated a call to action, OI is included as a partner, and potential other partners have been identified by both OI and the initiating corporate. Below, we describe this design per step.

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### Table 8 - Design parameters

| Authorities involved | Top Management, Operational Management |

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**Step 1: Reach internal consensus on goals and drivers**

This step is meant to assure that at each participating company individually, goals and drivers for taking part in a collaboration for sustainability are clear. It corresponds to Design Principle 9 (Table 8), and is a direct way of addressing the parameter ‘internal consensus’. Figure 11 also states that this stage is linked to Design Principle 12; this is because in this stage, each individual participant will have to explore for itself in which areas it wishes to define long-term goals and visions. In this stage, the participants will have to have the ‘call to action’ in mind; the goals must fit within this broadly positioned sustainability challenge. Very importantly, the goals and drivers have to be known and supported by...
both operational (the ones who have to do it) and top management (the ones who makes the
decisions) so that no inconsistencies can cause hinder in the process. The final product of this step is
having a sort of checklist of both goals and drivers of each and every company. To make this step
more specific, three sub-steps were formulated:
1. Define the company’s strategy and mission statement towards sustainability
2. Define clear, unambiguous company goals for the collaboration
3. Define the company’s interest and drivers for the collaboration on both short- and long term
   perspective.

**Matchmaking:** The process where participants find each other based on the similarities or
compatibilities of their goals and drivers. Result is a set of partners that are interested in further
exploration based on compatible company goals. This is the first step in defining a shared long term
vision, hence corresponding to Design Principle 12.

**Step 2: Joint challenge and opportunity exploration:** This step is about exploring joint challenges
and opportunities by briefly sharing knowledge and insights and current challenges. It is a first way
of investigating the willingness of commitment and the feasibility of several solution directions for a
joint challenge. Hence, it corresponds to Design Principles 10 and 11 and the parameters ‘Feasibility’
and ‘Commitment’. This explorative stage can be done through ideating and is aimed at identifying
general solution directions. Derived from interviews, this is a first step in aligning goals; exploring
shared challenges and opportunities. Three sub-steps are defined:
1. Share current company goals and drivers as stated in step 1 with each other
2. Share current relevant sustainability challenges and knowledge
3. Roughly explore mutual opportunities and solution directions for collaboration for sustainability

**Evaluation & Expectations:** The process where step 2 is evaluated and the expectations of all
participants are discussed. This offers the opportunity for participants to step out of the process or
address uncertainties about each other and the process. Moreover, it is a method that allows
companies to recap from what has been said and discuss the results internally, before making any
further decisions. This gives a chance to sense where the collaboration is heading to and whether
that is still in line with the goals and drivers first mentioned in stage 1. Through this small step, the
design accredits the requirement that the design should leave space for a company’s individual
challenges and questions in the program, also formulated in Design Principle 9.

**Step 3:** In-depth joint analysis of possibilities: Here, the solution directions found in step 2 will be
further investigated, if they have survived the round of evaluation & expectations. This corresponds
to the Design Principles 10 and 11 but on a more detailed and deeper level than in step 2. By means
of a gap analysis (identifying the differences between the desired state versus the current state),
requirements have to be specified that are necessary for the success of a solution direction.
Following literature on CSE which states that having sufficient financial space as well as room and
time to experiment, requirements for collaboration are categorized by skills, resources (time,
money, room, material, production/research capacity), and extent of personal commitment (in
terms of how long the collaboration will be and how often one has contact with each other).
According to interviewees in phase 2 and 4, this human factor of real commitment was the
bottleneck in many collaborations. Sub-steps in this step are:
1. Choose mutual solution direction to tackle sustainability challenge
2. Analyse necessary resources and where these could be found (think of time, space, finance, knowledge)
3. Analyse willingness for commitment of all partners

**Evaluation:** Step 3 is evaluated and participants check internally for the feasibility of the requirements as defined in step 3. The internal check corresponds to Design Principle 9; reaching internal consensus. This offers the opportunity for participants to step out of the process or address uncertainties about each other and the process. Again, through this small step, the design accredits the requirement that the design should leave space for a company’s individual challenges and questions in the program.

**Step 4: Define Goals and Confirm:** Setting a goal based on the feasibilities addressed in step 3 and its evaluation. The goal should be S.M.A.R.T., adhering to Design Principle 13. This is the final step and thus the final opportunity for companies to reach agreement over a long-term shared vision, with a specific goal attached to it, hence this stage also corresponds to Design Principle 12, albeit in a less prominent way than in phase 2, where the first steps towards shared goals are made. Above all, companies will have to confirm, and deliberately commit (both operational- and top management) to this goal.

**6.2.3. Validation round one**

The interviewees for the first round are the same as in phase 4 of the analysis, see Table 8. During the interviews, the design was presented to them, and going through the design by step-by-step explanation, a conversation was encouraged about the usefulness, the logic and any possibly missing aspects. Also the necessity of each step for goal congruence was questioned, raising interesting discussions. When analyzing the interviews, it became clear that the discussions could be split up in either process-level discussions, which focuses on the coherence and the logics of the design in general, or step-level which focuses on the content of one specific step, or discussions revolving around the potential role that OI could play in the process. We will describe the most important insights for these categories below.

**Process-level insights**

A few things were mentioned or supported by all interviewees. For example, each interviewee asked for specific outcomes per step. Where this is already the case in step 1, step 2 and 3 are less specific, and the argument was that such steps were therefore hard to assess in terms of successfulness and necessity. Also, without such specificity, where exactly do these stages end? Though many interviewees argued that it is highly likely that step 2 naturally flows over in step 3 without the necessity of an end- and starting point, for the sake of facilitation and clarity, such specifics are helpful in assessing the progress of the process.

Moreover, 80% of interviewees asked for each step which company members should be present. It was stated that it makes a big difference whether you have the true decision makers at the table (i.e. top management), or whether there is a more hands-on operational manager in the meeting. It was argued that top management should be there at least at the start and end, to give their consent and
guarantee top management support and commitment for the project. This corresponds to findings of CSE and sustainable business literature that sustainable initiatives can only work if it is supported and championed by top management. So overall, the design should somehow specify who is present at each step.

Taking a more general view, 70% of interviewees argued that such a process can never be truly linear, and would even benefit from a more iterative approach. Especially since there is a lot of reflection and communication necessary both within and between companies, including feedback loops would benefit the usefulness and relevance for reality.

Lastly, two interviewees asked what would happen to ideas and goals that would in the end not make it to the final step. Will these be totally discarded, put on the shelf or will another process be started to make use of these ideas? This sparked an interesting discussion on the possibilities and implications for the further program. However, there is little room for further exploration in this research, and therefore this notion is left out of scope for the analysis.

**Step-level insights**

**Step 1:** Four interviewees (30%), emphasized the necessity of having both top- and operational managers at the table. It was crucial that all members that would somehow be involved in the program are aware of the goals and drivers and fully understand the implications of it. The mission statement and sustainability goals should be broadly carried out throughout the firm and supported and deemed feasible by both top- and operational managers. This corresponds to CSE literature (Grayson, McLaren, & Spitzeck, 2014; SustainAbility, 2008).

**Step 2:** It was argued that it is crucial to explore opportunities, but asking companies to share explicit knowledge was tricky, since compliant companies still often choose secrecy above open innovation. Moreover, during discussions, participants are likely to get new ideas and insights and might be able to further specify their company goals. This would then require to reflect on the first stated goals and possibly redefine them in conjunction with internal company members. Lastly, it should be possible that partners leave the program, and that others may enter as a result of network-connections of companies already in the program. This was supported by all interviewees. Consequently, especially when partners are added, the process needs to return to step 1 to align all missions. Though the new partner will most likely already be more in line with what the incumbent participants were heading for, it is still crucial to make sure everyone can express their interests in the collaboration and redefine or at least explicitly agree on the current situation and direction.

**Step 3:** Three interviewees added to this step that thinking about how to divide risks and incentives is crucial in this stage. As a result, it is also necessary to think about responsibilities companies are willing to take, and this corresponds to the commitment they give. They also mentioned the formulation of exit strategies here. Though this is certainly a dimension that should be present in the entire set-up of collaboration, it is unsure whether step 3 would be the right place, and there were no convincing arguments to back this statement. Hence, addressing risks and incentives could be added, but exit strategies are considered not relevant enough since the business that flows out of the program is not specified yet, this only happens when Goal Congruence as a stage is completed and the program continues to the next phase of ideation and business development. After all, one can only define an exit strategy if the business to exit from is clearly specified; this is not the case.
with goal congruence. Moreover, the deeper analysis allows companies to better specify their
drivers, wishes and needs of the collaboration. Hence, a feedback loop is necessary to step 1 to re-
discuss goals and drivers and interests on a more detailed level. Lastly, in this stage too, partners
should be able to leave or enter the program, similar to step 2 and endorsed by all interviewees.

**Step 4:** Due to simplicity of this step, few alterations were proposed. The most important one, and
backed by all interviewees, is that both the decision making management and operational
employees should be present in this stage and confirm their commitment to the goal.

**Insights concerning OI’s role in the process**

Opinions on the role of OI varied. Though in the Analysis phase of this research, interviewees were
quite unanimous about the added value of OI as a trusted third party and a process director,
specifying how that would fit within this design generated ambiguous results. During the interviews,
interviewees were still quite enthusiastic about the role of process director for the overall design. It
was argued that this helps in keeping everyone ‘awake’ and alert, and ensuring that participants
would live up to their promises and agreements. This aspect alone would accelerate decision making
more than would be in a natural, normal environment, where such initiatives easily lose their
priority over time. The role of trusted third party was by 50% seen as necessary, and the other 50%
had its doubts whether this was really the crucial element of OI’s added value for the process.
Rather, three interviewees (25%), emphasized the role of OI as a matchmaker and facilitator of
evaluations. The matchmaking part was seen as a unique characteristic of OI; as an objective and
experienced partner, interviewees saw OI most fit to make the best matches. During evaluations, OI
should not be part of secrets companies keep towards each other (which would be the case if OI
fulfilled the role trusted third party), but rather should aid in asking the right questions and keeping
the right conversations at any point in time. Hence, the role of OI as process director and facilitator
is confirmed, and that of trusted third party only partially. This needs further research, but this is out
of the scope for this particular thesis. Table 10 summarizes the insights of this round.
### Table 9 - Summary of design insights round 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process level</th>
<th>Step level</th>
<th>Role of OI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Define specific outcomes per step</td>
<td>Step 1 • Include both top- and operational management</td>
<td>• Role of process director is confirmed for each stage; ensures the actual accelerative property of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarify the necessary authorities for each step</td>
<td>Step 2 • Knowledge sharing not feasible</td>
<td>• Matchmaking is seen as added value of OI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The process is iterative, include feedback loops</td>
<td>Step 3 • Address risks and incentives</td>
<td>• Ambiguous arguments pro- and contra the necessity of OI as trusted third party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Define success</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 4 • Include both top- and operational management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Allow in- &amp; outflow of partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 6.2.4. Redesign

Following the suggestions of the industry experts, a redesign was made placing all insights into one model, which is shown in Figure 12. The spiraling shape illustrates the iterative character of the process as well as the converging property to eventually end up in one goal (other goals receive no attention in this particular model, due to the limited scope as explained before). Next to this shape, the explicit feedback loop from step 2 and 3 towards step 1 was added to emphasize the continuous back- and forth switching between steps. This is especially essential if new participants enter the process. The last big alteration is the explicit sign of partner’s ability to enter or exit the program later on in the process. Further explanation will follow below.
In the redesign, the evaluation phases have become an integral part of each step. This is done to illustrate their cohesion with the previous step. Though the titles in the figure remain the same for the sake of brevity, the explanation and sub-steps differ from that of the preliminary design. These will now be shortly described in Table 11. Through the inclusion of definitions at which stage which type of management needs to be involved, and in which stages OI plays a specific role, all design parameters as defined in Table 10 are now included.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>End product of step</th>
<th>Authorities involved</th>
<th>Role of acceleration company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td>• Achieve internal consensus for each individual company on sustainability mission statement, goals and drivers for collaboration</td>
<td>• Mission statement • List of goals and drivers for collaboration</td>
<td>• Operational Management • Top Management • Acceleration company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td>• Companies compare mission statement and lists of goals and drivers. • Joint exploration of common challenges and opportunities</td>
<td>• Several solution directions to resolve sustainability challenge • List of potential other partners to be included in the process</td>
<td>• Top Management • Acceleration company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td>• In-depth analysis of feasibility, commitment, risks, incentives and responsibilities for each company individually as well as within the collaboration • Choose solution direction based on analysis</td>
<td>• Reports on feasibility (available resources per company) • Risk analysis report • Assignment of one responsible, committed manager per company • One clear solution direction</td>
<td>• Top Management • Acceleration company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 4</strong></td>
<td>• Recap on former analysis, draw final conclusions • Formulate SMART goal</td>
<td>• SMART goal</td>
<td>• Operational Management • Top Management • Acceleration company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 - Description of redesign
6.2.5. Validation round two

The second round of validation brought only few new suggestions to the table, mostly focused on the visual level rather than on content. Interviewees were disappointed that the role of OI was not specifically specified in the design itself, but only through the table. Though this is a valid point, we believe that adding more visual elements to the design would decrease its clarity; a design visualization is always a simplification of reality, hence we choose not to implement this change.

Another comment, more concerned with the content, was about the fact that participants should not be able to enter the program in the last phase of the design; this would be detrimental to progress and cause ‘noise’ for the participants. Step 4 should be about finalizing and concretizing the process towards goal congruence, and adding new participants would therefore not be recommendable, rather, step 3 is the last step where this could occur. The new design is shown below in Figure 13, with the above described alterations made. For sake of clarity and since no changes are made concerning the adherence of the stages to specific Design Principles, the indication for them is left out here. Table 11 remains applicable as explanatory support for this design, as no significant comments were made about this.

Final Design:

![Figure 14 - Final Design, in combination with Table 11.](image)
7. Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter describes the overall conclusions, implications and limitations of this research. The first section contains the conclusions and answers to the research questions. Section 7.2. describes the managerial implications this research has brought forward. Lastly, since this study had an academic goal, section 7.3 discusses this study’s academic limitations and implications for further research.

7.1. Research questions

The subject of this master thesis was to investigate the way CSE acceleration programs could foster supply chain collaboration for sustainability. As a step-wise approach towards an answer to this question, four sub-questions were proposed, to which we now add the answers as found throughout this study (both literature review and analysis). Lastly, we converge all answers on the sub-questions into an answer to the main research question.

1. What is CSE and what does it require from companies to engage in successful CSE?

CSE is a corporate organization’s transition from an organization with no environmental and/or social impact to an organization that creates both economic, environmental and social impact through corporate entrepreneurial efforts. To this end, organizational antecedents have been formulated that can aid a company in this process. Most importantly, having sustainable or social impact at the core of the corporate strategy is required. This will affect the way top and operational management view sustainability and deal with it throughout the company. Both top and operational management should support sustainability and should enact leadership that empowers employees to become socially engaged within their functions and that establishes the right company culture. Regarding culture, the D.A.R.E.S. principle provides an important guideline, it stands for the ability to have; Dialogue, Autonomy, Risk-taking attitude, Experimentation space, and Sustainability as a strategy. In other words, an open and failure-celebrating company will be more proficient at CSE than a risk-avoiding, failure-punishing company. Lastly, the importance of close relationships with the external environment was mentioned, of which supply chain partners form an important part. Importantly, the antecedents mentioned can serve as selection criteria for OI acceleration programs, as it is unlikely that a company that does not possess any of them will be successful in such a program.

2. What is OI’s core business and expertise?

After in-depth interviews with the employees and owners of OI, it became clear that OI’s main business was to design, develop and execute CSE-focused acceleration programs for large existing corporates. Their expertise was divided between certain roles they were apt in, and actual knowledge areas. Roles contained that of being the process director, mentor, and trusted third party. The actual knowledge was on business development, the operationalization of getting new ideas off the ground and (working with and recognizing) company cultures.

3. What is OI’s current approach in their acceleration programs and how can this be an inspiration for fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability?

OI’s actual current approach is visualized in Figure 9. This is a stage-wise approach that entails seven stages in total. First, the spark phase is about formulating a broad topic for the acceleration program
and a call to action within that topic. Secondly, partner identification is a phase that seeks to make a list of feasible and compatible partners that are potentially interested in the program. In phase 3, called ‘Goal Congruence’, these potential partners and the initiating company try to define a common goal that will be pursued in the remainder of the program. In the ‘Sprout’ stage following Goal congruence, ideas that fit the goal will be constructed. Feasible and appealing ideas are further developed in the ‘Spin’ phase. Lastly, the ‘Scale’ phase is about scaling up the concepts of the Spin stage and making a true business that outgrows the acceleration program far after its end. All throughout this process, OI fulfills different roles, as described above. This step-wise approach proved to be a good starting point for the design of a process for goal congruence.

4. **What are current challenges to achieve supply chain collaboration for sustainability?**

Four main reasons for the difficulty of pursuing sustainability by companies were found in literature. First, companies lack a good insight in their environmental impact. Secondly, the case of truly doing something for sustainability does not depend on just one company; it crosses company and even sector boundaries. Thirdly, the current ways of calculating profit through RoI are not capable of calculating the value of social/sustainable profits. Lastly, the company culture may face a misfit with desired culture; risk avoidance and secrecy should be replaced with reasonable risk taking and knowledge sharing.

Jumping in on the second- and lastly mentioned challenges for sustainability, the CSE literature also highlighted the importance of collaboration with other partners. Here, collaboration is defined as the joint effort of tackling business and sustainability challenges, going beyond the traditional information sharing and into actual knowledge sharing and joint knowledge creation. We focused on supply chain partners specifically as they possess valuable knowledge and complementary skills, and are often a key player in a company’s environmental impact.

Several challenges in collaborating specifically for sustainability have been identified. Literature has found the issues of complexity, operationalisation, strategy, uncertainty and costs that hamper sustainability efforts throughout the supply chain. The analysis of this research has found support for all of these dimensions, though complexity was least mentioned. Next to that, this research has added Company Culture as a sixth hampering factor, especially if this culture was characterized by risk avoidance and secrecy against partners. Most of all, this research has found the issue of uncertainty and a lack of trust to be the biggest challenges for collaboration. In line with these statements, it was also often mentioned how difficult it was to get goal congruence between all partners. Without this, experts argued, any further attempts for negotiation and collaboration would be in vain.

5. **What are opportunities to achieve successful supply chain collaboration for sustainability?**

The CSE literature revealed several antecedents that companies should have if they are to successfully employ a CSE strategy, shown in Figure 1. Most importantly, having sustainability at the heart of the corporate strategy, and supported by top management and resource commitment is key for any CSE initiative. Also the open sharing of knowledge with partners and some extent of risk taking and a ‘just do-it’ mentality are of great importance for the pursuit of new CSE initiatives. Hence, adhering to these antecedents is a part of the opportunities for more supply chain collaboration for sustainability.
Interestingly, these insights of the literature review in combination with the second phase of analysis formed great support for a company typology on business attitudes towards sustainability, in which it becomes apparent that many companies lack these antecedents mentioned by CSE literature. This suggested a continuum of company attitudes for sustainability. This continuum ranges from companies being completely negligent about the necessity of sustainability towards the companies that have sustainability integrated in every aspect of their business; these can be called the inherently sustainable companies. Figure 5 shows the interviewed companies on the continuum. Clearly, companies that are more to the inherently sustainable side of the continuum, see and seize more opportunities for collaboration for sustainability than negligent companies. Being or trying to be an inherently sustainable company thus represents an opportunity for successful supply chain collaborations.

After further research, it became apparent that having goal congruence was the key for decreasing uncertainty and increasing trust, thereby contributing significantly to the forming of a successful collaboration. Furthermore, both literature and this analysis revealed that if partners did have goal congruence, their faith in succeeding with the collaboration increased. To this end, clear commitment towards the goal should be reached among all partners. Also the feasibility of the goal is an important aspect that is decisive in the process of reaching goal congruence, as well as having a shared long-term vision between all participants. Thus, consciously adopting a decent process for achieving goal congruence rather than doing it ‘on-the-fly’, proposes a major opportunity for many companies to make their supply chain collaboration successful.

As a last answer to this question, industry experts have repeatedly confirmed the assumed added value of an acceleration program for collaborative business development. Hence, engaging in an acceleration program represents an opportunity for making supply chain collaborations successful. Experts argued that the process director role was most important, and that their expertise and mentoring abilities within the process of dealing with many different partners (and cultures and drivers) was highly valuable, followed by the fact that the acceleration company could also be seen as a trusted third party. With regards to the process of achieving goal congruence, interviewees saw added value and opportunity for the acceleration company as a matchmaker between partners, process director and, though ambiguously, as trusted third party. The role of mentor in this process was not mentioned, though it is believed that only by having the knowledge of a mentor, can an acceleration company be of true value in matchmaking and process director.

Main research question:
How can OI foster more supply chain collaboration through their CSE acceleration programs?

OI should serve as a process director, mentor and trusted third party in a collaboration process between several partners. Within this program, it is especially important that uncertainty is decreased and trust is increased between partners, and that partners are rightly matched with each other. All these three aspects can be addressed by focusing on the achievement of goal congruence.

However, goal congruence itself is not a one-dimensional factor itself. True goal congruence entails a much deeper level of detail than simply two partners saying ‘I agree’ towards a certain goal. Literature has provided organizational motivation, long-term strategy and a shared corporate vision as key antecedents for goal congruence. This research has added several factors to this list. First of all, companies should have internal consensus themselves on their own goals and drivers for the
Secondly, it is of the essence that feasibility of the goal is assured, this is also supported by literature on goal setting, such as the S.M.A.R.T. goal theory. This requires a deep analysis of the implications of following up the goal. Furthermore, industry experts have highlighted the importance of true commitment of all partners for the goal. In their view, this means that both top- and operational management are committed towards the project, but also that the actual employees responsible for the project at each company are truly committed and up for the task. Clearly, achieving goal congruence requires much deliberation, discussion and analysis from all partners involved.

**7.2. Managerial Implications**

This research has given some practical insights into crucial elements of setting up collaborations. These can be divided into implications for the large corporate companies versus those for the acceleration company.

**Corporates**

First of all, it was mentioned that having companies that possess the CSE antecedents of Figure 1, will find more ease in collaborating as their culture allows for knowledge sharing and risk taking. Companies should analyse their companies on these aspects and check where they can improve to become more suitable for successful CSE initiatives.

Most specifically, this research focused on the fact that collaboration with supply chain partners are a good way of pursuing more sustainability. Companies should be open for other partners in tackling their business challenges and not be afraid of sharing knowledge and skills. Setting up collaboration can be done through participation in acceleration programs, which all industry experts acknowledged can have beneficial effects on the results and successfulness of the collaboration. Such programs ensure that partners live up to their expectations as there is a third objective party controlling the process. Having this objective partner (in this research that would be OI), also allows companies to ventilate their thoughts about the process and other participants without being scared of scrutiny or loss of competitive advantage.

A specific aspect of the process of fostering collaboration through use of an acceleration program is the stage ‘goal congruence’. Getting all partners on the same page was crucial according to both OI and industry experts for further collaboration, but doing so currently is often overlooked or done insufficiently. One cause for this was the lack of internal consensus within individual companies; this made them ambiguous about their own goals and drivers. Consequently, other partners had difficulty aligning with those companies and trust decreased. Hence, making sure that internally all goals and drivers are clearly and unambiguously discussed and defined is paramount for collaboration. Lastly, with regards to reaching goal congruence, is the proposition that besides internal consensus, three other elements seem to be key to discuss; feasibility, commitment of all partners involved and having a shared long-term vision.

**OI (business development consultancy firm that specializes in CSE acceleration programs)**

The CSE antecedents mentioned in Figure 1 are not only for corporates a valuable tool of assessment. The company that sets up an acceleration program, OI in this case, can use this set of antecedents to determine whether a prospect participant-company is truly an organization that can
be aided through the program. For example, organizations that do not or only very marginally adhere to the antecedents are unlikely to make the essential steps towards successful supply chain collaboration for sustainability as they still have too much to change internally; these type of companies correspond to the negligent company type of the spectrum in Figure 5.

Furthermore, true company commitment, from both top and operational management is key. This is an implication for both the participating companies as the acceleration company. For the latter, this means that they will have to make sure that these people of each individual company are correctly involved throughout the process at the right moments. The process-design of this research as depicted in Table 12, the fourth column, shows which types of management members are required at each step. For example; top management is explicitly required in the first and fourth stage, whereas operational management is more prominent in the second and third stage.

As for the acceleration companies, they have three clear roles to fulfil if they are to add value to a collaboration setup process. The first and most prominent role is that of process director. This entails the control and management of agreements, expectations and actions by the participants. The second role is that of being a mentor with an expertise in business development and making the transition to CSE, this can help companies turn around their current ways of doing things. Lastly, the acceleration company should present itself as a trusted third party for all participants. Congruent to this, the acceleration company has a responsibility of maintaining an objective and all times trustful, confidential character. With regards to goal congruence, the acceleration company can also assist in matchmaking because of its overlooking and objective role as process director.

7.3. Research Implications and Limitations

This research has made some interesting contributions to existing literature on goal congruence, supply chain collaboration for sustainability and acceleration programs. Here, we first discuss these contributions and then address some limitations and future implications of this research.

Contributions

The most prominent insight of this research is that of the importance of goal congruence; Cao and Zhang (2013) clearly set goal congruence as a precondition for supply chain collaboration, and this is supported in this thesis. However, it appears in this thesis that goal congruence is often overlooked or not thoroughly enough addressed in collaborative efforts, and hence highlights a gap in companies’ understandings of collaboration and/or goal congruence. Where literature about the setup of collaborations itself is already scarce, literature about goal congruence is even scarcer. A definition was given by Jap and Anderson (2003), and various authors have argued that goal congruence can increase trust, and decrease uncertainty and opportunism among partners (Cuevas, Julkunen, & Gabriellsson, 2015; Minagawa, 2010; Locke & Latham, 2002). Yet, no research was found that addresses how to reach the state of goal congruence. In this thesis it becomes apparent that achieving goal congruence is not just a singular act; it entails a process and an end-state of having a jointly defined S.M.A.R.T. goal. This research has shed a light on this matter through synthesis of insights on the topic of goal setting and goal achievement, and analysis of interviews with industry experts on goal congruence specifically. Important antecedents for achieving goal congruence are believed to be internal consensus on goals and drivers at each participating company, true commitment, feasibility, and, in support of an article by Lasher, Ives and Jarvenpaa (1991), shared long-term vision among partners.
Another insight that this research has brought to light concerns the relevance of accelerator programs. Up until this research, academics have only done a few studies focusing on seed-acceleration companies (Cohen & Hochberg, 2014; Hoffman & Radojevich-Kelley, 2012); other types of acceleration programs have not been addressed. This study has given the insight that acceleration companies that focus on existing, large corporates are also a successful new player in the field of business development and business consultancy, and that industry experts endorse their added value.

Furthermore, insights with regards to companies and their relationship with- and efforts for sustainability have been generated in this thesis. The topic of sustainability is widely covered in many academic papers and research areas, some focus on logistics (Vachon & Klassen, 2008), some on collaboration (Abbasi & Nilsson, 2012) and others on strategy (Porter & Kramer, 2006), and much more areas can be mentioned here. However, few studies focus on the perception of companies towards sustainability and how this affects their sustainability performance. In that light, this study has provided a continuum of company attitudes towards sustainability. This insight can help in finding out why one company is better suited for sustainability projects than the other and is closely related to this thesis’s finding of company culture being an important aspect in sustainability efforts; this research has found support for the challenges that Abbasi and Nilsson (2012) found for the collaboration for sustainability, but has also added a new dimension; Company Culture. More than once, it became apparent that a risk averse culture that was satisfied with status quo was unlikely to be very ambitious nor very successful in sustainability efforts. Both of these findings may provide an explanation for the rather slow progress of getting sustainability more integrated in business life.

Limitations and implications for further research

This research had an exploratory character and developed its insights through qualitative measurement. Though this is a widely supported method of research, there are substantial limitations to this study that affect the robustness and relevance. First and foremost, this study has been very small in scale and setup: a total of 16 people (OI excluded) have been interviewed but they are by no means an exhaustive representation of any industry or any acceleration company’s customer base. Hence, the robustness of this study is limited, as many type of business have not been included. Additionally, since this study has been done in assignment of one specific acceleration company, the generalizability for other acceleration companies is debatable. A new study with a larger sample size and covering a specific industry would contribute to the generalizability of these findings. Another interesting study would be to analyse multiple acceleration companies in their approaches and customer base, and interview them and their customer base on perceived outcomes. Also, since this study can only provide a cross-sectional view on the topic due to time and scope limitations, a longitudinal study over collaborations that have been setup through an acceleration program would provide more convincing evidence for the long-term success of the programs.

With regard to the findings of company attitudes and culture towards sustainability, some companies clearly indicated that sustainability is just not as top priority as other aspects, such as safety for example, and probably never will be; this suggests that industry type affects the attitude of a company towards sustainability and hence its position on the continuum, yet this research could not validate this due to scope. This would be an interesting direction for further research that could
address differences between industries, or perform in-industry analysis of the adoption of sustainability practices and criteria. Moreover, company culture can be divided in many subdivisions, and it would be an interesting study to find which of these divisions actually have the greatest impact on the hindrance or promotion of sustainability within a corporate.

Furthermore, between phase 2 and 4 there was no internal consistency among the interviewees that took part. This too accounts for the design phase, where some interviewees were entirely new and others had been there since phase 2. The sole use of interviewees is also debatable since it cannot capture real events and stories can be twisted by the interviewees opinions and frames of reference. Case studies that investigate actual collaboration setup attempts (both with and without the help of acceleration programs) are crucial to validate the findings of this study.

Despite these limitations, this thesis signals the importance of the often overlooked precondition of goal congruence for supply chain collaborations, and also highlights the relevance of acceleration programs for the setup of supply chain collaborations for CSE. It has highlighted different roles for such programs and has also addressed the attitudes companies may have towards sustainability that may hamper or foster the success of these programs. Thus, research building on these findings is well warranted.
8. Personal Reflection

Throughout this study, I have experienced a great learning curve in many aspects, both on personal and professional levels. Overall, the study has helped me gain insight in the overall process of doing research on your own. It made me see how a certain type of entrepreneurship is necessary to take your project to the next level; undertaking action and ‘just doing’ sometimes helps in finding the right questions to ask to supervisors and interviewees alike. More than once, I realized that finding and asking the right questions is a more fundamental aspect of doing research than finding the right answer is; the ‘right’ answer might not even exist. Though I like entrepreneurship in the sense of organizing, setting up and managing events or projects, I had not coupled this to doing research. I struggled with being entrepreneurial and undertaking in the beginning, falling into the same old pitfall I faced during my bachelor in Industrial Design; trying to overthink things too critically or not starting to do something before I was certain it was right. In the end, somewhere halfway in the project, I started realizing this pitfall and turned my attitude around.

This was also a turning point in the amount of help I asked from supervisors from university as well as the company. I had been quite a loner during the first months, but later on I pushed myself to plan meetings more regularly, as they somehow always turned out to be helpful even if I myself did not have a clue what exactly I wanted from the meeting. Reflecting on this a bit deeper, I now realize why this seriously annoying pitfall is bothering me ever again; it is my desire for structure combined with strong self-criticism. In almost everything I do, I have a goal in mind, and I structure that what I do to achieve this goal. Structure though, is not always present, especially not in the beginning of this thesis project, and it can be very hard to see structure once you are in the middle of a big pile of information, or standing in front of it. In that case, getting tips and comments from supervisors but also just friends or colleagues was of great help! Hence, this project helped me structure large amounts of information and text, but also showed me the value of not having structure and just starting with any clue or bit of information you have.

Secondly, self-criticism is good, but at some times I noticed how I was holding myself back from taking action because I did not think what I did was good enough. I am quite tough on myself and rather insecure about the results I am generating. Paradoxically, this forms a restraint for taking action and actually blocks a truly good outcome, so being a bit more lenient (especially in the beginning) with regards to my standards and ambitions is a wise lesson for any future project. I am not afraid that I will become too lazy or sloppy by doing so, since self-criticism for me is kind of ‘the nature of the beast’.

Lastly, I realized the necessity of ‘lazy days’; days filled with staring at a laptop screen without really doing anything. I got mad at myself for doing so, but it dawned on me that this attitude only made it worse. Above all, after having such a day and starting again the next day, I was more motivated and sometimes I got some truly valuable ideas and questions I needed to ask for this research when I was distracted from the actual project. I taught myself to be happy with every little paragraph I had written, keeping up a positive vibe, and not think too long about all the ‘wasted’ time of doing nothing. This too was something that only occurred to me in the last two months, but formed a great source of stress alleviation.
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## Appendix A. List of Social Development Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>End poverty in all its forms everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Reduce inequality within and among countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Conserve and sustainable use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300), accessed last at March 22nd, 2016*
Appendix B: Interview Protocols OI

Interview 1: OI Intake interview Mathijs en Marieke (analysis phase 1)

1. Wat is je functie bij OI?
2. Wat is precies de missie en corebusiness van OI?
3. Op welke manieren wordt er aan die corebusiness gewerkt, en wat zijn zij-projecten?
4. Kun je jullie algemene aanpak van programma-design toelichten?
5. Wat is de focus en insteek van de meeste programma’s/projecten die OI start?
6. Welke rol speelt OI hier zelf in, en klopt dat met wat je vind dat het zou moeten spelen?
7. Kun je één of twee voorbeelden noemen van afgelopen projecten?
8. Wat waren in deze projecten jullie leerpunten en successen?
9. Kun je het resultaat van de programma’s samenvatten in een aantal globale kernbegrippen? (dus niet case-specific). Was dit het beoogde resultaat, zo niet, hoe kwam dat?
10. In hoeverre heeft OI al ervaring met het betrekken van supply chain partners? Kun je deze ervaringen beschrijven? Wat ging er goed/minder goed?
11. Zijn er leerpunten uit deze ervaringen die van toepassing kunnen zijn op volgende programma’s gericht op supply chain collaboration?

Interview 2: OI fishbone diagram Mathijs en Marieke (analysis phase 3)

Het eerste plaatje gaat over de oorzaken waarom er weinig samenwerking voor duurzaamheid is, de resultaten komen uit literatuur en interviews. De blokjes onder- en bovenaan zijn categorieën en de bijbehorende pijltjes de oorzaken.

2. Op welke van deze gebieden zou OI kunnen helpen?
3. Op welke manier zou OI bij elke van de aangegeven gebieden kunnen helpen? Zijn er voorbeelden waar je uit kunt putten?
4. Wat is er daarvoor nodig, en is dit er al of moeten hiervoor nog methodes voor OI ontwikkeld worden?
5. Waar zie je hierin de grootste uitdaging?
6. In welke fase, Spark Sprout Scout Scale zouden deze dingen passen?

Open nu het tweede plaatje; hier zie je de gebieden waarvan ik zelf dacht dat OI iets mee zou kunnen, en wat juist de kansen zijn voor goede samenwerking, als een soort tegenovergestelde van plaatje 1.

7. Ben je het hiermee eens, en zie jij concrete tools/voorbeelden/scenarios voor hoe dit in bijvoorbeeld een programma kan worden verwerkt?
8. Heb je nog toevoegingen op het model?
Appendix C. Analysis phase 2 - Interview Protocol industry experts

ALGEMEEN/DUURZAAMHEID

1. Welke functie bekleed je nu, wat zijn je ervaringen met supply chain management/procurement?

2. In hoeverre denkt u dat duurzaamheid/social business voor bedrijven de sleutel is voor toekomstige successen?

3. Op welke vlakken kan een focus op duurzaamheid/social business specifiek erg helpen vanuit uw organisatie/perspectief bekeken?
   a. Business case, social development goals??

4. Vanuit uw organisatie en perspectief bekeken; op welke aspecten let u het meest bij het selecteren van leveranciers?
   a. Trust, (knowledge) capacities, capabilities, sustainability??

5. En specifiek gelet op duurzaamheid of social business, welke aspecten van een leverancier kunnen daarin extra aantrekkelijk zijn?

6. Hoe wordt er momenteel samengewerkt met leveranciers, met welk doel?

7. Zie je daar zelf nog meer mogelijkheden voor?
   a. Hulp van buitenaf? Accelerations?

8. Wat zijn barrières om intensief vanaf het begin met leveranciers een project te ontwikkelen?
   a. – D.A.R.E.S. Culture??
   b. IP? Openness, trust?

9. Hoe kunnen leveranciers vroegtijdig in het ontwikkelen van nieuwe projecten bijdragen aan een betere/duurzamere/socialere/ business case?

RANDVOORWAARDEN & RUILMIDDELEN

10. (Nogmaals uitleggen CSE ) Komen dit soort initiatieven voor in uw organisatie? Welke interne/externe partijen worden daarbij betrokken? In welke mate/contract?

11. Wat voor resources, naast het geleverde onderdeel/product, kunnen leveranciers nog meer bieden voor uw bedrijf? Geld, kennis, tijd, ruimte? Welke daarvan zijn het meest interessant, relevant?
12. Wat bent u bereid zelf terug te geven aan leveranciers in ruil voor hun samenwerking? Geld buiten beschouwing gelaten?
   a. –kennis, ruimte, connecties??

13. Wordt er gekeken naar de verdeling van soft resources bij het opstellen van contracten? Zo ja kun je voorbeelden geven waarin bijvoorbeeld kennis/expertise/ruimte/reputatie werd gedeeld.

14. In welke vorm wordt er samengewerkt, zijn daar per project contracten voor, worden er joint ventures opgezet, gaat het informeel?
   a. Informal/formal government

15. Is er een bepaalde verandering van mindset nodig om meer met suppliers op te trekken, zo ja, welke dan en hoe dan.
Appendix D. Consolidation interviews phase 2

1. Welke functie bekleed je nu, wat zijn je ervaringen met supply chain management/procurement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Procurement manager</td>
<td>Inherently sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Offshore</td>
<td>Sustainability advisor</td>
<td>Negligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Maritime</td>
<td>Supply chain manager</td>
<td>Commercially sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Textile &amp; Carpet</td>
<td>Sustainability manager</td>
<td>Inherently sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Construction &amp; Architecture</td>
<td>Contract manager procurement</td>
<td>Compliant / commercially sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Construction &amp; Architecture</td>
<td>Sustainability manager</td>
<td>Compliant / commercially sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consumer Electronics</td>
<td>Sustainable procurement manager</td>
<td>Compliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consumer Electronics</td>
<td>Sustainability advisor</td>
<td>Compliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Sustainability project manager</td>
<td>Negligent / Compliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Sustainability communications</td>
<td>Inherently sustainable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. In hoeverre denkt u dat duurzaamheid/social business voor bedrijven de sleutel is voor toekomstige successen?

   a. 3x Enige manier om om te gaan met groeiende milieu-eisenpakket (B, C, F)
   b. 3x Alleen een sleutel als de klant dit wil (C, E, G)
   c. 2x Werkt alleen in combinatie met goede business case; efficientie en kostenbesparing zijn daarbij belangrijk (C, E)
   d. 1x Betere reputatie (F)
   e. 3x only way to sustain business in the future in a healthy world. (A, D, H)
3. Op welke vlakken kan een focus op duurzaamheid/social business specifiek erg helpen vanuit uw organisatie/perspectief bekeken?

a. 2x Langer houdbaar businessmodel dus meer zekerheid (E, D)

b. 4x Hogere efficiëntie, besparingen (B, C, E, F)

c. 4x Verminderen milieu-impact (omdat we dit belangrijk vinden) (A, D, E, H)

d. 1x Stapje voor op concurrentie (G)

4. Vanuit een inkoop perspectief gekeken, en in het algemeen, op welke aspecten let u het meest bij het selecteren van leveranciers?

a. 4x Houden aan duurzaamheidscontracten, akkoorden en regelgeving (C, E (2x), F)

b. 3x Prijs/kwaliteitverhouding (B, E, F)
5. En specifiek gelet op duurzaamheid of social business, welke aspecten van een leverancier kunnen daarin extra aantrekkelijk zijn?
   a. 6x Kennis en kunde
   b. 2x Lef
   c. 2x Capaciteit
   d. 2x Innovatief onderscheidend vermogen
   e. 1x Betrouwbaarheid
   f. 1x ‘Exotische’ expertise

6. Hoe wordt er momenteel samengewerkt met leveranciers, met welk doel? Wanneer worden ze betrokken als men een samenwerking wil aangaan?
   a. 2x Vanuit wet- en regelgeving periodieke afspraken
   b. 2x Review dagen met partners
   c. 2x Innovatiedagen (soms per product of materiaal categorie, thema’s)
   d. 5x Contract of opdracht gebaseerde afspraken (over proces, verloop, uitkomst)
   e. 1x Multidisciplinaire teams met partners

7. Zie je daar zelf nog meer mogelijkheden voor?
   a. 2x Meer met universiteiten
b. 1x Accelerations

c. 1x Onderwijs aan partners om deze te stimuleren

d. 1x Doorvoeren best practices bij klanten

e. 2x Opdrachtgever (klant) moet duurzamer worden

8. Wat zijn barrières om intensief vanaf het begin met leveranciers een project te ontwikkelen?

   a. 4x Angst voor het onbekende (A, D, F, G)
   b. 1x Risico door onduidelijke uitkomsten(A)
   c. 1x Twijfel tussen in of outsourcen(F)
   d. 3x Conservatieve sector, liefhebbers van de status-quo (B, C, E)
   e. 1x Gebrek aan communicatieve vaardigheden om juiste gesprekken te voeren(D)
   f. 3x Huidige contracten, wet- en regelgeving werkt belemmerend(A, E, F)
   g. 1x Gebrek aan vertrouwen(E)
   h. 3x Prijs blijft leidend(C, E, F)
9. Hoe kunnen leveranciers vroegtijdig in het ontwikkelen van nieuwe projecten bijdragen aan een betere/duurzamere/socialere/business case?
   a. 9x Uitnodigen bij ontwerpers aan de tekentafel

10. Uitleggen CSE Komen dit soort initiatieven voor in uw organisatie? Welke interne/externe partijen worden daarbij betrokken? In welke mate/contract?
    a. 2x Door focus-areas aan te geven per afdeling/onderwerp
    b. 1x Innovatiecriteria opstellen
    c. 1x Ideeënloket
    d. 2x Wordt gezien als integraal onderdeel van iemands baan
    e. 2x Nee

11. Wat voor resources, naast het geleverde onderdeel/product, kunnen leveranciers nog meer bieden voor uw bedrijf? Geld, kennis, tijd, ruimte? Welke daarvan zijn het meest interessant, relevant?
    a. 9x Kennis

12. Wat bent u bereid zelf terug te geven aan leveranciers in ruil voor hun samenwerking? Geld buiten beschouwing gelaten?
    a. 4x Kennis
    b. 1x Credits
    c. 1x Contacten
13. Is er een bepaalde verandering van mindset nodig om meer met suppliers op te trekken, zo ja, welke dan en hoe dan.
   a. 2x Meer lef (D, H)
   b. 2x Meer ondernemendheid (A, H)
   c. 2x Meer risico durven nemen (C, E)
   d. 4x Sustainability moet als kans gezien worden (A, C, D, E)
   e. 1x Tijd en ruimte voor experimentatie(F)
   f. 2x Openheid in samenwerking(D, H)
   g. 1x Holistische aanpak (D)

14. In welke vorm wordt er samengewerkt, zijn daar per project contracten voor, worden er joint ventures opgezet, gaat het informeel?
   a. Vaak joint ventures
   b. Gentleman’s agreements

15. Wordt er gekeken naar de verdeling van soft resources bij het opstellen van contracten? Zo ja kun je voorbeelden geven waarin bijvoorbeeld kennis/expertise/ruimte/reputatie werd gedeeld
   a. Geen goede antwoorden verkregen, meestal niet van toepassing. Kennis was het meest genoemd, ‘als ze dan toch iets moeten zeggen’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code after transcription</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business case</td>
<td>What the company would define as a successful business case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer driven</td>
<td>The extent to which companies are reactive to customers’ desires versus coming up with new inventions themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>The extent to which a certain business case or process could affect the company’s reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term vision</td>
<td>The extent to which a company has a long term vision on sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal consensus</td>
<td>The extent to which companies have internally unambiguous and clearly defined goals, ideas, mission statements etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability efforts</td>
<td>The way in which company’s try to be more sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability drivers</td>
<td>A company’s motivation to engage in sustainability efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner requirements</td>
<td>The requirements a partner needs to fulfil to stay in the partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner sustainability</td>
<td>The aspects of a partner that are important to engage in sustainability challenges together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of collaboration</td>
<td>Configurations for collaborating with partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>The extent of feasibility in terms of money, time, resources, people, knowledge etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning goals/Goal congruence</td>
<td>The extent to which partners are getting on the same page with each other with respect to the final goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration intensity</td>
<td>The frequency with which collaborating partners meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>The extent to which a company’s employees are truly committed to the collaboration in both word and deed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers for collaboration</td>
<td>Hindering factors within or between companies that undermine collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate culture</td>
<td>Cultural aspects and corporate mindset, ways of going at a company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setup of collaboration</td>
<td>How collaboration was started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>The extent to which the company had an innovative or rather conservative approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>The extent of uncertainty in a process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>The extent to which partners trust each other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E. Analysis phase 4 interview protocol

Intro

I started doing my master thesis at OI in October. OI focuses on entrepreneurship programs within companies to foster social and sustainable business. They aim to take their business a step further by exploring how they could engage supply chain partners in these programs. This is what I will be investigating for them. The question then became

Which steps are essential in fostering supply chain collaboration through an acceleration program?

Introduction acceleration programs

An acceleration program usually spans a period of approximately 3 months, in which several consecutive phases will be followed. In phase 1, OI helps the initiating customer with defining a call to action. In phase 2, the company and OI help to find the right participants, based on their enthusiasm and ideation. In phase 3, OI’s role is that of an expert and facilitator in brainstorming, ideation and setting up business models for future products, this is often done in event-days and several creative sessions guided by OI. Phase 4 focuses on the actual exploitation and realization of these products, this is done through mentoring and counselling sessions and network events and meetings with stakeholders in guidance of OI. So far, this is what happens in a normal entrepreneurship program. Any questions?

Aim of the program

Now we are heading towards supply chain collaboration for sustainability. The goal here is to setup new long lasting partnerships that together solve a sustainability challenge. The perfect aim here would be really to avoid statements like ‘reducing CO2’ and go more towards ‘a new product/process that has no CO2 emission at all and actually returns back to the environment’. Though supply chain coordination and information sharing is already happening, co-creation and knowledge sharing is not. An acceleration programme could help. As an overview, I have designed an overall process. Before we continue I would like to set out the general scenario:

- The acceleration program is done in the assignment of 1 focal company that aims to leverage its supply chain’s sustainability. This company finances the program.
- The program’s timespan is undefined, but each stage starts with an event-day.

(See Figure 9 - Rough conceptualization of actual process in acceleration programs)

- Looking at this process globally, do you miss any steps or think that some steps are irrelevant?
- Which of these steps, if any, would you consider to be the main pitfalls in common supply chain collaboration efforts? Why?
## Appendix E. List of Design Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>CIMO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>An acceleration program for supply chain collaboration for sustainability (C), should focus on creating openness and trust (I) which will trigger companies to share knowledge (M) which will contribute to fostering and maintaining a mutually fruitful collaboration for sustainability (O).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>An acceleration program for supply chain collaboration for sustainability (C), should embed long term strategic thinking in the company’s business model (I) which will prevent short term opportunism by companies and facilitates the embedding of long-term sustainability goals (M) so that long term collaborations for sustainability can be fostered (O).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>An acceleration program for supply chain collaboration for sustainability (C) should guide companies in installing clear coordination mechanisms and task explanation (I) so that operational complexity is reduced (M) which will foster collaboration for sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>An acceleration program for supply chain collaboration for sustainability (C), should direct partners towards a close and long-term relationship (I) which will increase trust, openness, and knowledge sharing (M) which will foster collaboration for sustainability (O).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>An acceleration program for supply chain collaboration for sustainability (C) should increase goal congruence between partners (I) which would trigger more trust and decrease uncertainty (M), which will foster collaboration for sustainability (O).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should act as a process director (I) which ensures all agreements are uphold and tempo is secured, hence generating trust and certainty (M) thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should act as a trusted third party (I), generating trust and a feeling of safety among partners (M) thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should act as a mentor (I), educating the participants in sustainable business development and CSE (M), thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should enable companies to have internally clear which goals they have for the collaboration (I) which prevents confusion and uncertainty in future processes (M), thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>focus on demanding true commitment from participants (I) which reduces uncertainty and lack of trust (M), thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should focus on feasibility (I) which will decrease uncertainty and increase trust (M), thus fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C), should embed a long-term vision and goal (I) which will result in a shared sustainable vision for the future that addresses complex sustainability problems at the core (M) thereby fostering supply chain collaboration for sustainability (O).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C) should focus on setting a S.M.A.R.T. goal (I) to ensure clarity, decrease uncertainty and increase trust (M) which will foster supply chain collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>An acceleration program for the support of achieving goal congruence (C), should help companies perform a gap analysis between the desired and current situation (I) which will decrease uncertainty about what goal entails and demands (M), which will foster supply chain collaboration (O).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Delphi interview round 1

**Explain Goal Congruence**

With regards to the process as described in the previous interview (Appendix X), I myself had put the main pitfall in goal congruence, because it facilitates the creation of trust and decreases the uncertainties between partners. Moreover, having the same or compatible goals makes it easier to align efforts, coordination and responsibilities. Having no goal congruence decreases trust and increases uncertainty at both partners and makes no solid basis for further exploration, hence goal congruence is essential. Goal congruence is the first step where you decide together that you want to achieve that goal and will collaborate to do so, hence you are one step closer towards actual collaboration. Selecting potential partners is necessary to set the stage where you want to do this most preferably, but here the power is still with the focal company, and thus this company decides for itself whether or not to proceed. Goal congruence is the first step where all partners for the future are involved in.

**Design 2: Overall and detailed explanation**

I have designed a process through which goal congruence can be achieved.

**Achieving Goal Congruence**

- **Step 1**: Reach internal consensus on goals and drivers
- **Step 2**: Matchmaking
- **Step 3**: Joint challenge & opportunity exploration, Evaluations & Expectations, In-depth joint analysis of possibilities, Evaluation
- **Step 4**: Define Goals & Confirm

- Looking at this process globally, do you miss any steps or think that some steps are irrelevant?
- In which phases could an acceleration program or company like OI have a relevant role, how do you see this role?

**Detailed explanation and intention**

Ok now we dive deeper into the specific steps, I will only explain these to you now without any further questions from my side. You will receive a handout with a summary of my story and a questionnaire that asks some in-depth questions about the content of each and every step. Clear to you? So this is your time to ask questions about the things I say, please save all comments, thoughts and insights for the questionnaire.
Questionnaire questions

Deze vragenlijst gaat over het stappenplan om tot goal congruence te komen in een supply chain partnership. De vragenlijst bestaat uit in totaal 22 vragen. Het stappenplan werkt toe naar het bepalen van één gezamenlijk doel voor meerdere partijen en kijkt zowel naar het onderwerp als de gewenste vorm van het einddoel. Het proces bestaat uit 4 hoofdstappen (de grote blokken) en 3 tussenstappen (kleine blokken). Eerst zullen er per hoofdstap een aantal vragen gesteld worden, daarna volgen vier vragen over de tussenstappen en één afsluitende vraag.

Beantwoord de vragen zo duidelijk mogelijk, en lever een argumentatie waar dat kan.

Voor deze questionnaire mag uitgaan van het volgende scenario:

- Er is één bedrijf als focus genomen, die zijn werknemers opdracht heeft gegeven om meer samenwerking met partners te generen voor een algemeen geformuleerd duurzaamheidsdoel.
- Het bedrijf heeft al een algemeen sustainability-doel gekozen, dit is nog niet verder gespecificeerd, maar het is duidelijk dat het bedrijf dit niet alleen kan.
- Het bedrijf heeft al een poel aan potentiele partners (zowel huidige als nieuwe partijen) uitgekozen waar het misschien mee zou kunnen samenwerken.

Inleiding

1. Wat is uw eigen vakgebied en hoofd expertise?
   a. Procurement/ Inkoop
   b. Supply Chain management
   c. Duurzaamheid, Maatschappelijk Verantwoord Ondernemen
   d. Samenwerking, allianties, joint ventures
   e. Anders, namelijk:

Stap 1: Reaching internal consensus on goals and drivers.

Beschrijving: Deze stap draait om het creëren van duidelijke doelen en drijfveren per deelnemend bedrijf; dit moet dus bij de gehele poel van deelnemende bedrijven individueel alsmede het focusbedrijf plaatsvinden. Er is hier nog geen sprake van samenwerking of overleg; de partijen gaan eerst zichzelf onder de loep nemen. Sub-Onderdelen zijn:

1. Het definiëren van de algemene bedrijfsstrategie en een mission statement m.b.t duurzaamheid.
2. Het definiëren van één of meer duidelijk afgebakende, ondubbelzinnige doelstellingen om het mission statement via samenwerking waar te maken.
3. Het definiëren van de drijfveren en belangen van samenwerking op zowel korte als lange termijn.

Vraag 1: Beschouw de volgende stelling aangaande deze stap in het algemeen, en geef aan op: ‘Deze stap is noodzakelijk in het bereiken van goal congruence tussen twee of meer bedrijven.’ hoe hoog schat u de noodzakelijkheid van deze stap in op een schaal van 1 tot 5, waarbij 1 ‘niet noodzakelijk’ is en 5 ‘heel erg noodzakelijk’?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stap 1</th>
<th>Totaal niet noodzakelijk</th>
<th>Niet echt noodzakelijk</th>
<th>Neutraal</th>
<th>Best wel noodzakelijk</th>
<th>Heel erg noodzakelijk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Vraag 2:** Puttend uit uw eigen ervaring en expertise, als mogelijk, kunt u globaal aangeven hoe vaak deze stap wel én niet werd uitgevoerd (grove percentages volstaan), en hoe het in beide gevallen heeft bijgedragen aan verdere samenwerking?

*Wel:*

*Niet:*

**Vraag 3:** Kijkend naar de subonderdelen in deze stap en puttend uit uw eigen ervaringen en expertise; mist u hier onderdelen of zijn er juist onderdelen onnodig? Waarom?

**Vraag 4:** Kijkend naar de subonderdelen in deze stap: welke draagt het meeste bij aan het bereiken van interne consensus? Beargumenteer uw antwoord bij ‘argument’.

   a. Onderdeel 1
   b. Onderdeel 2
   c. Onderdeel 3
   d. Geen van deze, maar (eigen inbreng):

*Argument:*

**Stap 2: Gezamenlijke exploratie van uitdagingen en kansen**

_In deze stap draait het erom dat bedrijven met elkaar gaan nadenken over welke problemen er bij beide partijen spelen en welke kansen er voor beide liggen in het oplossen van die problemen. Het resultaat van deze stap is dat het focusbedrijf per partnerbedrijf weet waar de kansen en gemeenschappelijkheden liggen. Sub-onderdelen zijn:*

1. Het delen, analyseren en vergelijken van de in Stap 1 vastgestelde doelen en drijfveren.
2. Het koppelen van doelen en drijfveren die op elkaar aansluiten
3. Het grofweg exploreren en categoriseren van kansen voor het behalen van die doelen (denk aan snelle brainstorm sessies en mindmapping). Geen gedetailleerde oplossingen maar richtingen waarin men elkaar kan vinden.
Vraag 5: Aangaande deze stap in het algemeen: hoe hoog schat u de noodzakelijkheid van deze stap in op een schaal van 1 tot 5, waarbij 1 ‘niet noodzakelijk’ is en 5 ‘heel erg noodzakelijk’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Totaal niet noodzakelijk</th>
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<th>Neutraal</th>
<th>Best wel noodzakelijk</th>
<th>Heel erg noodzakelijk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stap 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vraag 6: Puttend uit uw eigen ervaring en expertise, als mogelijk, kunt u globaal aangeven hoe vaak deze stap wel én niet werd uitgevoerd (grote percentages volstaan), en hoe beide in uw ogen hebben bijgedragen aan verdere samenwerking?

Wel:

Niet:

Vraag 7: Kijkend naar de subonderdelen in deze stap en puttend uit uw eigen ervaringen en expertise; mist u hier onderdelen of zijn er juist onderdelen onnodig? Waarom?

Vraag 8: Kijkend naar de subonderdelen in deze stap: welke draagt het meeste bij aan het bereiken van interne consensus? Beargumenteer uw antwoord bij ‘Argument’.

a. Onderdeel 1
b. Onderdeel 2
c. Onderdeel 3
d. Geen van deze, maar (eigen inbreng):

Argument:

Stap 3: Diepte analyse van capaciteiten en kansen

Deze stap draait om het verder achterhalen van de werkelijke haalbaarheden om samen tot een doel te komen. Het resultaat van deze stap moet zijn dat bedrijven een reëel beeld van elkaar hebben om te beoordelen of er met een partner daadwerkelijk haalbare doelen (qua onderwerp en vorm) gesteld kunnen worden die voor beide partijen iets oplevert. Sub-onderdelen zijn:

1. Het kiezen van een mogelijke, gezamenlijke oplossingsrichting
2. Het analyseren van de nodige organisatorische capaciteiten en middelen
3. Het onderzoeken van de wederzijdse toewijding; hoe denkt top management erover, wat voor intensiteit wordt beoogd?
Vraag 9: Aangaande deze stap in het algemeen: hoe hoog schat u de noodzakelijkheid van deze stap in op een schaal van 1 tot 5, waarbij 1 ‘niet noodzakelijk’ is en 5 ‘heel erg noodzakelijk’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Heel erg noodzakelijk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stap 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vraag 10: Puttend uit uw eigen ervaring en expertise, als mogelijk, kunt u globaal aangeven hoe vaak deze stap wel én niet werd uitgevoerd (grove percentages volstaan), en hoe beide in uw ogen hebben bijgedragen aan verdere samenwerking?

Wel:

Niet:

Vraag 11: Kijkend naar de subonderdelen in deze stap en puttend uit uw eigen ervaringen en expertise; mist u hier onderdelen of zijn er juist onderdelen onnodig? Waarom?


a. Onderdeel 1  
b. Onderdeel 2  
c. Onderdeel 3  
d. Geen van deze, maar (eigen inbreng):

Argument:

Stap 4: Doel en haalbaarheidscriteria vaststellen

Het doel van deze stap is het vaststellen van een duidelijk afgebakend doel waar beide partijen een belang bij hebben. Sub-onderdelen zijn:

1. Daarnaast wordt er afgestemd wat de vorm globale vorm zal zijn, afgeleid van de beoogde intensiteit die in stap 3 is vastgesteld:
- Een vorm om huidige duurzaamheidsinspanningen te vergemakkelijken door kennis- en informatiedeling (lage intensiteit)
- Een vorm om nieuwe duurzaamheidsinspanningen te kunnen faciliteren door nieuw beleid en standaarden uit te zetten (lage tot medium intensiteit)
- Een vorm om gericht één nieuwe duurzaamheidsinspanning gezamenlijk uit te voeren (medium intensiteit)
- Een vorm om nieuwe duurzaamheidsinspanningen op te schalen en de industrie mee te trekken in de achterliggende duurzaamheidsvisie (hoge intensiteit)

2. Het vaststellen van het daadwerkelijke doel met subonderdeel 1 in gedachten d.m.v. de SMART wijze: dit zorgt dat een doel Specifiek, Meetbaar, Acceptabel, Realistisch en Tijdsgebonden is. Dit gebeurt voor zowel een korte als lange termijn doel.

Vraag 13: Aangaande deze stap in het algemeen: hoe hoog schat u de noodzakelijkheid van deze stap in op een schaal van 1 tot 5, waarbij 1 ‘niet noodzakelijk’ is en 5 ‘heel erg noodzakelijk’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Totaal niet noodzakelijk</th>
<th>Niet echt noodzakelijk</th>
<th>Neutraal</th>
<th>Best wel noodzakelijk</th>
<th>Heel erg noodzakelijk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stap 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Vraag 14: Puttend uit uw eigen ervaring en expertise, als mogelijk, kunt u globaal aangeven hoe vaak deze stap wel én niet werd uitgevoerd (grove percentages volstaan), en hoe beide in uw ogen hebben bijgedragen aan verdere samenwerking?

Wel:

Niet:

Vraag 15: Kijkend naar de subonderdelen in deze stap en puttend uit uw eigen ervaringen en expertise; mist u hier onderdelen of zijn er juist onderdelen onnodig? Waarom?

Vraag 16: Kijkend naar de subonderdelen in deze stap: welke draagt het meeste bij aan het bereiken van interne consensus? Beargumenteer uw antwoord bij ‘argument’.

a. Onderdeel 1
b. Onderdeel 2
c. Geen van deze, maar (eigen inbreng):

Argument:
**Tussenstappen**

Nu volgen nog vier vragen over de tussenstappen die in het model te zien zijn. Een korte uitleg:

- **Matchmaking**: omvat het proces dat er wordt gekeken welke doelen en drijfveren van welke bedrijven bij die van het focus bedrijf past. Doelen en drijfveren die ofwel gelijk of wel complementair aan elkaar zijn, betekenen een potentiële match, en dus worden deze partijen in stap 2 met elkaar aan tafel gezet.

- **Na stap 2**: worden de exploraties, ideeën en uitdagingen die voorbij zijn gekomen geëvalueerd en formuleren zowel het focusbedrijf als de deelnemende partijen de verwachtingen die na deze stap zijn ontstaan over elkaar en mogelijke doelen.

- **Na stap 3**: worden nogmaals de middelen, intenties en capaciteiten geëvalueerd en kunnen bedrijven nogmaals een verwachting uitspreken alvorens ze naar stap 4 gaan, dit biedt dus ook de mogelijkheid om van samenwerking af te zien.

**Vraag 17**: Hoe hoog schat u de noodzakelijkheid in van deze tussenstappen? Per rij één colom aankruisen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Totaal niet noodzakelijk</th>
<th>Niet echt noodzakelijk</th>
<th>Neutraal</th>
<th>Best wel noodzakelijk</th>
<th>Heel erg noodzakelijk</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matchmaking</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluatie 1</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluatie 2</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Vraag 18**: Door wie zou de stap matchmaking moeten worden gefaciliteerd? Vul de motivatie voor je antwoord in bij ‘argument’.

a. Het focusbedrijf
b. Het focusbedrijf met alle deelnemende partijen
c. Een onafhankelijke partij

Argument:

**Vraag 19**: Door wie zou de tweede tussenstep idealiter moeten worden gefaciliteerd? Vul de motivatie voor je antwoord in bij ‘argument’.

a. Het focusbedrijf
b. Het focusbedrijf met alle deelnemende partijen
c. Een onafhankelijke partij

Argument:
**Vraag 20:** Door wie zou de derde tussenstep idealiter moeten worden gefaciliteerd? Vul de motivatie voor je antwoord in bij ‘argument’.

a. Het focusbedrijf  
b. Het focusbedrijf met alle deelnemende partijen  
c. Een onafhankelijke partij

Argument:

**Vraag 21:** Zou het hebben van een ‘trusted third party’, ofwel een onafhankelijk vertrouwenspersoon waarde hebben in dit stappenplan? Waarom wel of niet?

**Vraag 22:** Heb je nog andere opmerkingen over het ontwerp of dit onderzoek die u graag wilt delen vanuit uw vakgebied en expertise?
Appendix G. Delphi interview round 2

Beste,

Enige tijd terug heb ik je geïnterviewd voor mijn afstudeerproject, en hebben we een eerste ontwerp besproken voor het bereiken van doel congruentie tussen partners, en hoe een derde partij, in dit onderzoek een acceleration-company, hierbij kan helpen. Het idee hierachter was dat als twee samenwerkende partijen samen werken aan het definiëren van een gezamenlijk doel, of er in ieder geval compatibiliteit bestaat tussen twee doelen, dit het vertrouwen doet toenemen, de onzekerheid vermindert en zo helpt voor betere samenwerking tussen partijen.

Nu heb ik een tweede ontwerp gemaakt waarin ik alles wat er in de interview- en questionnaire rondes is gezegd zoveel mogelijk heb verwerkt. Je vindt het ontwerp en een uitleg-tabel in de bijlage.

- Ik wil je nog een laatste maal vragen of je hier nog opmerkingen, tips of vragen bij hebt, of er dingen missen of dingen onduidelijk zijn. Ben benieuwd naar je mening en inzichten,

Met vriendelijke groet,

Susanne Schouten