

State of the Sustainability Profession 2020

Survey results - highlights
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INTRODUCTION

During and hopefully soon after COVID - is a crucial moment for business to lead the way in achieving a more sustainable world. As the discussion on a green and social recovery strategy - after COVID- is rising on the agenda, business as usual is no longer an option.

More companies should therefore engage in sustainable strategies and implementation of these strategies. At the core, effective corporate sustainability leaders are key in this transition. In order to translate sustainability goals into action and success, companies need sustainability professionals equipped with the necessary skills.

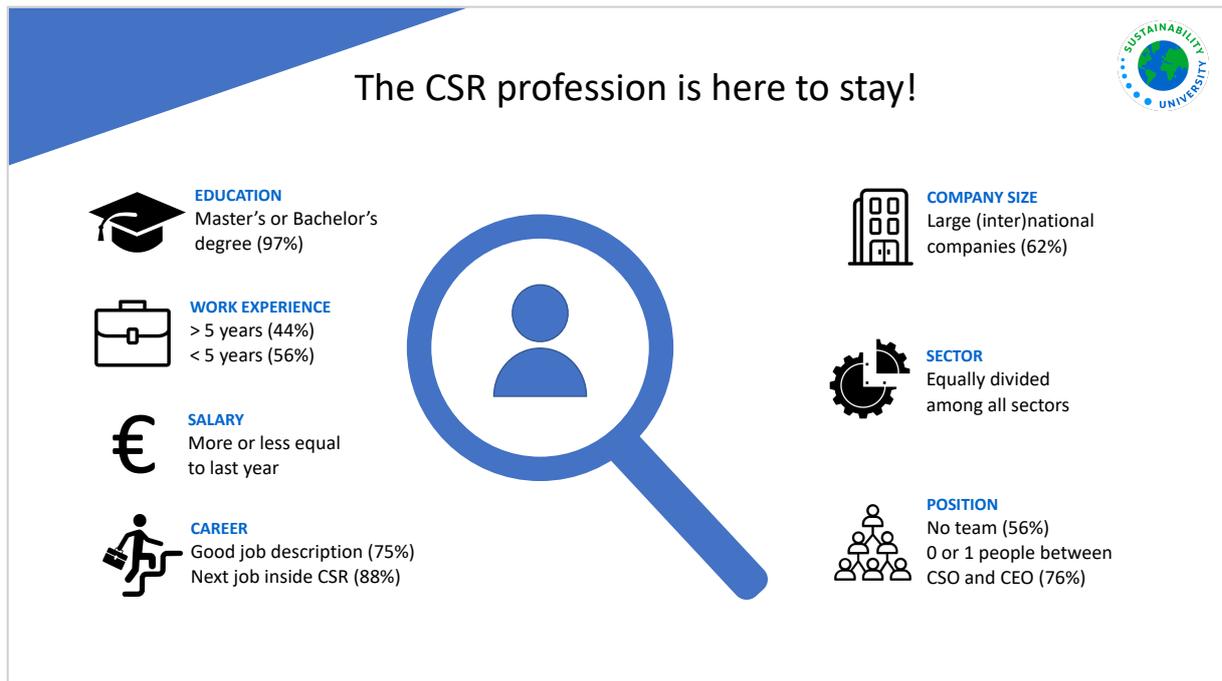
However, our sustainability profession is still a young developing profession and most of us learn the job by doing. Therefore, at Sustainability University we aim to further develop our profession and the skills sustainability professionals need to accelerate sustainable development in their organizations.



This is why, 3 years ago, we started our survey amongst CSR and sustainability professionals, so that we can monitor and detect trends in our common journey and learn from each other. Thanks to your participation in the survey, I can today proudly present the 3rd edition of the State of Sustainability Profession Survey. In this 3rd edition, 93

respondents - mostly Dutch sustainability professionals in companies - participated. I will share with you the highlights of the outcomes of the survey and our panel will reflect on the most important conclusions. The complete publication of this survey will follow in the coming months. In my presentation I will use the terms CSR and sustainability interchangeable.

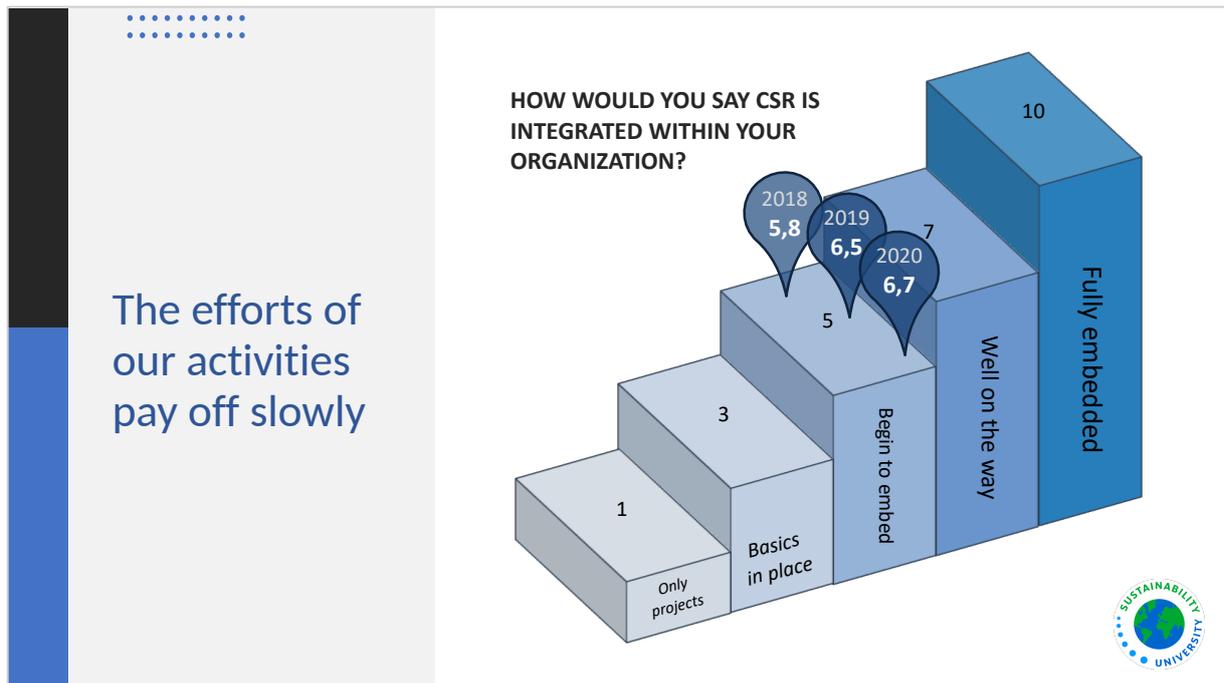
OUR PROFILE



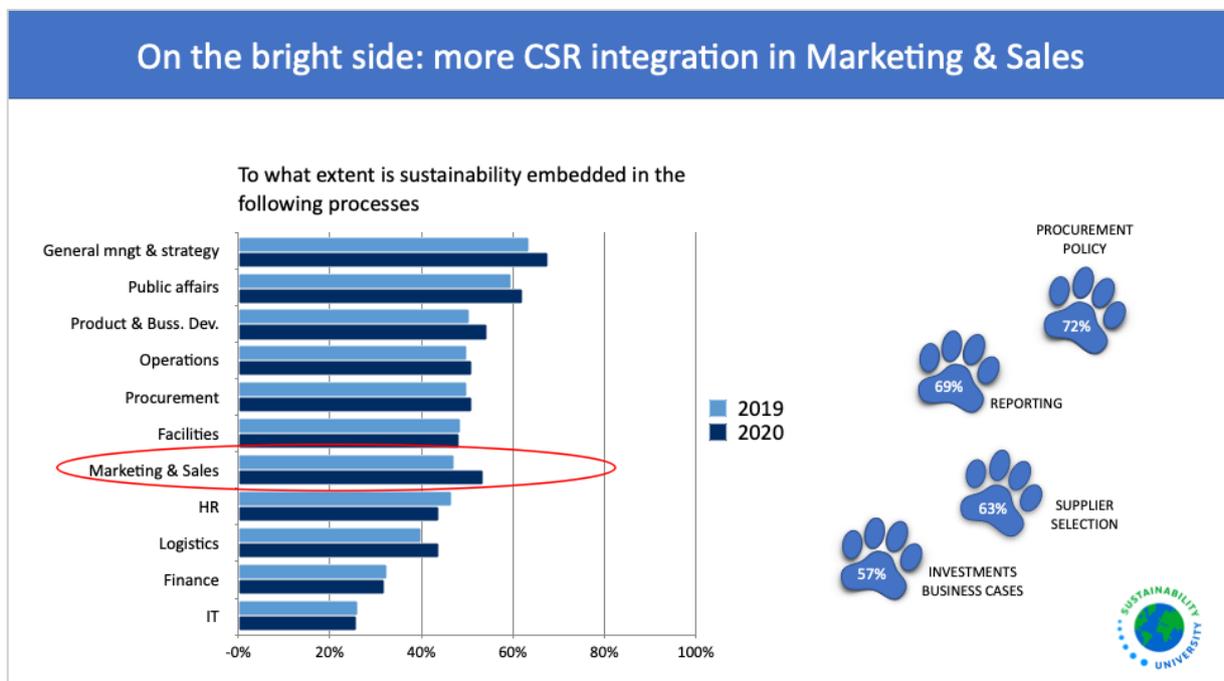
Our profile has not changed much over the years. We are highly educated professionals mostly working in larger companies with an equal mix of juniors and seniors. Over the last year our range of salary remains more or less the same. Our companies cover all sectors of our national industry. Being a CSR-manager or director, is still a lonely job - with a small or no team - and positioned close to the CEO.

However, we can determine one remarkable change in our profile over the years. In the last 3 years we have seen a significant increase in the number of respondents that 'want to stay in our profession' and 'have a reflective job description'. In 2018 only 49% wanted to stay within CSR and 64% had a good job description.

INTEGRATION



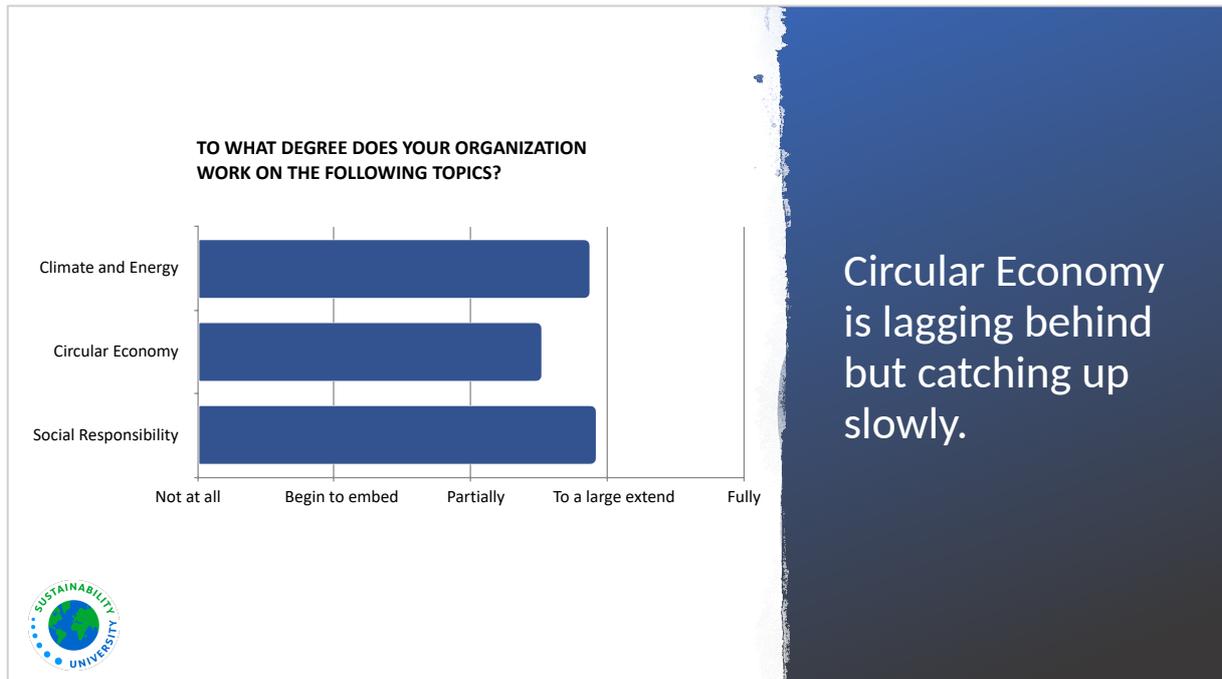
Although we need to accelerate sustainable development to achieve our sustainable development goals in 2030, this year's survey shows that we did the opposite. Instead of accelerating, we are slowing down. A trend that started already before COVID. Between 2019 and 2020 we are not progressing as much as we did between 2018 and 2019. If we want to reach full integration of CSR in our companies by 2030 we should however at least improve with 1 full grade every 3 years.



When you dive deeper in embedding CSR in the different business processes, the same limited development is shown. However, we do see a positive change in comparison with last year that could be a tipping point to accelerate integration. This year, CSR is significantly more integrated

in the Marketing and Sales activities and processes. Marketing and Sales has therefore entered the Top 3 of best integrated business processes, next to general management and public affairs.

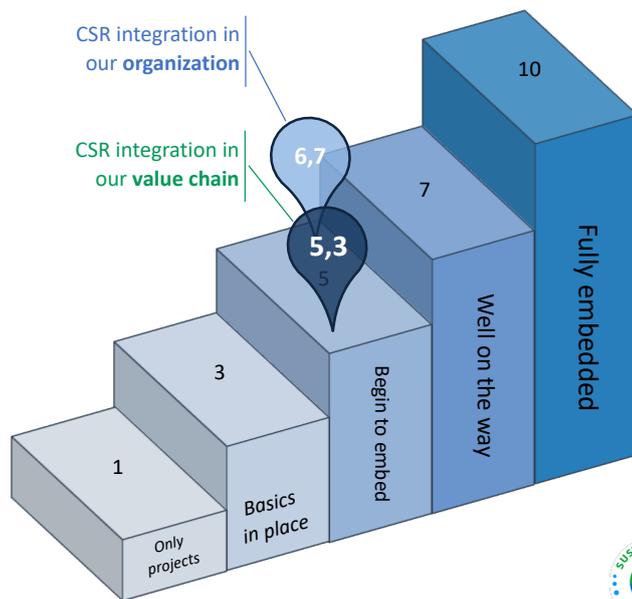
We also asked you more specifically about the integration of CSR in the underlying activities of 4 different key business processes. A diverse picture emerges, with certain activities that are a step ahead of other activities in the same business process. For example, within Finance CSR is well integrated in the activities of business casing (57%) and reporting (69%) or in Procurement CSR is well integrated in policy (72%) and selection criteria (63%). Although this is absolutely a note on the bright side, it might also give these departments the false impression of having incorporated CSR fully already.



If it comes to the different sustainability topics that companies are working on, we see, as last year that Circular Economy gets less attention than the topics Climate and Energy Transition and Social Responsibility. However, social responsibility has caught up with climate and energy transition – in comparison with last year. Also, it seems as if circular economy is on its way of catching up as well.

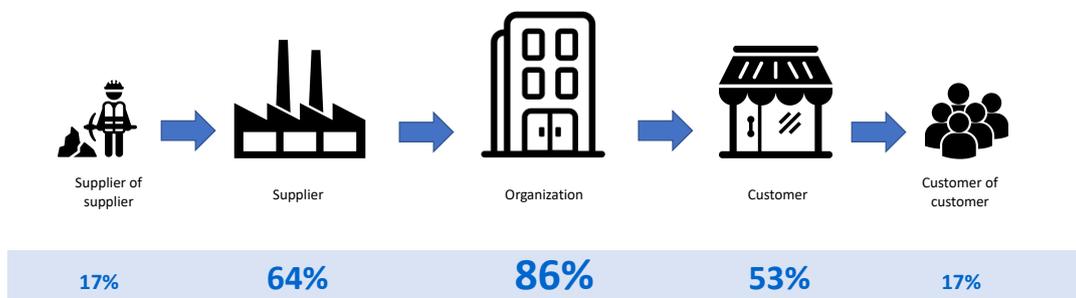
VALUE CHAIN

There is a lot to do within our organizations but in our value chain even more.



Next to integrating CSR in our own organizations, we should also integrate CSR in our value chain. Sustainability does not stop at the door of our companies. In contrary, to improve the integration of CSR the focus on our complete value chain is necessary. We value the integration of CSR in our value chain with a 5,3. This is lower than the integration in our organization (6,7), but not less important. For most organizations, the impact on society in the value chain is higher than in the organization itself. And for topics like Circular Economy most changes have to be made with and within the value chain.

We need to extend the scope of our activities to the complete value chain



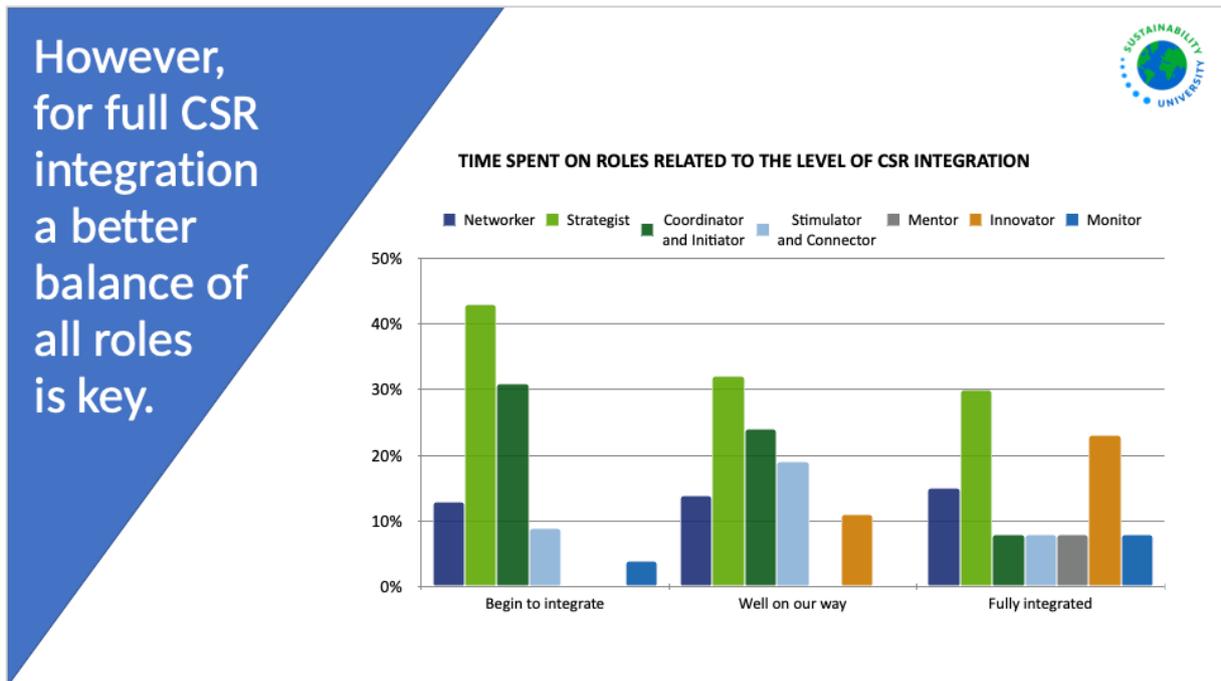
Q: TO WHAT EXTENT HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION DETERMINED THE SCOPE OF ITS CSR ACTIVITIES?

In addition, we should not only look at our suppliers and customers but also to the suppliers of our suppliers and the customers of our customers, if we really want to maximize our impact or create system changes such as needed for CE. Again, we still have a long way to go.

ROLES

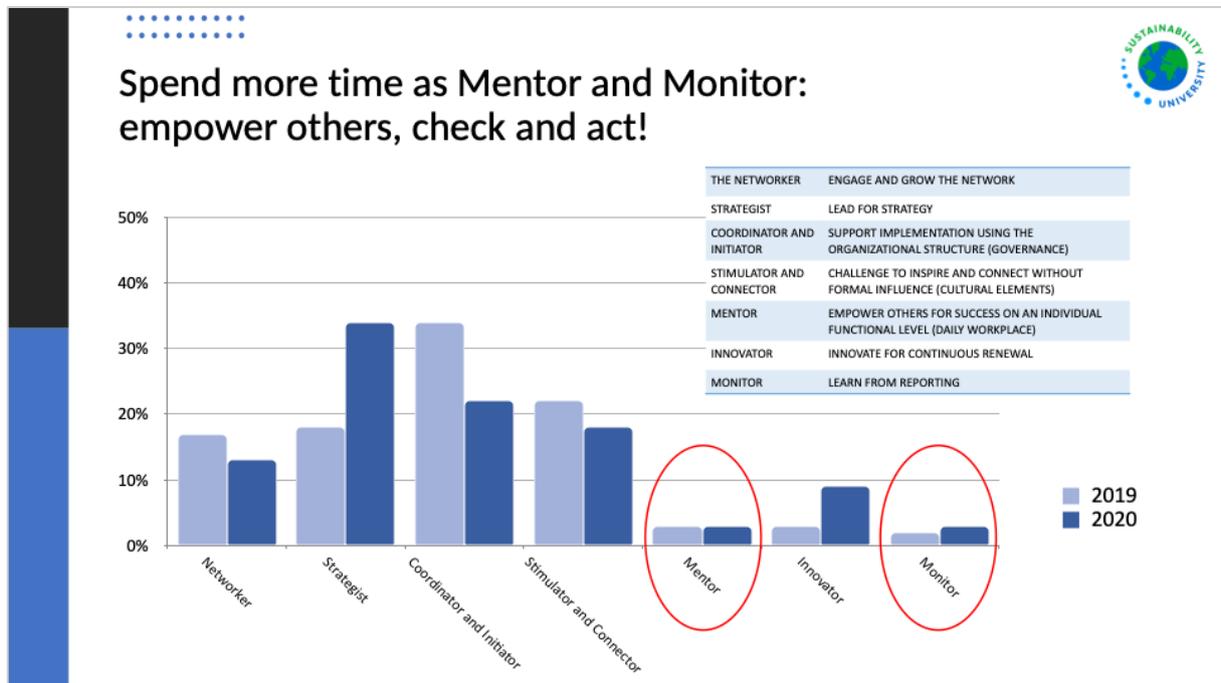


I have myself, while working as a CSO at the Dutch Railways, experienced how difficult it is to transform systems that have been in place for many years into climate neutral and circular systems. Based on my experiences and practices of other professionals and scientific research the 7 Roles- method was developed. The 7 roles - further explained in my book - provide professionals a practical guide to successfully integrate CSR in the core activities of their organizations. Let's have a closer look at how we developed in these 7 roles. Last year we wanted to spend more of our time as Strategist and Innovator and less as Coordinator and Initiator. This year's survey shows that we did! We managed to decrease the gap between time spent and preferred time spend.



One of the most important findings of this year's survey is found in the different "working style"

of CSR professionals that integrated CSR fully compared to the professionals at companies that have just begun to integrate CSR. CSR professionals that are successful in fully integrating CSR in their organization, divide their time more equally between all the roles. In short, balancing all the roles leads to more sustainable success.



Unfortunately, balancing the roles is not the trend that emerges from the survey if you look at all CSR professionals. Already for 3 years, we spend less time on the Mentor and Monitor role, and we also don't want to spend more time or develop in these roles.

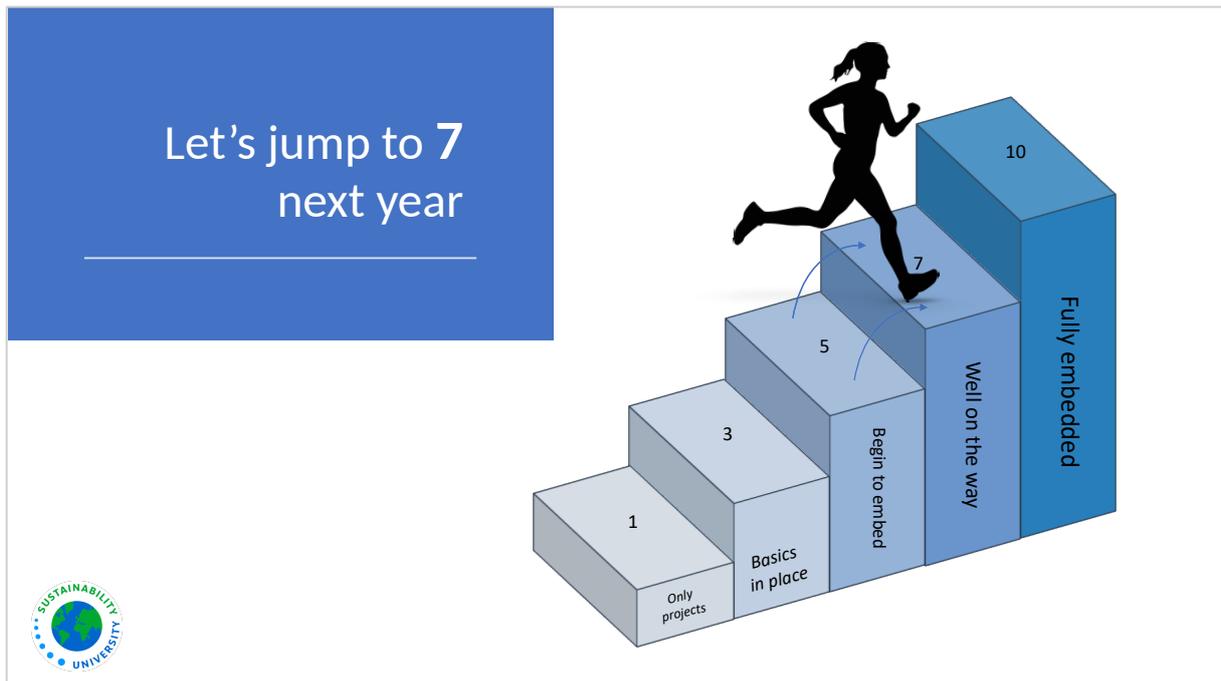
This year we tested the assumption that roles - like for instance the monitor role - could already been taken over by other departments in the organization, so that the CSR professional doesn't have to spend much time on it. The survey shows however that in the best case roles are taken over by other departments to a maximum of 50%. As a result, there is still a sizeable gap between (your) own and the delegated responsibilities, also with regard to monitoring.

In addition, the survey shows that these roles are not yet been taken over by other departments.

It is therefore advisable to focus more on the Monitor and Mentor Role. The latter (Mentor role) is also crucial in relation to other important finding of this survey. Whereas the Stimulator role inspires on an organizational level, the Mentor role translates CSR to the individual functional level of workers. Spending more time as a Mentor will therefore not only balance the time divided between roles but will also support the necessary further integration of CSR in the different business processes.

In short, if we want to jump to 7 next year, we have to spend more time empowering others and proactively monitor and steer our progress!

CONCLUSION



Next year we want and need to step up. Let's jump to a 7 plus! Spend more time in your mentor and monitor role and find better balance in time spend on all 7 roles. By you or by your organization. Focus on all key business processes and the underlying activities that are part of it, broaden the scope of your value chain and most of all keep up the good spirit :-).