

SUSTAINABILITY IN THE ARTS

A board game
for
working teams
and organizations



Developed within the CoopAnimArt project by SÍN Arts Centre in consultation with Artemrede

Concept: Anikó Rácz, Tímea Török
Graphic design: Szilveszter Jenei
Sustainability consultant: Pippa Bailey



INTRODUCTION

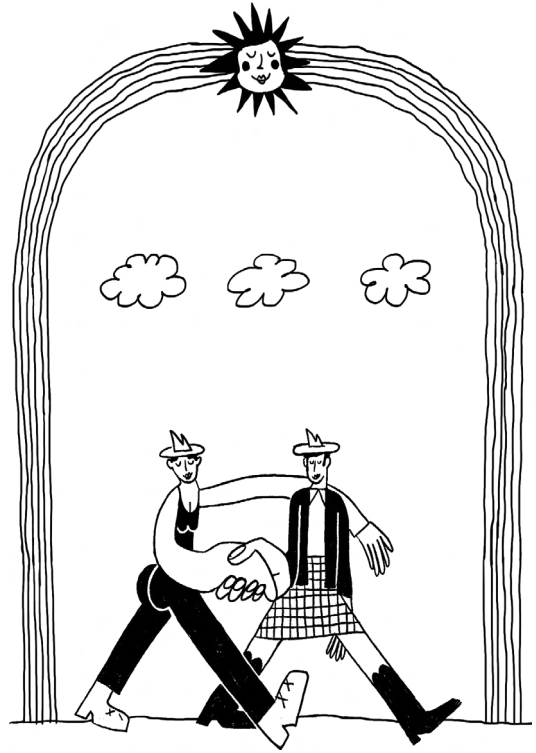
The board game “Sustainability in the Arts” was created within the framework of the CoopAnimArt Erasmus+ programme, which is a partnership between six European organizations active in performing arts, training and socially engaged work.

The project aims at the development of training schemes to foster the professionalization, collaboration practices and career development of artists, arts professionals and creative industry professionals. The idea of collaboration is the core idea of all training modules.

The idea of sustainability has been an umbrella concept of all topics and developments, and as such a board game was created within the programme. The development was conducted by two partner organizations, Artemrede in Portugal and SÍN Arts Centre in Hungary.

BACKGROUND

When the developers started unfolding the idea of Sustainability they came across the research titled Rewiring the Network conducted by IETM and IDEA Consult in 2021. We were hugely inspired by its findings primarily because it discusses sustainability in a much broader sense than the green topics. We were primarily interested in the five areas in which sustainability is examined: Artistic, Social, Human, Ecological and Economic. We welcomed such a comprehensive approach to sustainability and took it as a basis for our game development.



While nature remains in the focus, we believe that making steps towards sustainability necessitates a shift in mindset on many levels. We have found that these five categories have an intricate, complex correlation with one another in this shift.

As regards to nature we bear in mind the following considerations when thinking about our activities and plans for the future:

- Exploring the local natural environment and challenges (air quality, water source, etc.)
- The natural characteristics of the bioregion and its ecology, its wildlife and how this can inform our work
- Exploring the rights of local nature, such as land, sea, trees and wildlife
- Understand, respect and integrate the local cultural environment, including First Nations cultural protocol

THE GOAL OF THE GAME



The game invites working groups - collectives, NGO's, structures, institutions - to think through their current status and determine areas of development towards a more sustainable operation in these five categories with the help of the board game.

Our aim was to bring this vast concept down to the level of action, to understand what each of us can do to make one (or two or three...) doable but challenging steps forward according to individual capacities and readiness. The game was also developed with the idea to offer space and time for discussions about sustainability within teams, to encourage collaborative thinking and action.

This game is intended for those working teams that are interested in making a step forward towards sustainability but have not developed a strategic plan for it but are willing to discuss and act on it in a more structured way.

The goal of the game is that teams determine 3 to 4 activities that are relevant for their activities and way of working towards a higher level of sustainability that they commit to develop in the next 3-12 months.

Once the 3-4 activities are determined by the team there is a separate session recommended for their action planning and monitoring of the development. The planning can be completed with the Action Plan exercise within the Strategic Planning Module of CoopAnimArt.

PRACTICAL

Number of players: The game is proposed to be played with 5-6 team members.



Note: If your team is larger, break it down to smaller groups and make sure that you spare at least 30 minutes at the end of the game to discuss the results of the small groups and come to a mutual decision about your actions with the whole team. Alternatively you can decide to make pairs within the team, making up 5-6 players in such a way. This however may end up in a longer session as there will be discussions between the pairs.

It is also OK to play the game within smaller groups than 5 people, then it will take shorter.

You will need a table (approx. 80 x 120cm) and chairs around it.



Recommended time: We recommend that you allocate a good 4 hours with break(s) to playing the game. If you don't have this time available at one go, you can play the game in 2 separate sessions that are not too far away from each other in time (within a week).

For each step there is a recommended time given, however players can decide how they proceed.

Make sure that all players have no urgencies to attend to, no phone calls to answer. If this is not possible, find another time that you can devote to the activity.

NOTE: Take your time. The aim is not to get through the game swiftly but to have a good discussion about your practices, way of working and find the room for development in them.

CONTENTS



You will find the following files:

1. The instructions (the document that you are reading now)
2. 5 A3 sheets - Boards
3. 4 A4 sheets with the Activity cards (36 cards in total: 30 Activity Cards + 6 blank cards)
4. Extra Score Sheet: A4 sheets 5 score sheet to print off if you play the game again.



STEP 0 - PRINT AND MAKE UP YOUR OWN GAME

You will need to print off 1 copy of the files in points 1-3 above.

You will need bigger paper scissors - 3 pairs of scissors will do, 5 pairs are even better :)

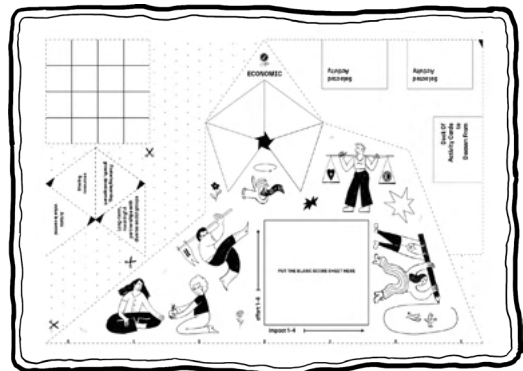
Note: You will need an A3 printer to print off the Board. The prints can be re-used at another time you play the game. If you play the game again you will only need to print off and cut out the Extra Score sheets (point 4 in the above list)



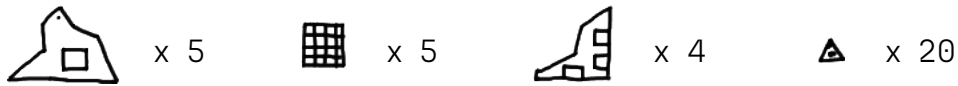
Cut out the 5 pieces of A3 sheets following the lines (the dotted areas will be the residue, you will use everything else).

Each of the 5 Boards contains:

- 1 segment of the Board
- 1 score sheet
- 4 Block cards (small triangles)
- 1 segment of the Board for Activity Cards



When done you will have:



DO NOT THROW AWAY the paper that you have cut off! Put it aside as you will need it in the final step of the game.

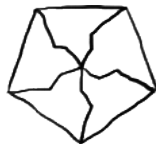
While cutting out the papers, read out the texts you find on the small triangles - we call these **Block Cards**: make sense of them together, and briefly discuss how you interpret them.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOARD AND CARDS

1. **The Board:** spread the board in the middle of the table between the players in good reach. The five segments of the board will add up to a pentagon. The order of the segments does not matter.

Place the blank Score Sheets in their place on the board (5 in total).

When the board is complete it will look like this:



2. The Board for Activity Cards will look like this:



3. Separate the Activity Cards in two piles - ones with activities and ones that are blank. Place the Activity cards in one pile facing down on the top square named "Activity Cards". Put the blank cards aside for now, you will need them later.

THE GAME

Please remember to follow the principles of consensus in all your discussions. When a decision needs to be made, make sure all viewpoints are heard beforehand.

Also remember that it is OK to disagree - listen with an open mind, try to make sense of what you hear and shape your opinion on the basis of a diversity of viewpoints.

This is a collaborative game, the aim is to have a good conversation and that the whole team gets to a conclusion together about what you as a team can do for enhanced sustainability in your practices.

Note: read and make sense of each step one by one instead of reading the whole instructions at a go.
Read the next step, complete the activity, then go on to the next one.

STEP 1 - THE BLOCKS / RECOMMENDED TIME: 20 MINS



In this step the aim is to arrange the Block Cards (the 20 triangles) under the 5 Categories - Human, Social, Ecological, Artistic, Economic. 4 Block Cards will go under each Category.

Note: As described in the introduction, the model is taken as a base for this game. We, the developers, understand that it is not some universal truth, but a tool to help us structurize our thinking around sustainability. At some points you may have different views on what belongs under which category, and this is just fine.

The goal of this step is to have a mutual understanding of the five Sustainability Categories with the help of the Block Cards under them. The blocks are understood as ideas that serve to make a step ahead towards sustainable practices in your organization/team.

1. Take the Block Cards (20 triangles)
2. In conversation with the other players, decide on which Block goes under which of the five categories: Artistic, Social, Human, Ecological, Economic. You can also bring examples for the blocks, activities from your own experience to help the categorization. Each category should have 4 blocks.
3. Place the Block Cards in the 4 triangles in the designated areas at the peaks of the 5 segments.
4. Once you are finished take a look at the CHEAT SHEET to check the categorization according to the model. You can find the Cheat Sheet at the end of the instructions.

You can decide to rearrange the blocks according to the model or leave as you have done it. You can also rearrange them later, once you get a deeper understanding of the categories as the discussion goes.

Understanding the categories through the blocks

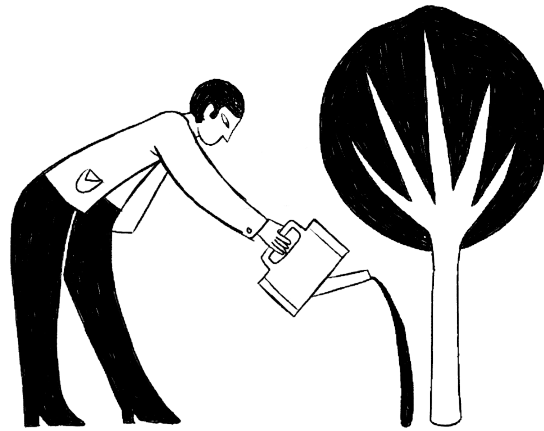
Before moving on take a few minutes to have a look at the blocks under each category and come to a mutual understanding of them.

Note: You will not need to agree about all details or have long conversations about the various interpretations of definitions, it is OK to have a diversity of opinions.



STEP 2 - THE ACTIVITIES

In this step you will discuss activities in the categories, see if they are relevant, doable and challenging for your team. The idea is to have a collection of activities that you will later choose from. You will have three rounds of card drawing and discussion. Make sure that you have breaks, stretch yourselves and have a drink.



The activities on the cards are a selection of practices, initiatives researched in the course of the game development. You may find that you are already doing a few or many of the activities. That is very good news. Also, you may find that some are not so relevant to your practice. That's OK too. The idea is that you find those or make up ones yourself in the end that will make brings about a more sustainable operation than you currently have.

In some instances you may find that the activities offered are rather elementary - especially for those professionals and organizations who have already developed their sustainability strategy and action plan. If so, you can always modify, fine-tune, upgrade the activities according to your level.

Round 1 - recommended time: 50mins

1. Each player draws 4 Activity Cards from the pile. (If there are more than 5 players, each will draw 3 cards.)
2. Player 1 chooses 1 card of the 4 in their hand that they find relevant, doable and challenging for their team and puts the card down in front of them - Player 1 explains why they have chosen that card, the group accepts the choice by discussion. Also, Player 1 makes a suggestion which Block the given Activity Card belongs to - which of the four ideas that given activity serves (please refer to the icon on the card as the developer's suggestion). It can happen that the group thinks it belongs to more than one category - put it under the one that you feel it to be the closest to.

The selected card is put down under the category it belongs to. The other 3 cards remain in the player's hand.

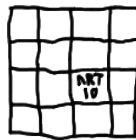
3. All players repeat Step 2 one after the other. At the end of this step there will be as many cards on the table as the number of players.

3. Scoring: the group decides together about each selected card for their impact and effort score (from 1-4 points). The scoring is done for each of the selected cards.
4. In this step the team will need to decide together how much of an effort it would take for the team to do this activity and what impact this activity would have on the sustainability of your team/organization (scoring from 1 to 4).

NOTE: This will be a very subjective scoring, one that is relevant to your team. The aim of the scoring is to have a discussion about what change it would bring to you and how difficult it would be for the team to complete this activity. Therefore it is important that the scoring is done in a discussion.

5. Write the number on the Activity card in the Score Sheet in the relevant cell according to their impact and effort score.

E.g.: for the ART10 card you have decided that it would have an impact score of 3 and an effort score of 2 write the name ART10 to the score sheet accordingly:



Round 2 - recommended time: 40mins

6. Each player draws 2 more cards - now all players have 5 cards in their hands (if there are more than 5 players they will have 4 cards each).
7. Player 1 puts down one card following the procedure in Round 1: you select one card that is relevant, doable and challenging for the team/organization. You will choose from all 5 cards in your hand: the 3 cards from the previous round and the 2 new ones.
8. All players repeat Step 7. At the end of this step there are 10 cards on the table under their relevant categories (or 12 if there are 6 players).
9. Players now repeat Steps 4 and 5 above for the scoring of the second round of Activity Cards.
10. The group checks the balance between the categories - how many activities there are under each of the 5 categories.

Round 3 - recommended time: 40mins

11. Have a look at the cards that you still have in your hands.
12. Discuss about the cards, have a look at those that are still in your hands.
13. Make a mutual decision about a total number of 4-6 cards to put down on the table from all your hands. Make sure that in this step you already watch for the balance between the number of cards under the categories.

Additionally, now you can use the blank cards that you have put aside: if there is a much better idea for an activity that is relevant for your team, write it down on the card and put it on the table under the relevant category.

NOTE: Be selective - here the aim is not to have many cards but to have a good, sensible selection of activities that you will further discuss and narrow down.

14. When all cards are placed on the table, collect all those cards that are passed and place them facing down in one pile on the Board for Activity Cards in the designated section.
15. Discuss and decide about the scoring of the last round of selected Activity Cards of the following the instructions of Steps 4 and 5.

Conclusion - recommended time: 30mins

16. Now there are about 14-16 cards on the board, presumably evenly distributed amongst the categories.
17. Have a look at the impact and effort scores and the collection of all the selected cards, the relationship of the activities to each other.
18. Each player makes 4 small paper balls (of about 1cm in diameter) from the residue papers. This will be their voting tokens.



19. The players consider individually all selected cards in respect of the team/organization: which are the top 4 activities they can foresee to develop in the next 6-12 months?

They need to consider the impact and effort scores in their choice so that they are doable and challenging, meaningful activities.

Also, players need to make their choice upon their willingness to commit to the selected activities.

20. The voting is done individually in silence. It is possible to distribute the tokens unevenly: to put up to 2 tokens on one Activity and spread the remaining 2 on two other Activities.
21. When everybody has thought over their vote, they put down their tokens on the selected Activity Cards.
22. The group checks the scores and sees which the top 4 activities are. If the voting has not resulted in 4 top activities, the players may remove those cards that did not get any or just one vote and repeat the voting.

Note: it is OK not to have as many as 4 Activities but less. The point is that the team can be committed to develop those that they have selected. However, it is advised not to select more than 4 Activities in the end.

23. The top 4 (or 3 or 2) Activities are placed in the designated boxes on the Board of Activities. These are the activities that you will develop in the near future.

Make a photo of this to record your selection.

24. In a different session but in the very near future (not more than 2 weeks' time) have another meeting where you develop action plans for these activities. An action plan is what lists the individual, practical steps, tasks that with timing and people responsible for it, as well as a scheduled monitoring date, when progress is measured and modifications are implemented in the plan if necessary.

For the action plan you can refer to the Action Planning exercise in The Strategic Planning Module of the CoopAnimArt project.



CHEAT SHEET

ARTISTIC	ECOLOGICAL	SOCIAL	HUMAN	ECONOMIC
Slow art	Ecological awareness	Equal access and inclusion	Fair practices is team work	Alternative business models
Artist driven development	Ecological artistic production practices	Demonstrable impact on society	A better work-life balance	Fair pay and security
Space/time for transformation	Meaningful and green mobility	Long-term, meaningful collaborations with social groups	Fostering learning, growth, development	Sharing resources
Artistic value is central	Rethinking internationalization	Synergies with sectors beyond the arts	Shared leadership (with care in centre)	Diverse revenue streams

