

Translating Sustainability Knowledge

A Need for Change

Please Help! The Earth, our home, is in danger. Through excessive resource extraction, production, consumption, and pollution, we risk destroying the delicate balance our planet has maintained for aeons. We need to act now.



Collective Efforts

Hope

The good news is that we can still change our trajectory. While legislative interventions and government incentives are crucial for a sustainable future, individuals can also contribute. This thesis investigates the barriers Swiss SMEs face in implementing ecological sustainability in their business practices and seeks ways to address these challenges.



The Situation

In Switzerland, 99% of all businesses are SMEs. Every business has the potential to improve its sustainability integration, but research has shown that they often lack the knowledge and know-how to go beyond the obvious.



SME



Faces

Barriers

Information Overload
Lack of Knowledge, Context and Actionable Strategies

Leads To

Shallow Level Sustainability Measures
No Sustainability Measures

Intervention Opportunity

Needs

Guidance
Clear Information
Support and Collaboration
Innovative Tools and Approaches

To Achieve

The Goal

Better Sustainability Integration

The Opportunity

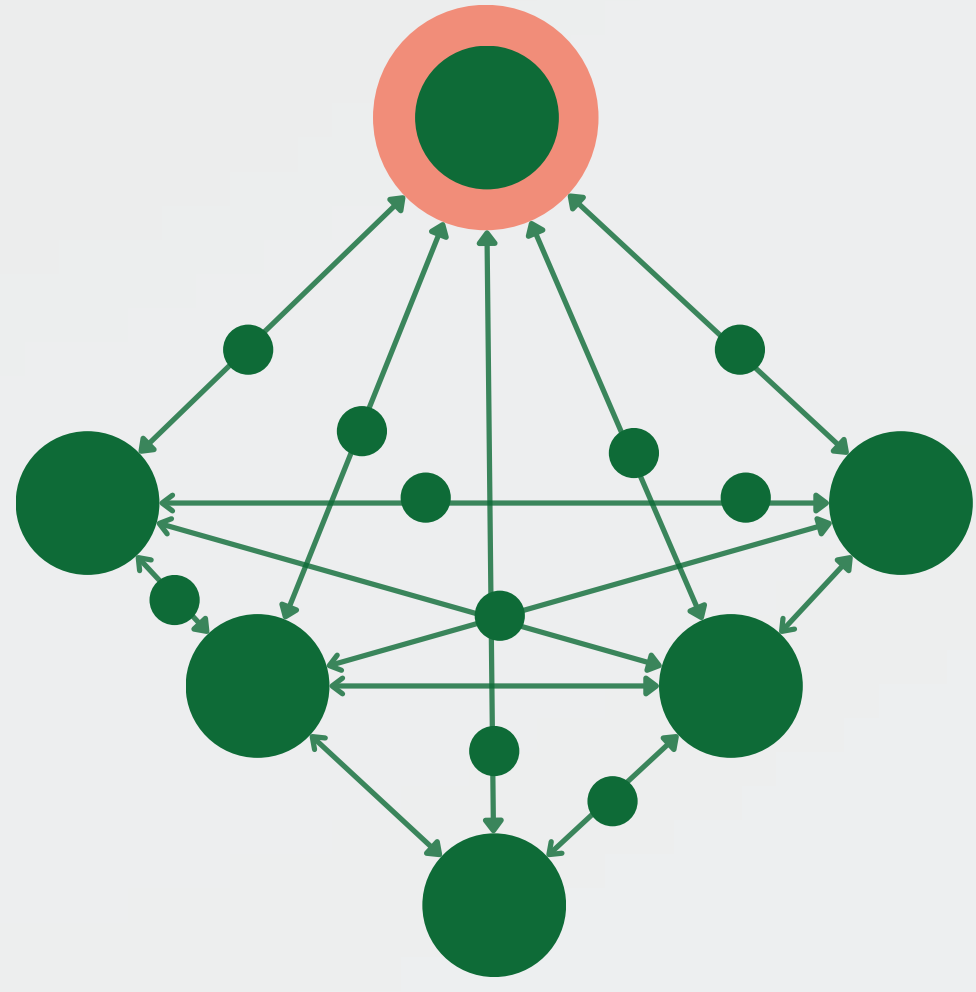
To address these barriers, an intervention must help SMEs overcome knowledge gaps and empower them to understand sustainability in their context and find further opportunities to implement new strategies in their specific business model.



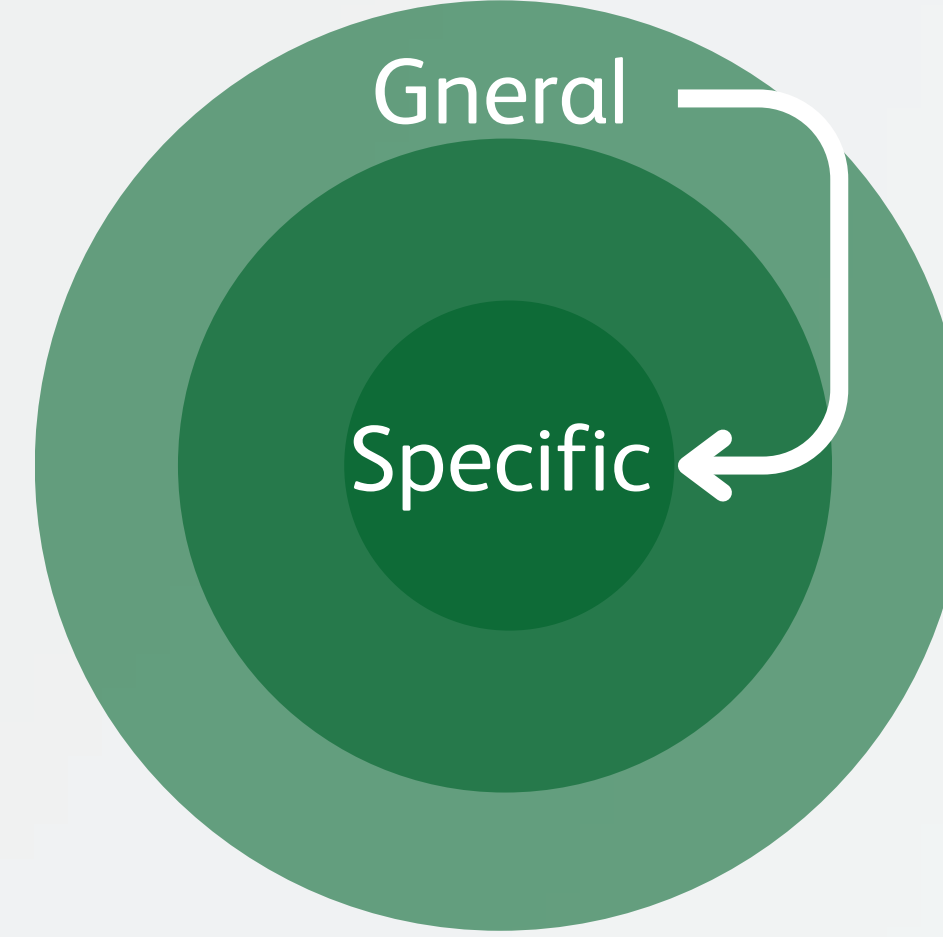
The Design



In a design process involving **prototyping, testing, and collaboration with various stakeholders and experts**, an intervention was crafted to address the identified challenges.



Engaging the SME as a **whole** and including employees is crucial for accessing distributed knowledge and expertise. **A workshop setting ensures interactivity and flexibility.**

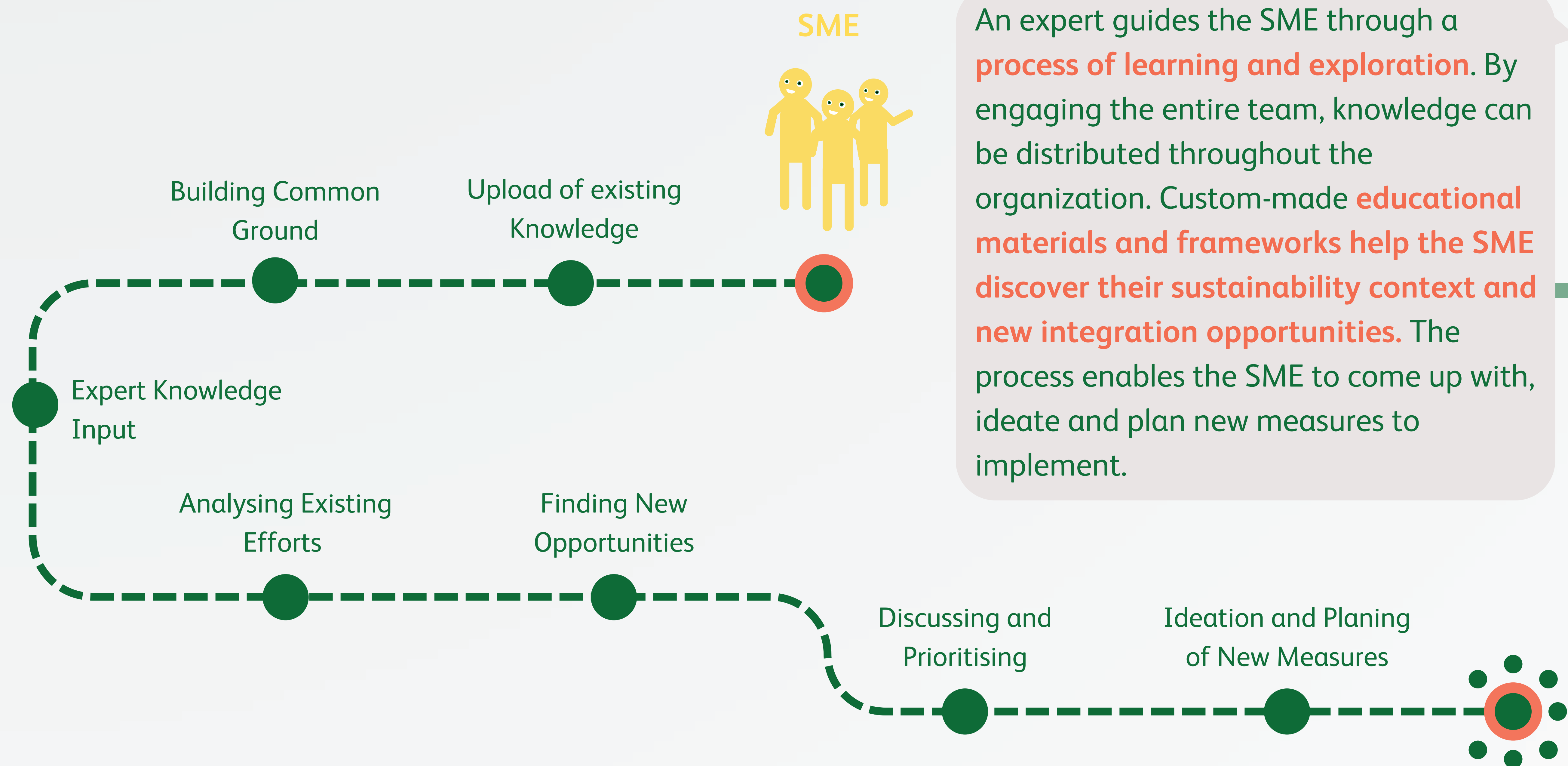


To achieve a deeper understanding of ecological sustainability, **SMEs need to transition from a general sustainability context to a business-specific context.**

The Intervention



An expert guides the SME through a **process of learning and exploration**. By engaging the entire team, knowledge can be distributed throughout the organization. Custom-made **educational materials and frameworks help the SME discover their sustainability context and new integration opportunities**. The process enables the SME to come up with, ideate and plan new measures to implement.



Take Aways



The intervention can help an SME practice sustainability on a deeper level. **Sustainability must be understood as a mindset**, not just as an afterthought. Fostering an understanding that **sustainability can be practised and lived on all levels of an SME** can help the organisation shift and change as a whole. We have to create action not just from above, but also from the bottom up.

Thank you for considering the earth as a stakeholder.

