



**EMEA PUBLICATION UNDER THE INVESTMED PROJECT – POLICY PAPER: 10
REGENERATIVE VALUE-DRIVEN BUSINESS
READY FOR SWITCHING TO A WELLNESS-
FIT ECONOMY: DELIVERING A
FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION.**

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1 INTRODUCTION: REGENERATIVE VALUE-DRIVEN BUSINESS

Imagine a future where business is considered universally as a force for the creative and sustainable pursuit of unlimited qualitative enrichment and wellness of human beings, with limited means and in harmony with the evolution of nature's living systems. In this future, we live as one with the natural world: today's 'take-make-waste' approach has been supplanted by a 'borrow-use-return' approach. "Growth" becomes synonymous not with higher GDP, but with increasing trust, greater equity, healthier lives and richer ecosystems.

The term "**wellness**" includes factors such as physical and mental health, social connections, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, the sense of purpose and the overall satisfaction and happiness of the population. A **wellness-fit economy**, whatever its scale – a company or business ecosystem, a city, region, nation or federation of nations – has three main goals against which its progress is measured: (1) ensuring basic needs are met for all its citizens, (2) sustaining and improving quality of life, and (3) mitigating future risks¹.

In this paper, we introduce a vision of **regenerative value-driven business**, contributing to a wellness-fit economy, with the vision and principles introduced in Ayadi and Sessa (2023). In this concept, all regenerative value-driven companies, whilst pursuing growth, strive to ensure that every individual contributing to their success is afforded the opportunity to learn, grow and lead fulfilling, purposeful lives, playing their part to create the conditions required for humanity to flourish within the carrying capacity of our finite planet.

Regenerative value-driven businesses apply the **key principle of purposeful business: to solve the problems of people and planet profitably, and not to profit from causing problems**. The corporate purpose for a 'business-as-usual' company is profit, whatever it takes to make it, within the rule of law. For a purposeful or purpose-driven business, corporate purpose identifies how the company assists people, organisations, societies and nations to address the challenges they face, whilst at the same time avoiding or minimising problems companies might cause and making them more resilient in the process. Purposeful businesses will be essential contributors to solving the global challenges of the 21st century, best expressed in an integrated way by the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

If we are to see businesses move towards solving problems and not profiting from producing problems for people or planet, then we need businesses that commit to their corporate purpose and

¹ In Ayadi and Sessa (2023)

create reciprocal relations of trust and mutual benefit, both for the firm and its stakeholders. This, in turn, can create more loyal customers, more engaged employees, more reliable suppliers and more supportive shareholders and societies. A return to corporate purpose is central to a renewal and revival of business as an institution that plays a positive role in society. And since the definition of SDGs in 2015, there has been a growing recognition of this in the business sector. A tool for operationalising the SDGs was released in 2019 from the Future-Fit foundation: the **Future-Fit Business Benchmark**. This is a tool that allows companies, investors and other stakeholders to assess the social and environmental impacts of businesses. It translates the system-level requirements of sustainability into organisation-level objectives, operationalising the SDGs in a business context.²

In this paper, building upon our own definition of regenerative economy (section 2), we describe a regenerative value-driven business approach (section 3) and, associated with this, suggest a scheme of a Wellness-Fit Business Benchmark to help regenerative value-driven business to pursue outcomes that contribute to a Wellness-Fit Society (section 4). Section 5 concludes, providing key policy recommendations to foster regenerative value-driven business growth.

2 WHAT DOES “REGENERATIVE ECONOMY” MEAN?

The contribution of business is key to making the wellness-fit economy vision not into a utopia – obviously people will become sick, crimes will occur, accidents will happen – but a compelling and plausible vision. This is where societal and business leaders are asked to switch the economy paradigm, from achieving unlimited homogeneous growth of quantitative targets (e.g., GDP growth) to the creative and sustainable pursuit of unlimited qualitative enrichment with limited means, in harmony with the evolution of nature. This means switching to a “regenerative economy” paradigm, but what does this really mean?

We have asked Open AI chatGPT to describe the meaning of “regenerative economy”. The answer is copied below:

² The Future-Fit Business Benchmark is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license. This makes anybody free to copy and redistribute the material (methodological and implementation guides) in any medium and format, and to remix, transform and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially, with the aim of accelerating progress towards a prosperous future for all. We use and adapt the Future-Fit to design our own Wellness-Fit Business Benchmark, as discussed in this paper.

“The concept of a regenerative economy is rooted in the idea of creating systems that can restore and replenish resources, rather than depleting or degrading them. It goes beyond the traditional approach of sustainability by aiming to actively enhance natural, social and economic systems. In a regenerative economy, the focus is on designing systems and processes that mimic and work in harmony with natural ecosystems. The principles of regeneration draw from nature's own methods of resource management and renewal. The goal is to create closed-loop cycles where waste is minimised, resources are used efficiently and natural capital is regenerated. Key characteristics of a regenerative economy include:

1. **Circular Systems:** A regenerative economy aims to eliminate the concept of waste by promoting circular systems where materials and resources are recycled, reused, or repurposed. This reduces the extraction of new resources and minimises the generation of pollution and waste.
2. **Renewable Energy:** The transition to a regenerative economy involves a shift towards clean and renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind and hydroelectric power. By reducing reliance on fossil fuels, it helps mitigate climate change and reduces environmental impact.
3. **Ecosystem Restoration:** Regenerative practices involve restoring and rehabilitating ecosystems that have been damaged or degraded. This includes reforestation efforts, wetland restoration and sustainable agriculture practices that enhance soil health and biodiversity.
4. **Social Equity:** A regenerative economy emphasises social justice and equity by ensuring that economic benefits are shared equitably amongst all members of society. It seeks to address disparities, promote fair labour practices and foster inclusive decision-making processes.
5. **Innovation and Collaboration:** A regenerative economy encourages innovation and collaboration across various sectors. It calls for new business models, technologies and policies that support sustainable development and create positive social and environmental outcomes.
6. **Long-Term Thinking:** A regenerative economy emphasises long-term thinking and takes into account the well-being of future generations. It recognises the interdependence of economic systems, social systems and ecological systems, and aims to ensure their resilience and sustainability over time.

The concept of a regenerative economy is gaining attention as a framework for addressing pressing global challenges, such as climate change, resource depletion, and social inequality. By

shifting from a linear, extractive model of economic growth to a regenerative model, societies can work towards a more sustainable and thriving future.”

The rationale of switching to a regenerative economy paradigm worldwide is increasingly evident. We are in a situation where rapid change to a healthy relationship with the planet is in order. In this respect, the concept of “regeneration” and “regenerative growth” moves our frame of discourse from “doing things to nature” to “participate as partners with and as nature”. At the core of the regeneration paradigm there is, therefore, conceiving the economic system literally as a living system, working with the same universal pattern of self-organisation, interdependence between and diversity of the various parts connected in a whole organic system.

By taking this regenerative worldview, we radically change the concept of sustainability. This is not a fixed state measured by targets that can be achieved and then maintained forever after. Sustainability is a dynamic process of co-evolution and a community-based process of continuous conversation and learning how to participate appropriately in the constantly transforming life-sustaining processes that we are part of and that our future depends upon, with the aim to maintain this planet in a condition where life satisfaction and human well-being can flourish (a Wellness-Fit Society).

The best-known example of a regenerative economy is in the agriculture sector, where it is now technologically possible and economically competitive to produce food whilst simultaneously living better off the plot of land. But regeneration can work across all development sectors – not just agriculture – going beyond sustainability. The question in **sustainable development** was “How can the economy work in such a way that we sustain or do not hurt the underlying (ecological and social) support systems?” Now, the question in **regenerative development** becomes “How can the economy work in such a way that we improve the capacity of the underlying support systems?”. It is no longer enough not to do harm - sustainability, zero-waste and zero-emission policies are noble goals but we can and must do better than zero, we need to do good. This is the key message of regenerative economy, illustrated in figure 1 below.

Regenerative economy principle

Sustainable development is no more enough. We no longer have the luxury of just being less bad!

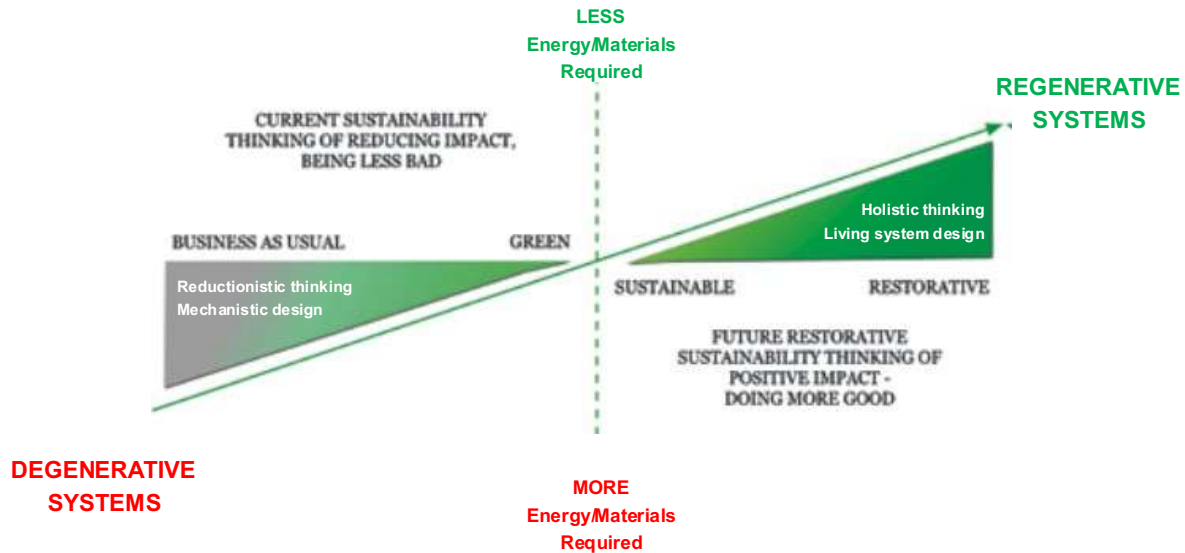


Figure 1 Regenerative economy principle (adapted from Brown M. et al. 2018)

Regenerative economy practices may do more than any single thing in the next generation to reverse the deteriorating human and environmental conditions that accompany unchecked human expansion. Limiting and reducing that damage, whilst working relentlessly to raise the living standards of the poorest third of humanity, is arguably the most pressing problem of our time. The hub of the problem now is how to flip over the magnificent growth energy of modern civilisation into a non-acquisitive search for deeper knowledge of self and nature. If people come to realise that there are many non-material, non-destructive paths of growth, it would help dampen the common fear that a steady state economy would mean deadly stagnation.

3 HOW CAN THE BUSINESS WORLD SWITCH TO REGENERATIVE VALUE CREATION?

Traditionally, creating shareholder value – potentially at the expense of other stakeholders, including the environment – was considered the sole purpose of business. The more a company was able to privatise gains and socialise losses, the more successful it would become. But since the 1970s, evidence has started to mount that such behavior is not sustainable on a finite planet with a rapidly growing population.

A few years ago, the term creating shared value was coined, to describe how companies can continue to focus primarily on financial performance, by identifying ways to make money wherever their core business and societal problems overlap. But this approach is still insufficient to cope with the increasing complexity of the global economy. Today’s companies operate in a world of complex, interlinked systems – markets, communities, ecosystems, etc. – in which linear notions of cause and effect start to evaporate. Any action in one area can lead to undesirable consequences elsewhere. A company embracing a shared value approach might – in all good conscience – seek to solve one problem, only to create another.

Business can only thrive in a strong society. Society, in turn, can only prosper if its needs are being met by a healthy natural environment. These relationships are best described with a systems analysis approach, as nested dependencies of the economy on the society and environmental conditions, as shown in figure 2 below:

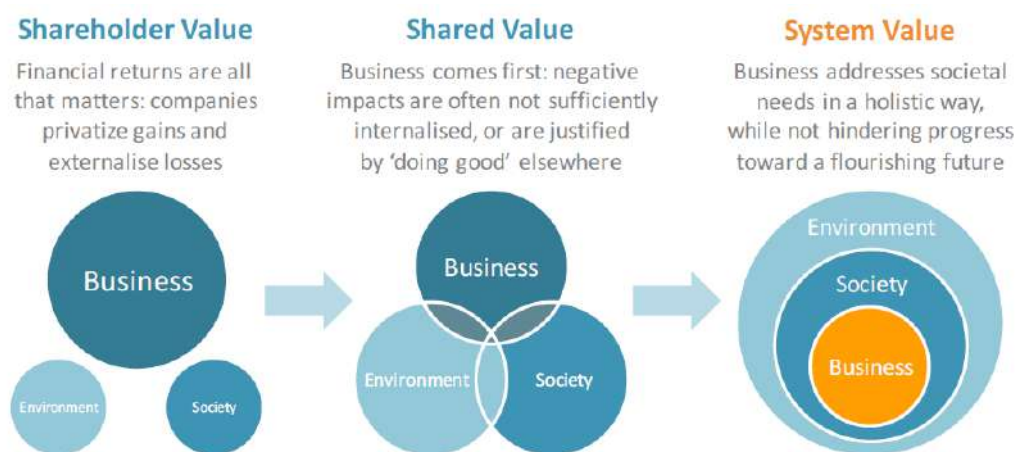


Figure 2 Rethinking value creation through a systems lens (source Future-Fit Business Benchmark, 2019a)

To understand the full extent of a company's impacts – good and bad – we must think in terms of creating system value. No business decision is ever free of potential trade-offs. But a systems-based approach makes it possible to identify otherwise unforeseen issues. This allows negative trade-offs to be anticipated, avoided or, at the very least, addressed. This kind of holistic decision-making must become the norm if we are to avoid – and eventually reverse – damage to our natural systems and social fabric.

Creating system value and achieving a greater wellness-fit is possible only if economic agents – business, governments, civil society organisations – work together in pursuit of a collective progress towards which they all aim. But how can any specific social system (company, business ecosystem, territorial community – neighbourhood, city, region, nation) that is taking its own purposeful actions be sure it is helping, rather than hindering, the collective progress?

To answer this question, we need to consider the full range of impacts any social system may have across two independent dimensions – positive versus negative, and direct versus indirect:

- A social system's impacts may be either positive or negative. Positive impacts are those which help to bring society into closer alignment with the desired regenerative outcomes and so move us towards wellness-fitness. Negative impacts are those which hold us back.
- A social system's impacts may be either direct or indirect. All social systems rely on the activities of others – for example, to provide them with essential goods and services – and those activities might lead to a wide range of impacts, both good and bad. A social system cannot absolve itself of responsibility for such impacts, if its own success depends on the activities which cause them. We can class such impacts as indirect, in contrast to the direct impacts which one's own activities cause.

Based on these criteria, any social system impacts are classified in four categories, as shown in figure 3 below:



Figure 3 The relationship between extra-financial break-even goals (bottom left) and positive pursuits
Source Future-Fit Business Benchmark 2019a)

This matrix helps us to define operationally a regenerative economy break-even rule, which can be used to guide regenerative business strategies. So far, our economic system has evolved to treat financial returns and value creation as one and the same thing. The financial break-even is achieved by any social system – a company, investor or other economic actor – when financial returns are at least able to cover the ongoing costs. Any surplus (or “profit” in business language) is welcomed, but the minimum requirement is to break-even.

The shift to a regenerative value-driven business now requires a more holistic value creation approach: one in which all business and other social systems (e.g., government) strive to create system value by positively impacting all three dimensions - environmental, social and economic - simultaneously. To guide the creation of system value effectively, we must clearly identify what it means to break even for the social and environmental dimensions, as well as extending the break-even rule to cover extra-financial performance. This is about determining what any business system must do – and what it may do beyond that – to support our collective journey to a Wellness-Fit Society. In a nutshell:

- *Extra-financial break-even point:* Any business system *must* do everything in its power to eliminate negative impacts that occur because of its existence, modifying its own activities to align with

wellness-fitness conditions and avoiding any dependence on others who are not committed to doing the same (this action is represented in the bottom-right quadrant of the matrix)

- *Beyond the extra-financial break-even point:* In addition to achieving the break-even point, neutralising its own negative impact, a business system *may* actively seek to speed up society's progress, by directly creating a positive impact itself, or indirectly by amplifying a positive impact created by others, or by helping others to avoid causing a negative impact (such actions are represented by the other three quadrants of the matrix).

The extra-financial break-even is therefore the operational rule that any business system should follow to explore its overall contribution to regenerative outcomes, creating system value with a better wellness-fit alignment. The concept is summarised in figure 4 below:

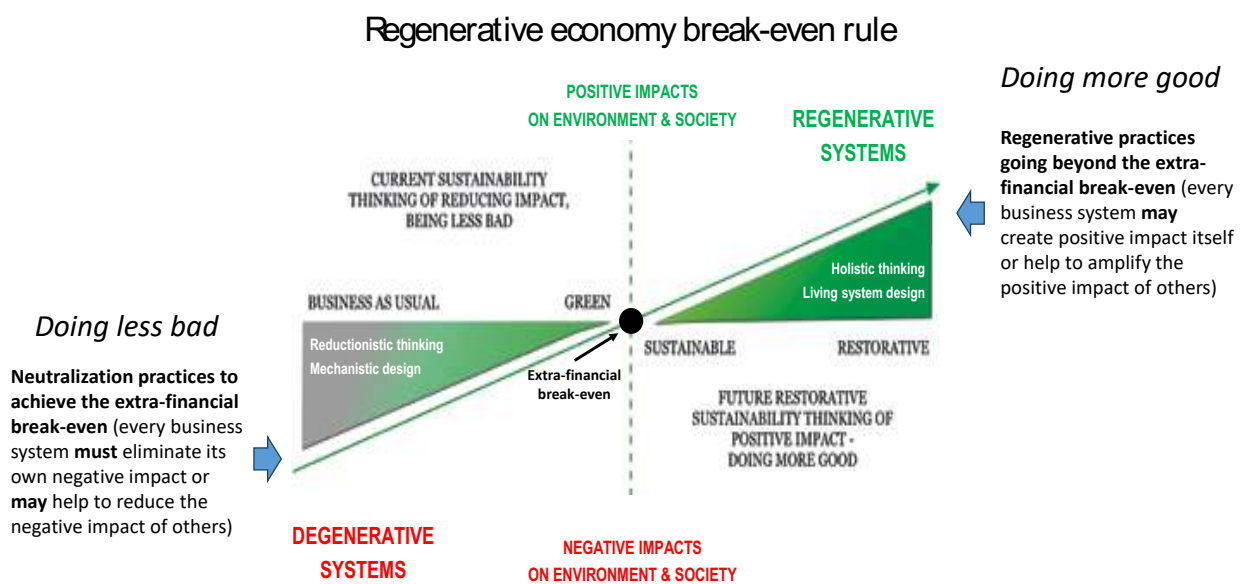


Figure 4 – Visualisation of the regenerative economy break-even rule

In practice, regenerative business leaders should formulate specific break-even goals, which can be grasped by key stakeholders without lengthy explanation and representing the minimum level of performance to aim for, related to one issue (e.g., income inequality, waste). All specific goals together will then identify the social and environmental break-even point that every company/social system must reach.

4 PURSUING REGENERATIVE OUTCOMES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO A WELLNESS-FIT SOCIETY

To push regenerative outcomes, it is also important to focus on positive pursuits beyond the extra-financial break-even point, which will help to contribute actively to a better Wellness-Fit Society. Whilst companies **must** achieve extra-financial break-even goals in their own operation, they **may** also contribute to *positive pursuits beyond the break-even* directly in their operational activities and indirectly, influencing the behaviour of others.

Insofar as companies are only reducing and eventually neutralising the harms of their own operational activities and products, by achieving well formulated environmental and social break-even goals, they remain within the **sustainable business perspective**. In this perspective, **break-even goals** are formulated to give business leaders a clear destination to aim for, such that: 1) each goal is expressed as a single sentence, whose meaning can be grasped by business leaders, investors and other key stakeholders without lengthy explanation, 2) each goal represents the minimum level of performance to aim for in one part of the company value web (e.g. products, operations) and relates to one issue (e.g., wages, waste); 3) all goals together identify the social and environmental break-even point that every company must reach.³

Whenever companies are not pursuing only activities recognised as progress towards the extra-financial break-even goals, delivering outcomes that serve to reduce or neutralise their own negative environmental or social impact, but go beyond the break-even with activities whose outcome contributes to speed up the collective progress towards a Wellness-Fit Society, they enter the **regenerative business perspective**. In this perspective, **positive pursuits** are formulated to give business leaders a clear understanding of regenerative outcomes to aim for that contribute to a Wellness-Fit Society, such that again it:

- is expressed as a single sentence, whose meaning can be grasped by business leaders, investors and other key stakeholders without lengthy explanation;
- identifies a way either to reverse the effects of negative environmental or social impacts that occurred in the past, or to help others avoid having such negative impacts in the future;

³ For instance, the Future-Fit Business Benchmark considers 18 break-even goals related to seven core priorities of a Future-Fit society: 1) energy is renewable and available to all; 2) water is responsibly sourced and available to all; 3) waste does not exist; 4) natural resources are managed to safeguard communities, animals and ecosystems; 5) the environment is free from pollution; 6) our physical presence protects the health of ecosystems and communities; 7) people have the capacity and opportunity to lead fulfilling lives (see Future-Fit Business Benchmark, 2019a, page 45).

- relates to one type of intended outcome, which can be delivered across the value web, thus encompassing a range of possible direct actions and indirect influences.⁴

There are a potentially infinite number of ways in which a company can undertake a positive pursuit. For example, in the *regenerative health* field, ensuring that more people are healthy and safe from harm, by reducing the impact of diabetes amongst the world's poorest people, might be tackled by educating people on healthy eating choices, providing access to affordable insulin, or training healthcare professionals to spot and treat the disease before symptoms escalate. This diversity of approaches means it can be challenging to assess and report on any two projects in a consistent and comparable way. But striving to do so is important, both to inform future project decisions and to present results to investors and others in a meaningful way.

The Future-Fit Business Benchmark released a Positive Pursuit Guide to help companies pursue outcomes that contribute to a future-fit society (Future-Fit Business Benchmark, 2019b). Any company can contribute to positive pursuits in three ways (see figure 3 again): 1) creating positive impact itself, by restoring the environment through its own operational activities, or removing barriers to wellbeing for people beyond those the company is wholly accountable for;⁵ 2) reducing the negative impact of others, by enabling others to avoid degrading the environment, or enabling others to remove barriers to wellbeing for people they are wholly accountable for;⁶ 3) amplifying the positive impact of others, by enabling others to restore the environment, or enabling others to remove barriers to wellbeing for people beyond those they are wholly accountable for.

It is worth noting that:

- Positive Pursuits do not prescribe specific actions. They are more like *categories* used to capture similar outcomes that may accrue from a wide range of different actions. For instance, the Future-Fit Business Benchmark considers 20 positive pursuits related to seven core priorities of a Future-Fit society: 1) energy is renewable and available to all; 2) water is responsibly sourced and available to all; 3) waste does not exist; 4) natural resources are managed to safeguard communities, animals and ecosystems; 5) the environment is free from pollution; 6) our

⁴ For example, a company might act to remove greenhouse gases (GHGs) from the atmosphere, or to enable others to eliminate their own GHGs. Such activities would be classed as a Positive Pursuit. But if a company were to act only to reduce *its own* operational GHGs, any improvement would count, instead, as progress towards the Break-Even Goal "Operations emit no greenhouse gases".

⁵ A company is wholly accountable for ensuring it does not undermine the wellbeing of its workers, the communities affected by its physical presence, or the users of its goods and services. This, however, is an extra-financial break-even goal of the company, not a positive pursuit.

⁶ As we are referring here to the wellbeing of people the other companies are fully accountable for, this is a positive pursuit beyond the own break-even point of the company.

physical presence protects the health of ecosystems and communities; 7) people have the capacity and opportunity to lead fulfilling lives.

- One activity may result in outcomes that span two or more Positive Pursuits. For instance, a company might provide solar lanterns to a rural community, which was previously using kerosene lamps and wasn't connected to an electric grid. This activity might lead to less need for kerosene (energy priority) and a decrease in respiratory-related diseases caused by the emissions it produces (the people fulfilling lives priority).
- Positive Pursuits should not be thought of as isolated activities conducted in a vacuum but, rather, as systemic interventions involving coordinated action amongst multiple actors, where the company is just one of many participants. These are generally complex endeavours, which demand holistic planning.
- Finally, Positive Pursuits relate to a *subset* of outcomes that might be considered 'good' on some level. Handing out free ice cream to customers might bring them joy and providing tickets to sporting events for employees may support team bonding. However, such outcomes do not make society more environmentally restorative, socially just or economically inclusive thus they fall outside the scope of systemic improvement and the ethical dimension considered here.

Now, adapting the Future-Fit Business Benchmark methodology to our research context, we suggest combining it with the TRIS model⁷, delivering an **actionable guidance framework to help green, blue, cultural and creative industries⁸ to pursue regenerative practices and outcomes that contribute to building-up a Wellness-Fit Society in the Mediterranean.**

Figure 5, below, shows how the TRIS dimensions and impact categories can be seen as regenerative transition drivers of **natural capital regeneration** (the sustainable energy and environment dimension), **human capital development** (the inclusive economy dimension), **present and future population wellness** (the responsible living dimension) and **anticipatory governance** (the transparent governance dimension) and can be used simultaneously to measure collective progress towards a Wellness-Fit society, by defining and monitoring proxy indicators for each impact category.

⁷ Transparent governance, Responsible living and being, Inclusive economy and Sustainable energy and environment are four dimensions of extra-financial impact together referred as the **TRIS framework model**, first introduced by Ayadi & Sessa (2020). The TRIS framework is conceived to help multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder groups to analyse long-term scenario horizons (e.g., until 2050) and strategic transition agendas (e.g., until 2030), combining the four dimensions to co-create inertial (business as usual) and transformative (paradigm shift) scenarios, as well as to formulate agendas for steering the transition out of the old towards a new paradigm of economy and society. The TRIS model identifies several categories of impact for each dimension, shown in table 1 of this paper.

⁸ These include a large variety of sectors: water management, waste management, recycling, agriculture & food production, CO2 reduction, self-care & natural products, music & dance, cinema, arts & handicrafts, literature, architecture, tourism, research on sustainability.

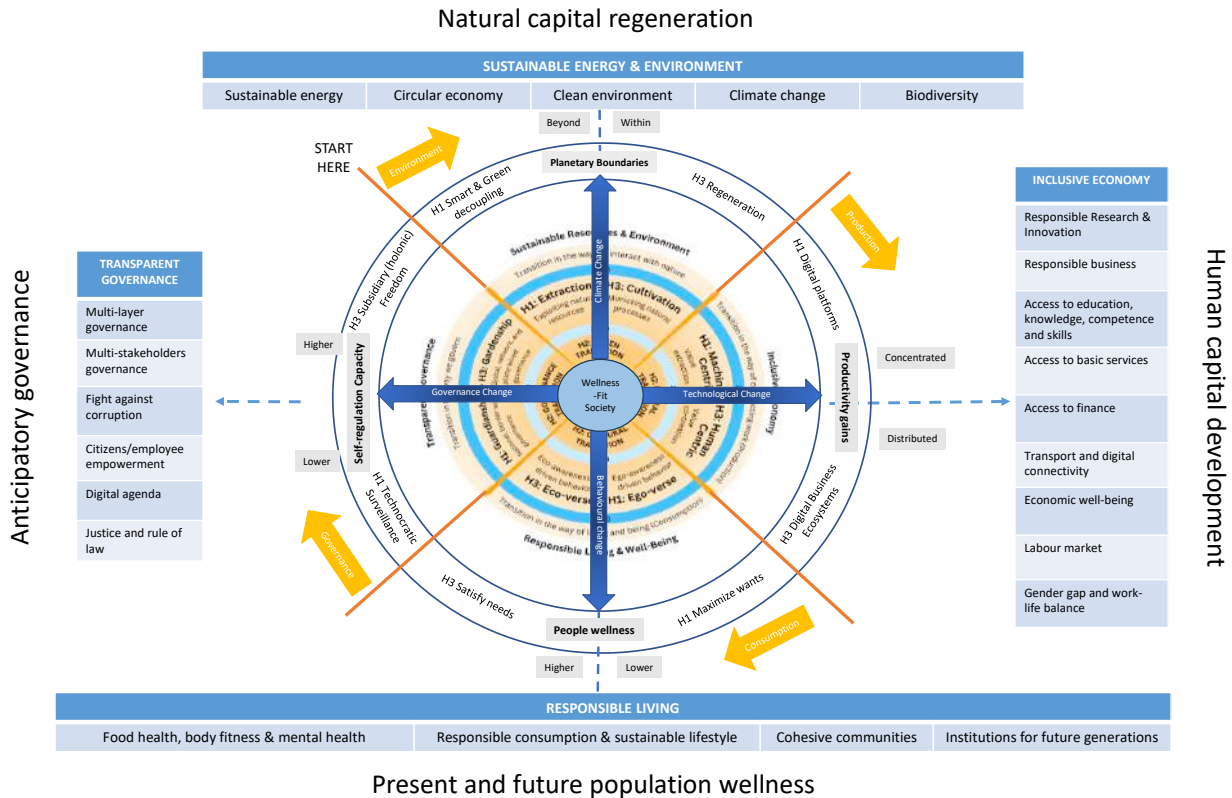


Figure 5 Regenerative transition dimensions and categories of indicators (own elaboration in Ayadi and Sessa (2023))

The TRIS categories can be used to identify in each category break-even and positive pursuit indicators, to help business leaders to monitor their own performance, by measuring the achievement of break-even targets, as well as their contribution to positive pursuits (systemic performance), by measuring the outcomes of *harm reducing/neutralising practices* (i.e., the contribution that, from the sustainability perspective, any company may give to other companies to help them to reduce their harmful environmental or social impacts) and/or *regenerative practices* (i.e., the contribution that, from the regenerative business perspective, any company may give to Wellness-Fit Society by creating positive impact itself and/or by amplifying the positive impact of others). The following table shows

the positive pursuits that any company may undertake – the “things” to be measured with adequate indicators⁹ – for each TRIS category.¹⁰

TRIS categories	Positive pursuits that any business may undertake	
	Harm reducing/neutralising practices	Regenerative practices
Sustainable energy & environment		
Sustainable energy	Other depends less on non-renewable energy	More people have access to energy
Circular economy	Others generate less waste	Waste is reclaimed and repurposed
Clean environment	Others generate fewer harmful emissions	Harmful emissions are removed from the environment
Climate change	Others generate fewer greenhouse gas emissions	Greenhouse gases are removed from the atmosphere
Ecosystem services and biodiversity	Others cause less ecosystem degradation Others depend less on inadequately managed natural resources	Ecosystems are restored
Inclusive economy		
Access to education, knowledge, competence and skills	Reducing early school leavers and NEET young people	People’s capabilities are strengthened, thanks to: Access to education and vocational training Access to information needed to make more informed decisions (e.g., reproductive choices, business decisions)
Access to basic services	More people are healthy and safe from harm, thanks to: Access to clean water and sanitation Access to adequate housing Access to healthcare services	People’s capabilities are strengthened, thanks to: The prevention of premature deaths and illnesses The prevention of mental health issues
Access to finance		People’s capabilities are strengthened, thanks to: Access to social security, insurance and finance (as a means to build

⁹ Indicators adequate for a Wellness-Fit Business Benchmark system should be calculable (i.e., all data required to compute an indicator’s value should be within the company’s power to obtain), comparable across companies, complete to cover the full scope and relevant company activities related to the TRIS category, concise (e.g., each indicator measuring the progress towards or beyond a specific break-even target as a percentage) and credible (i.e., built on leading science and/or existing industry standards).

¹⁰ The table is a work in progress, for some TRIS categories the definition of positive pursuits is still not available (n.a.)

		resilience and insulate against shocks in family and business life)
Access to transport and digital connectivity		People's capabilities are strengthened, thanks to: Access to information and communication technologies (e.g., access to smartphones and computers with Internet connectivity) Access to transport networks (increasing mobility to bring more capacity-building opportunities within reach)
Economic well-being	Reducing working poor (not having at least a living wage) Ensuring access to livelihood opportunities which do not degrade the health of workers	More people have access to economic opportunity, thanks to: Access to productivity enhancing technologies (e.g., farming implements, manufacturing equipment)
Labour market	Ensuring the right for workers to form trade unions and engage in collective bargaining	The rights to fair working hours, leaving adequate time for rest and leisure Stable income throughout the year (i.e., not just seasonal, temporary or casual labour)
Gender gap and work-life balance	n.a.	n.a.
Responsible living		
Food health, body fitness and mental health	More people are healthy and safe from harm, thanks to: Access to nutritious food and an end to malnutrition	n.a.
Responsible consumption & sustainable lifestyle	n.a.	n.a.
Cohesive communities	Barriers to social cohesion are reduced, including: <i>Social divides</i> (language or cultural barriers to participation in social activities; prejudices, discriminatory behaviours and biases leading to voluntary or involuntary exclusion of	The same barriers to social cohesion are fully overcome

	<p>certain individuals or groups; lack of productive activities to engage in; fear for personal safety; low levels of trust in institutions, resulting in apathy and reduced civic participation)</p> <p><i>Economic divides</i> (inability to afford to participate in social activities; lack of access to relevant education or training; lack of access to economic opportunities such as decent paying jobs)</p> <p><i>Physical barriers</i> (lack of appropriate spaces to engage in group activities; inaccessibility of shared spaces due to physical disability or lack of transport options)</p>	
Transparent governance		
Multi-layer governance	n.a.	n.a.
Multi-stakeholder governance	n.a.	n.a.
Citizens/employees empowerment	<p>Ensuring the prevention of exploitation and abuse</p> <p>Ensuring the prevention of slavery and forced labour</p>	<p>Individual freedoms are upheld for more people, ensuring:</p> <p>Freedom of thought, conscience and religion</p> <p>Freedom of opinion and expression</p> <p>Freedom from discrimination</p> <p>Freedom of assembly</p> <p>The right to privacy</p>
Digital agenda	n.a.	n.a.
Justice and rule of law	n.a.	n.a.
Institutions for future generations	n.a.	n.a.

Table 1 – Positive Pursuit outcomes that contribute to a Wellness-Fit Society by TRIS categories

In practice, any positive pursuit listed in the table encompasses any action that achieves the related outcome. For instance, taking the first positive pursuit – i.e., harm reducing/neutralisation practices, such that **“others depend less on non-renewable energy”** – then people’s reliance on non-renewable energy is reduced when:

- *More renewable energy is available to replace non-renewable alternatives:* For instance, a company might install and maintain a grid-connected wind farm in a region where electricity is generated predominantly by coal-fired power stations and then sell this new electricity at standard market rates. A positive outcome would be an increase in the mix of renewable energy in the grid, translating into reduced demand for coal power.
- *Others are able to meet their needs using less energy:* Alternatively, a company might develop a much less energy-intensive way of producing a widely-used chemical and license the approach to other major producers. A positive outcome would be a reduction in the annual energy consumption of those companies.

This and other examples of actions that can be undertaken to achieve positive pursuits, listed in table 1, are provided in the Future-Fit Business Benchmark Positive Pursuit Guide. When actions are so concretely identified, it becomes easier to define appropriate indicators to measure positive outcomes.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The positive pursuits we have discussed so far describe the typology of outcomes that switching to a regenerative value-driven business culture may deliver, contributing to the realisation of a Wellness-Fit Society. However, describing how companies may contribute directly to progress on different environmental and social impact categories is not enough - we need to conclude here by discussing how to put in place the conditions that will enable those outcomes.

Social norms, global governance and how we pursue economic growth are what drive the behaviours of all socioeconomic actors – and today they are not aligned with the pursuit of future-fitness. As a result, society remains on the same breakdown trajectories that have led to the existential problems we are now facing. We have contended that simply pursuing sustainable development goals that only reduce or neutralise the harmful impacts of business on society and the environment – the sustainable business perspective – is no longer enough.

To transform society, we must reorient social norms, reshape global governance and reinvent how we recognise and reward economic growth, so that they become drivers - rather than inhibitors - of a Wellness-Fit Society. Three factors play a part in catalysing such a shift to a regenerative business perspective: 1) radical innovations, i.e., new ways to meet existing needs, which overcome systemic limitations of established approaches; 2) social, institutional and market structures, which should help to re-align existing technologies, regulations, incentives, user patterns and infrastructure to support transitions; 3) supporting paradigms, i.e., shifts in mindsets and values that underpin cultural, political and economic systems.

As **key recommendations** to implement the actionable guidance framework described in this paper - which can be used in principle to guide any business, in any country or jurisdiction - we suggest below **four strategic policy actions that may foster the transition to a Wellness-Fit Society in the Mediterranean context**:

- i. **Building a research and development infrastructure for promoting regenerative business**, e.g., by setting up a Regenerative Economy Research & Business Forum that aims to advance sustainability and regeneration in the economy through innovation and cross-sector partnerships. A network of academic and non-academic research institutions and leading companies in regenerative business fields can be created, expanding and connecting on-going international projects (e.g., the Horizon Europe project CROSS-REIS), to promote interdisciplinary research and innovation by developing joint agendas and action plans, providing training in regenerative economy research and innovation management, and creating a regional digital platform and business forum to connect institutions, experts, businessmen and policy-makers from different sectors and Mediterranean countries. The actionable regenerative business guidance framework should be used in this context as a shared methodological approach to regenerative value-driven business evaluation.
- ii. **Promoting strategic foresight capacity to help government and business stakeholders to formulate regenerative transition scenarios and long-term strategies**, addressing enabling conditions for achieving a wellness-fit society at an international, national and local level. This capacity could be created by setting up a strategic foresight group, engaging experts from different institutions in the Mediterranean (international organisations and leading national agencies) and business leaders in a regular series of scenario workshops, aimed at developing narratives of regenerative development in the Mediterranean and to deliver strategic policy recommendations about enabling governance and market mechanisms that may help regenerative value-driven business to flourish in the region. The TRIS transition scenarios'

meta-model should be used in this context. as a shared methodological approach to frame the scenario workshops.

- iii. **Promoting dialogues across the Mediterranean, involving government, business and social stakeholders and citizens**, to discuss regenerative transition scenarios and how today's entrenched social norms are challenged and may evolve - through the interplay of *social pressures* (demographic shifts, increasing globalisation and extreme events, such as wars, financial crises and revolutions), *environmental pressures* (resource scarcity, soil erosion and more extreme weather events caused by global warming) and *technological pressures* (the potential for increased automation due to breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and robotics) – to enable a transition towards a Wellness-Fit Society. There are many entities, operating across all levels of society – supranational organisations, governance institutions, multinational corporations, cultural institutions, media, community interaction and individual behaviour – that combine to establish and perpetuate social norms, which should be involved in *structured dialogues* at international, national or regional level.
- iv. **Promoting impact investment capacity and funding schemes in the Mediterranean**, by developing EU or national funds, as well as technical assistance to build up the capacity of all actors concerned – government, the banking sector, social business – to deliver successful impact investing outcomes. In the transformative regenerative economy vision, impact investment schemes may emerge and succeed as new “qualitative growth” engines, sustaining the diffusion of regenerative business practices and outcomes.

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7 ANNEXE: PROPOSAL FOR APPLICATION OF REGENERATIVE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

For the INVESTMED project, we tested the regenerative principles and practices during a workshop organised in July 2023, where representatives of companies mainly in three sectors (blue, green and cultural creative) were present.

The regenerative practices aim to restore, renew and revitalise their sources of energy and materials, creating systems that are robust and resilient over the long term.

These practices can be applied across various sectors and disciplines.

In what follows, we propose the following regenerative practices:

In Agriculture:

Regenerative Agriculture: This includes practices like no-till farming, cover cropping, rotational grazing and agroforestry. The aim is to increase soil health, water retention and biodiversity.

Permaculture: A design system for creating sustainable human habitats by following nature's patterns.

Holistic Management: A process of decision-making and planning for managing resources.

In Land Management:

Reforestation: Planting trees to restore ecosystems and capture carbon.

Wetland Restoration: Renewing wetland habitats that are essential for biodiversity, flood control and water purification.

In Water:

Natural Water Retention Measures: Techniques like swales, terracing and checking dams to slow down and capture runoff.

Rainwater Harvesting: Collecting and storing rainwater for later use.

In Energy:

Renewable Energy Sources: Using wind, solar, hydro and other renewable energy sources.

Energy Efficiency Measures: Implementing technologies and practices to reduce energy consumption.

In Urban Development:

Green Building: Using sustainable materials and energy-efficient designs.

Green Infrastructure: Integrating natural elements into urban planning, like green roofs and permeable pavements.

Urban Farming: Growing food in urban areas, reducing the need for transport and promoting local consumption.

In Waste Management:

Circular Economy: An economic system aimed at eliminating waste through the continual use of resources. This involves recycling, reusing and reducing waste.

Composting: Turning organic waste into nutrient-rich compost.

In Biodiversity:

Habitat Restoration: Returning areas to their natural state to encourage the return of native species.

Pollinator Gardens: Creating spaces specifically for pollinators like bees and butterflies.

In Economic Models:

Act Local: Supporting local businesses and economies to reduce transportation emissions and foster community resilience.

Stakeholder Engagement: Involving all stakeholders in decision-making processes, ensuring more holistic and sustainable outcomes.

In Community and Social development:

Community Gardens: Shared spaces where communities can grow food and foster connections.

Participatory Action Research: Engaging community members in research to address local issues and challenges.

In Education and Awareness:

Ecological Literacy Programmes: Educating people about ecosystems and their importance.

Workshops and Training: Offering training in regenerative practices and principles.

Whilst these are specific practices, the overarching philosophy of regeneration is systemic thinking, recognising the interconnectedness of all things and striving for a balance that sustains life in all its forms. Implementing regenerative practices often involves adapting to local conditions and cultural contexts, as well as continuously learning and adjusting, based on outcomes and feedback.

The regenerative principles can be applied to various sectors and economic models. How they might fit into the Blue Economy, Green Economy and the Cultural Creative Economy:

Blue Economy (focused on the sustainable use of ocean resources):

Regenerative Principles:

- Focus on holistic wealth by considering the ecological and social values of marine resources.
- Promote relationship over transaction by encouraging long-term stewardship of marine resources.
- Embrace the systems view by recognising the interconnectedness of marine ecosystems.

Regenerative Practices:

- Implement sustainable fishing practices that help restore fish populations and marine ecosystems.
- Promote aquaculture systems that mimic natural ecosystems, such as integrated multi-trophic aquaculture.
- Restore and protect coastal ecosystems, like mangroves, seagrasses and coral reefs which act as carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots.
- Develop marine-based renewable energy sources, like wave and tidal energy.
- Support circular economy principles in marine industries, such as recycling nets or using fish waste for energy.

2. Green Economy (oriented towards reducing environmental risks):

Regenerative Principles:

- Emphasise real wealth by focusing on the long-term health of ecosystems and communities.

- Encourage adaptive management by continuously updating green technologies and strategies, based on feedback.
- Strengthen resilience and redundancy to cope with environmental challenges.

Regenerative Practices:

- Prioritise renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydro.
- Support sustainable agriculture practices like agroforestry, permaculture and organic farming.
- Advocate green infrastructure and transportation systems.
- Promote waste reduction, recycling and circular economy principles.

3. Cultural Creative Economy (based on the production and distribution of creativity and knowledge):

Regenerative Principles:

- Honour places by celebrating the uniqueness of local cultures and traditions.
- Prioritise relationship over transaction, fostering long-term connections between artists, patrons and communities.
- Empower participation by involving communities in creative decision-making processes.
- Regenerative Practices:
- Support artisans and craftspeople using sustainable materials and practices.
- Encourage local art events and festivals to reduce transportation impacts and promote local culture.
- Digitise and share cultural and creative content, reducing the need for physical materials and transportation.
- Foster collaboration between artists, communities and ecologists to create projects that raise awareness about regenerative principles.

By integrating regenerative principles and practices into these economic models, we can foster more resilient, sustainable and holistic systems that benefit both people and the planet.

ABOUT INVESTMED

Mediterranean MSMEs face important challenges in terms of competitiveness, sustainability, internationalization and capacity to innovate while urgent measures are needed to tackle common environmental challenges and untap the potential of both natural and cultural heritage to contribute to sustainable growth and economic development. Against this backdrop, the INVESTMED project aims at addressing both economic and environmental challenges, by supporting new, sustainable business opportunities for young people and women in three Mediterranean Partner Countries: Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia.

The INVESTMED Project (InNoVative Sustainable sTart-ups for the MEDiterranean) is co-funded by the European Union under the ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020. INVESTMED has a duration of 30 months, with a total budget of €3.8 Million, of which €3.4 Million (90%) is funded by ENI CBC MED. It has 8 partners from Tunisia, Spain, Lebanon, Greece, Egypt, and Italy:

- Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises, BUSINESSMED (TU)
- Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association, EMEA (ES)
- European Institute of the Mediterranean, IEMed (ES)
- Beyond Group / Irada Group S.A.L, BRD (LE)
- Institute of Entrepreneurship Development, IED (GR)
- Libera Università Maria SS. Assunta, LUMSA (IT)
- Confederation of Egyptian European Business Associations, CEEBA (EG)
- Spanish Chamber of Commerce, CCE (ES)

INVESTMED will have an impact on MSMEs, start-ups and recently established enterprises where staff will be trained and coached to become more sustainable and competitive and financially supported via an open competition. Specific business incubation services will also be established for sustainable start-ups as well while relevant public authorities will benefit from capacity building and exchange of best practices to facilitate access and protect IPR for MSMEs.

The **Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association – EMEA** is a Barcelona-based regional think-tank that serves as a leading independent and innovative policy research institution; a forum for debate on the political and socio-economic reforms in Mediterranean and Africa; and promoter of actions and initiatives that fulfil objectives of sustainability, inclusiveness, regional integration and prosperity.

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