

Semester Project 5

“Selection process of non-greenwashing business partners”



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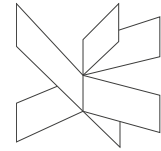
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Summary

This project report discusses the development process of the B2B web platform called EcoEval. Its purpose is for companies and consumers to assess the sustainability initiatives of companies. Besides this the purpose of this report is to enhance transparency in the process of researching companies. It seeks to minimize the option for companies to greenwash their efforts through a user-generated review and rating system.

The report includes a comprehensive market analysis, competitor analysis field research and a thorough discussion of the intended market strategies available to EcoEval in a start-up process. Besides the marketing aspect of launching EcoEval, the report outlines a financial plan which provides forecasts for the first 3 years of operation as well as an analysis of the competitive landscape of EcoEval's target market.

The technical aspect of this report discusses the development process of the EcoEval website prototype. The prototype makes use of technologies such as HTML, CSS, JS, NodeJs and PostgreSQL. It has a heavy emphasis on user friendly UI and UX design. The report walks through the waterfall model methods used and discusses reflections made from design to implementation to testing of the prototype.

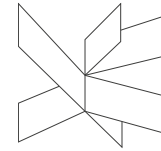
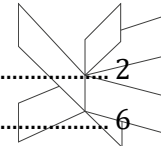


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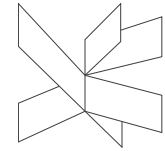


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1 Introduction

The terms "innovation" and "sustainability" are used frequently in today's business sector, encouraging companies to implement practical and effective strategies. Although innovation is often associated with revolutionary ideas, its true value comes from being practical, affordable, and able to meet certain needs, especially in a business setting.

As the trend changes, customer expectations are shifting, new competitors are emerging, and companies must adapt to survive.

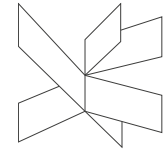
Businesses used to care mainly about making money, focusing on their bottom line.

However, as people become more aware of sustainable practices, a new approach has emerged. The triple bottom line now looks at profit, people, and the planet. Sustainable development and innovation are not a “nice to have”; they are essential for success in a fast-changing market (Emeritus, 2022).

It is now more than ever important to have your company sustainability practices displayed online and it is essential to avoid falling for misleading claims or "greenwashing.". This report introduces a project focusing on a website created primarily for B2B enterprises, designed to “Simplify the Complex”.

In a world where data on sustainability practices can be complex and challenging to navigate, this platform offers a broader and more user-friendly overview of companies' sustainability practices while combining all data in a single hub. The platform is unique as it uses user reviews and ratings to fight greenwashing. Authentic customer feedback makes the website a more trustworthy resource for separating serious environmental initiatives from false advertising schemes.

The report will display the prototype of such a website in detail as well as a thorough market analysis including field research.



2 Problem statement

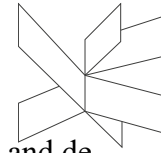
2.1 Definition of purpose

The purpose of this project is present a low-fidelity design of a system capable of giving companies and customers a higher level of transparency into companies' green profiles. The attractiveness/market potential will be evaluated through field research among potential customers and general needs/trends.

2.2 Sub questions and problem statement

The aim of this project is to develop innovative sustainable solution, supplemented by business plan, based on a detailed field research. Problem statement focuses on the following questions:

1. How can a website be designed to enhance transparency into the sustainable initiatives of companies for both customers and partners?
2. What challenges should be overcome to develop an innovative prototype that addresses the sustainable goals while considering the viability of the business aspects?
3. How does a company differentiate itself on a growing market with intense competition.
4. What methods and models can be used to conduct in depth market research and develop prototypes that effectively communicate sustainable product or service ideas to potential investors?
5. Can a budget forecast for the first years be used to display the profitability of an investment?



3 Methods

In the process of producing the business plan, marketing plan, market analysis and developing a prototype a combination of several methods were used. This was done in combination with a deductive approach to the work which ensured that the overall analysis was comprehensive and systematic.

Qualitative research:

For getting and understanding the market the product exists in and customer preferences within it, qualitative research played an important role. This involved collection, analysis and interpretation of non-numerical data. The data was gathered from websites and articles online. This included

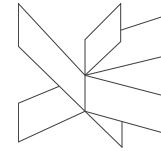
- Interviews and surveys – The idea concept was refined through a series of interviews with potential customers. These helped in gathering insights into the problem domain and customer preferences.
- Competitive analysis – Field research of the competitive landscape and strategies of the direct competitors was conducted. This helped get an understanding of best practices and differentiation potential.
- Prototype feedback - User interviews about the prototype design helped refine the user interface and the user experience.

To answer the problem statements the report features several financial calculations.

These include growth predictions, return of investment, cost overview, IRR, and future forecasts. The markets were analyzed with macro-economic models including PESTLE analysis.

The methodology surrounding the prototype development is elaborated in the Technical Part.

The report uses the Harvard Anglia style for its sourcing. All sources are cited in brackets containing author last name or publishing website combined with date of publication.



4 Results/findings and Discussion

4.1 Marketing

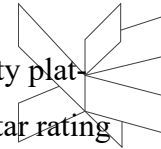
Exploring the market is a crucial initial phase for any project, particularly when introducing a new online platform. This process involves gathering information and insights about the target audience, competitors, opportunities etc. By conducting thorough market research, businesses can gain an important understanding of customer needs, preferences, and behaviors.

4.1.1 Market Insights

In the start-up phase of introducing a new product/service to the market, conducting field research through interviews with potential customers and performing a PESTLE analysis are crucial for informed decision making. The interviews provide insight into user needs and preferences ensuring an optimal design with the wanted information. Furthermore, the PESTLE analysis helps a start-up like EcoEval to understand broader market trends and external influences. A combination of interviews and PESTLE analysis validates if the idea will fit customer needs. This way EcoEval can make informed choices before putting significant time and money into creating and launching the actual platform and to ensure that there is a demand for the proposed platform (CIPD, 2023). The interviews were done with 5 potential customers/companies to see if there is a demand for a platform like EcoEval and how much companies actually consider sustainability in their buying process and choice of partners and suppliers.

The first interview was with the Sales Manager of Riisfort which is a wholesale company selling wood-based products. This interview paved the way for the other interviews and initiated the design phase as the interviewee clearly showed an interest and demand for a dedicated sustainability platform.

The first interview highlights the company's commitment to sustainability. They actively monitor suppliers for compliance with REACH regulations and emphasize the importance of recyclable materials. While not imposing strict requirements on suppliers, Riisfort still looks for suppliers with a sustainable product portfolio as this is where the



customer demand takes them. The manager expresses interest in a sustainability platform featuring a user-friendly database with all data gathered in one place, a star rating system, quickly displayed information and communication features among companies. He states that it would be a good idea with a platform that “simplifies the complex” making it faster and easier to make informed decisions for businesses, where time is money.

All interviews were done by representatives from various industries to get a broader insight into EcoEval’s potential customers and the overall demand.

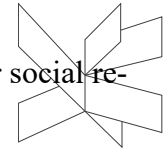
The interviews showed the increasing significance of sustainability in business operations. Commitment to reducing carbon emissions, investing in energy transition, and collaborating with sustainability-focused organizations are common themes. The emphasis on responsible sourcing, continuous assessment of environmental impact, and investment in research and development for sustainable products is noticeable within all interviewed industries. Additionally, there is a consistent interest in a sustainability platform featuring certifications, emissions data, and transparent communication of sustainability practices. There was also a high interest in the idea of having a platform that makes it faster and easier to evaluate other companies and potential business partners. The willingness to share information and rate partners varies but there is a clear preference for transparency and direct communication in making sustainable business practices.

Overall, these insights show the influence of sustainability in decision-making across different types of industries and the potential value of a comprehensive but user-friendly platform in promoting environmental responsibility. For a more detailed overview of all interviews, please visit 7.4 - Interviews.

To further investigate the potential markets, a comprehensive macro analysis has been conducted for the Scandinavian countries as this could possibly be the first countries EcoEval could consider entering. The STLE showed the following.

Sociocultural:

- High degree of equality and positive attitude towards work-related immigration in **Finland** may positively influence software adoption.



- In **Sweden**, a highly educated workforce and a supportive environment for social responsibility create a favorable market for EcoEval.
- **Denmark's** focus on sustainability and willingness to make long-term investments in it is an opportunity for EcoEval adoption.
- **Norway's** strong culture of equality and social justice can influence companies to adopt the web application.

Technological:

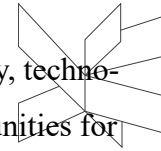
- **Finland** is technologically advanced with a high level of IT skills, providing a suitable environment for software solutions.
- **Sweden** is a hub for innovation, particularly in green technology and artificial intelligence making it a great market for EcoEval.
- **Denmark** is technologically advanced with reliable internet service, presenting an opportunity for software adoption.
- **Norway** has a highly developed technology sector, emphasizing a strong opportunity for the web application.

Environmental:

- **Finland and Sweden** strongly emphasize sustainability and environmental protection, aligning with EcoEval focus.
- **Denmark** faces environmental challenges, but the emphasis on sustainability provides opportunities for EcoEval.
- **Norway** is a global leader in environmental sustainability with strict regulations presenting a favorable environment.

Legal:

- **Finland's** time-consuming permission procedures and bureaucratic regulations may impact data gathering and storing.
- **Sweden's** employee-friendly labor laws can be an opportunity for EcoEval.
- **Denmark's** legal framework protects employees, and the country encourages innovation.
- **Norway** has strong labor laws protecting employees.



In conclusion the Scandinavian countries, with their emphasis on sustainability, technological advancement, and legal protections seem to display significant opportunities for EcoEval. However, challenges may arise in Finland due to bureaucratic regulations, emphasizing the need for careful consideration of legal factors. Overall, the positive sociocultural and technological environments outweigh potential risks, making these countries attractive markets for EcoEval to focus on at first. For a more thorough STLE Analysis see *7.1 – Macro Analysis, PESTLE, Scandinavia*.

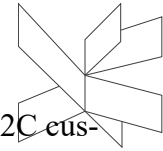
4.1.2 Strategic Elements

Segmenting customers and understanding their needs is a crucial strategy for any start-up like EcoEval. Knowing the target audience allows for targeted marketing, efficient resource planning and customized product development (Intuit Mailchimp).

EcoEval has carefully designed its market segmentation approach to adapt to the constantly evolving environment of sustainability assessments. The **Total Addressable Market** covers a wide range of customers, reaching out to **both SMEs and larger enterprises** in both sustainable and traditional industries. The global ESG rating system, together with the international focus, provides a thorough and easily accessible platform.

The **Serviceable Obtainable Market** classifies users by their goals. This includes those that daily are looking at ESG rating systems, looking for global insights into potential partners and comparing sustainability performance.

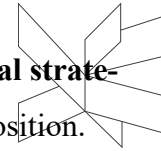
The target audience are strategically categorized into “*Paying Customers*” and “*Content Consumers*”. Paying Customers, primarily businesses showcasing their sustainability initiatives, serve as the primary revenue source for EcoEval. Content Consumers, including free users with sustainable interests, (B2C and B2B customers) contribute to the platform’s overall appeal, credibility, and success. The allowance for free users not only builds trust but also acts as a valuable testing ground for continuous improvements ensuring a better platform experience. For a more thorough walk through of the market segmentation and target audience look at *7.2 – Market Segmentation*.



Other than defining the target audience understanding the needs of B2B and B2C customers is also very important for EcoEval's overall success. Particularly the needs in the B2B context are in focus as this is the paying customer. The interviews with the 5 companies Salling Group, BioMar, Dovile, a global retail leader in luxury goods and Riisfort shed light on how different industries perceive and prioritize sustainability. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is used to determine EcoEval's place within customer priorities. Salling Group prioritizes sustainability due to customer demand corresponding with **self-actualization**. BioMar prioritizes sustainability as a way of reducing the production of waste within the marine food industry. Riisfort sees sustainability as a key factor for customer satisfaction in the wood distribution industry.

In the B2B context, EcoEval is positioned at the mid-level of Maslow's Pyramid, labeled "**Ease of doing business Value**". While this is not the primary driver for customer acquisition, it significantly contributes to the simplification of processes, showcasing transparency, and helps identify like-minded partners in sustainability eliminating complex and long searches for potential partners etc. For more information look at *7.3 – Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*.

As the customer base has now been clarified it is possible to review EcoEval's marketing mix which has been focused especially on the two most important elements: pricing and promotion. These elements are crucial for determining EcoEval's market strategy, ensuring an ongoing source of revenue and clearly defining what the company can offer. For the **pricing strategy** EcoEval went for a subscription-based pricing model which aligns with the flat rate pricing from SaaS pricing strategy. The subscription prices are standardized but only for the SMEs, as this pricing strategy has been assessed to capitalize on the advantages of a straightforward flat-rate pricing structure designed for this segment. In contrast, a more tailored approach is considered for large corporations, recognizing their diverse needs, especially in the earlier stages to attract larger clients. The idea of a tiered pricing system is also being considered in the future, as the current product's features a limited which makes it challenging to offer cheaper options without compromising value. However, the benefit of this pricing strategy is recognized and could be revisited in the future if EcoEval expands their product offerings.



As EcoEval is a newly created company it is essential to prioritize **promotional strategies** such as content marketing and market education to convey its value proposition.

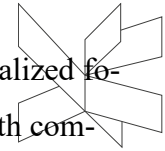
The initiative for promoting information on sustainability education should be distributed through diverse channels such as blog posts, whitepapers, brochures, and videos. Social media campaigns, combined with influencer marketing, target non-paying users to improve brand awareness and gather valuable analytics. While additional strategies are used to attract the consumer market, EcoEval highlights the importance of a parallel focus on B2B marketing. This could be through congresses as well as promotional schemes on platforms like LinkedIn. Additionally, for larger clients, implementing an account-based marketing strategy involves creating customized materials. As this is a more time-consuming and pricy approach this should only be used for individual major clients and industries.

All in all, achieving a balance between B2C and B2B strategies is deemed crucial for EcoEval's overall success. *7.7 elaborates more on the Marketing Mix. Please also look at 7.8 for customers and pricing/promoting strategies.*

4.1.3 Competitive Landscape

For startups in the business world, checking out competitors is not just a good strategy – it is a must. Starting a business comes with lots of challenges and uncertainties. Analysing and reviewing the potential competitors helps startups like EcoEval make smart decisions and grow steadily.

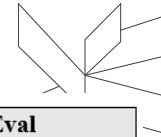
In the complex landscape of sustainability evaluation and reporting, EcoEval finds itself surrounded by a varied selection of competitors each having their own strengths and approaches. Looking into direct and indirect competitors is important for a complete market understanding. Direct competitors offer insights into immediate threats and opportunities, while indirect competitors show overall industry trends and innovations, helping with strategic planning and adaptability.



Direct competitors such as *EcoVadis*, *CSRHub* and *Sustainalytics* bring specialized focus on sustainability ratings, CSR data and ESG rating. These competitors, with comprehensive evaluation frameworks, extensive databases, and global reach, show how varied and complex the sustainability world is.

At the same time, **indirect competitors** like *Glassdoor* and *Google Business Profile* introduce an alternative element. Glassdoor, which is primarily a platform for employee reviews, offers potential insights into a company's sustainability practices through overall work culture. On the other hand, Google Business Profile display all company practices, focusing on online visibility and customer interaction.

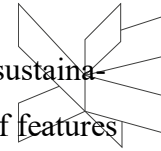
In order to get a better understanding of the competitors and how EcoEval should focus on differentiating themselves from them, a feature comparison has been conducted.



	EcoVadis	CSRHUB	Sustainalytics	Glassdoor	Google Business Profile	EcoEval
Product features	Comprehensive sustainability assessment tools, risk assessment, collaboration tools	Wide ESG ratings, data visualization, custom data schema, reports and dashboards	ESG risk ratings, portfolio analysis, CRM integration	Employee reviews, company culture insights	Business information, user reviews, integrated Maps	B2B collaboration, sustainability intelligence, ratings and reviews
Price	Subscription- based pricing. Price ranges from 379€ - 1649€ for a year and 909€ - 3959€ for 3 years.	\$50-\$40 per user per month, \$3,000/year minimum	Subscription- based, free trial available	Free basic features, enhanced options contact Sales	Free basic features, advertising costs extra	800kr monthly Larger customers can obtain a small discount.
Service Offered	Sustainability information, partner collaboration	ESG ratings, sustainability performance insights	ESG and corporate governance research	Employee generated company reviews	Customer ratings, company listings	B2B collaboration, sustainability intelligence
Age of Audience Served	Primarily B2B	Primarily businesses	Investors, businesses, financial institutions	Broad audience, employees, job seekers	Wide range of consumers	Primarily B2B
Style and design	Professional, business-oriented, green colors	Clean, data-focused, emphasis on clarity	Modern, professional, earthy and green colors	Simple, easy to use, focuses on usability	Simple, Google's integrated design standards	Professional, business focus, images of nature, earthy scheme
Ease of use	User-friendly with a focus on scorecards	User-friendly interface, data-focused	Generally user-friendly, design balances accessibility and sophistication	Very intuitive, simple interface	Incredibly easy to use, follows Google's design standards	Simple interface, user-friendly for B2B businesses

Table 1 Strategic Differentiation of EcoEval

The above summary of feature comparison shows that EcoEval strategically differentiates itself by placing a specific focus on B2B collaboration and sustainability insights. While competitors may focus on specific aspects such as complex ESG frameworks, EcoEval stands out as a platform where businesses can actively evaluate and score each other based on ethical and sustainable practices. The unique proposition not only differentiates EcoEval from its competitors but also fosters a community committed to promoting genuine sustainability practices ensuring full transparency, minimizing the risk of “greenwashing”. The platforms focus on simplicity in design and user-friendly interface improves accessibility for a diverse userbase, contributing to a positive user experience. Overall, EcoEval differentiation provides a trustworthy, user-friendly, interactive



and specialized platform that encourages meaningful B2B collaborations and sustainability partnerships. For an extensive analysis of competitors and comparison of features see and 7.6. For an extensive analysis of competitors and comparison of features see *Appendix 5 - Competitor Overview And Appendix 6 - Company Features Comparison*.

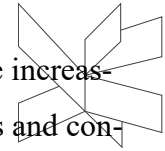
The following SWOT is used to showcase an overall evaluation of EcoEvals' competitive position. The SWOT analyses the internal and external factors as well as current potential.

Table 2 SWOT analysis

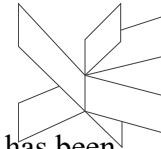
Internal Factors	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Niche focus on sustainability - B2B and B2C options - Comprehensive platform - Professional design - Easy access and transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited track record/ New on market - Limited feature set - Balancing Simplicity and Sophistication - Limited marketing budget
External Factors	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing ESG market - Educational content - Global expansion - Collaborations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intense competition - Technical challenges/data security - Economic downturn - Changing consumer behavior

EcoEval faces challenges in the competitive sustainability evaluation market, by its limited track record as a new entrant where it takes time to establish credibility and brand trust. Furthermore, Concerns about data security and privacy may also be perceived as a core threat to EcoEval.

As a startup, EcoEval may face limitations in terms of marketing budget, posing a potential weakness may affect its ability to compete with more established players in the



market. However, the platforms niche focus on sustainability aligning with the increasing awareness and importance of sustainability and catering to both businesses and consumer markets are core strengths for EcoEval. The comprehensive platform design, emphasizing transparency in environmental assessments, aligns with the industry's growing emphasis on ESG practices. Opportunities lies in the expanding ESG market, where EcoEval can expand beyond Denmark and even Scandinavian countries and tap into broader markets and trends in sustainability. EcoEval has to be aware of the intense competition and potential technological challenges if they wish to expand even further in the future. The success of EcoEval relies on effective differentiation, adaptability, and strategic market positioning.



4.2 Financial Overview

In this section of the report a walkthrough of the budget and the financial plan has been made. This has been done to make a clear overview of what costs and revenue streams EcoEval is aiming to have in the next 3 years. To see the budget in its entirety see the Excel document – “EcoEval – Financial Calculations”.

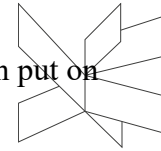
Initial costs

When EcoEval is first created some equipment and bureaucracy must be bought and paid for. Therefore, a budget has been made to show the initial expenses that will have to be paid. EcoEval has estimated that a budget of 75.000kr is needed to provide computers and all needed accessories to have something to work on to begin with. Furthermore, 8000kr has been delegated to a lawyer to make sure the company is set up with due diligence to Danish laws. With these initial costs paid the company can start to be productive. From there on monthly expenses will be the main costs for the company

Monthly Costs

To get a clear overview of the 3-year plan it is important to count in all monthly costs. In the EcoEval budget the main monthly costs will be salaries and maintenance of the website. Each of the 5 owning employees will have a monthly salary of 20.000kr. This is calculated by looking at the private spending of each individual and how much each is willing to spend on the company instead of getting a larger salary. On top of owner salaries an external software developer will also be hired to further develop on the Website. This developer's salary has been calculated to 35.000kr to give salary that is in line with the Danish market. Furthermore, a marketing intern will be hired to help the owner with marketing. Following the Danish laws for intern salaries a salary of 3000kr a month will be paid. Together this will give a monthly salary expenditure of 138.000kr for a team of seven people.

Since marketing is important to make EcoEval relevant on the market it will be the largest pool outside of salaries for the company with 10.000kr a month to spend. The money



will go to digital ads and physical advertisement such as sticker companies can put on their windows to show that they are on the EcoEval website.

For material costs there will mostly be operational cost and material costs. the costs will be spent on varying hosting fees and licenses and with the larger operational cost being rent of an office space which has been calculated to 10.000kr if the office space is in the Aarhus area. All together operating costs comes out to 13.100kr

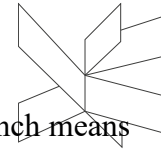
Adding all monthly costs up we get a monthly cost of 161.100kr per month. This number is an estimate and can change due to many factors, but it is a good guideline to use when looking at future expenses and profits.

Revenue growth and customer acquisition

By focusing heavily on marketing and sales the projection is to hold an average growth rate of 8% over the first 3 years. In the initial quarters and during the first year this is expected to be higher, and the customers growth rate here does not reflect the 8%. The subscription rate for normal paying customers (the bulk of our customers) is set to 800 kr. A big focus point in the sales effort will be to sign larger clients which will further increase revenue despite the discounted average monthly price of 640 kr. per listed company. The benefit of these larger client contracts will be the larger cash inflow due to the longer signing periods.

Churn rate

Keeping the churn rate at a low 5% will be an important success metric during the first years until the company has a well-established loyal customer base. Strong customer retention strategies will come in to play through focus on customer relation and support as well as integrating important customers in the further development process.



Cost Analysis and profitability

The monthly burn rate of 161.100 kr. and a time frame of 6 months before launch means that stage 1 will drive up launch costs substantially. However, this cost is deemed necessary and important in fact the investment sets the stage for a robust product at launch the is built to be capable of scaling from scratch instead of hurting early customer retention by launching too soon. By the end of year 3, as seen in this business plan the accumulated revenue will reach 10.5 million kr. While profits for reinvestment in further growth will have soared to 8.5 million kr.

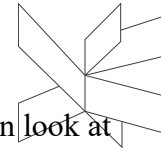
Subscription Fee

The revenue stream generated by EcoEval will come from a subscription fee that each company will pay to be on the website. The fee has been estimated by making comparisons to potential competitors on the market such as EcoVadis, CSRHub and Systainalytics.

With these competitors in mind the subscription fee has been calculated to 800kr for small and average sized companies and for larger customers a special annual subscription fee has been offered if the company can get 3 of their clients to subscribe, all three companies can get their subscription for 23.040kr per year (640kr per month for each company for at least one year) which is a 20% discount compared to the normal flat fee. This offer is made in hope to incentivize companies to try and share EcoEval to their partners and clients so that EcoEval can grow through its clients,

Return of investment

To get EcoEval to a stage where it can be operational it has to have external capital investments. By looking at the monthly burn and the costs of getting the material and work tools needed an estimated amount capital need has been estimated to 1.518.000kr. To make it more attractive for investors to invest, an estimate of when the capital can be paid back at the earliest point has been made. The estimate came out to be year 3 in the 3rd quarter where the accumulated profit will have come out to be 1.558.686 kr if no profits has been made for reinvestment on the website or marketing this would be the time where an investor could have all their capital back.



If the investor instead wants to see what kind of profits, they could get they can look at the estimated ROI (return of investment). The ROI formula shows in percentage the amount of profit earned in the chosen span of time minus the initial investment. In this case the timespan has been set to 3 years and that has given a ROI of 124,2% which means that after 3 years the investors should have made 24,2% of their initial investment in returns.

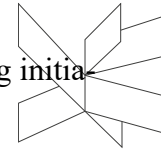
Expansion to Scandinavia

The EcoEval webpage has been designed with a global layout. This makes an expansion to other countries than Denmark a realistic scenario. This gives the possibility for EcoEval to consider two possible choices. One option is to stay in Denmark and concentrate on this market, where EcoEval already has a marketing plan for the next three years. The other is a bigger move – going more international to get a broader international customer base but use more capital on marketing.

As EcoEval is still in the start-up phase and therefore expanding to markets similar to Denmark was considered the best markets to look at for a potential expansion. For such an expansion to take place some growth has to take place in Denmark first. EcoEval has to start creating a portfolio of Danish companies and generate some revenue before they can consider expanding to countries outside Denmark. When the company has reached this stage, the future profits and/or investments will go to conducting marketing campaigns aimed at the different Scandinavian counties. This expansion will quadruple the Market when looking at the population pool of the countries with an increase from 5.8 million in just Denmark to 27.1 million in the whole of Scandinavia.

when the expansion starts EcoEval plans to acquire 20 customers in the first quarter and then have a steady growth and 8% every quarter from there on until the end of the current business plan.

Making this expansion to the other Scandinavian countries makes sense from a business standpoint as it increases market share and the amount of revenue generated in total as the target market increases. Though it will cost more in both marketing and maintenance of the website. If the expansion fails it will not have a major financial consequence for



EcoEval except for lost growth potential and loss of money spent on marketing initiatives and sales practices.

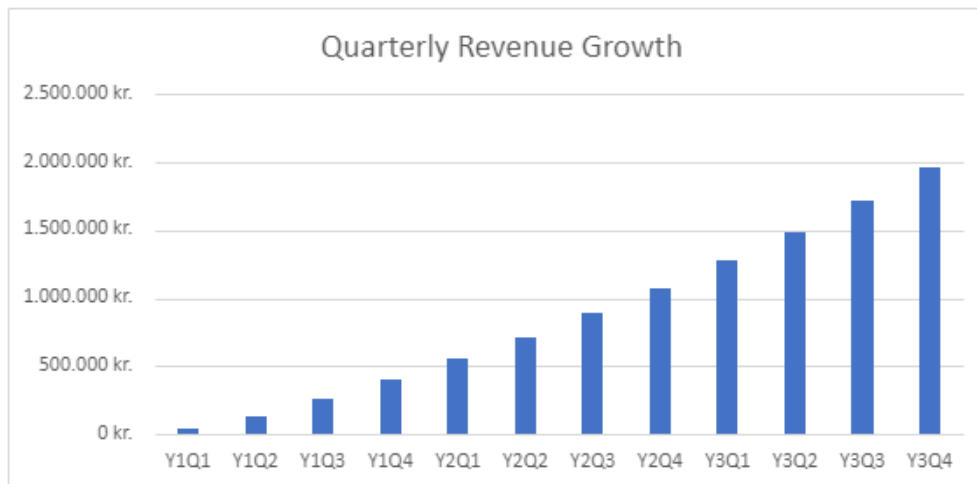
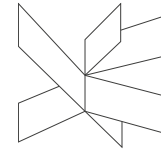


Figure 1 Quarterly Revenue Growth

In contemplating the prospect of extending their presence to additional Scandinavian countries, the anticipated potential looks like figure 1.

Note that year 0 has not been taken into consideration as the plan has been created based on the strategic assumption that the funding should come from the profit EcoEval has generated from its ventures in the Danish market. This displays the opportunity for EcoEval to enhance profits by strategically deploying capital for expansion into the Scandinavian market and possibly to other European markets in the future. For a more in-depth cash flow look at Excel sheet – Revenue Forecast Scandinavia in Excel document “EcoEval -Financial Calculations”.



4.3 Technical part and prototype Development

Link to source code

https://github.com/Plo4i/SEP5_Sustainability_Project/tree/main/SEP5%20Source%20Code

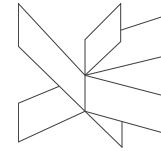
4.3.1 Technical Methodologies

The project management approach that was used is inspired by the Waterfall method and Scrum framework for Agile development. The Scrum framework is considered for its traceable nature, easiness of meeting deadlines (Anon., n.d.), as the Waterfall method is used for its linear approach. The method was used in every cycle of development process as the project was developed in different phases based on different functionalities. This repetitiveness is borrowed from the Agile way of development. The working plan was prepared using Trello, while GitHub served as a platform for sharing the project and its updates. Regular check-up meetings were scheduled to maintain focus and alignment.

4.3.2 Analysis

The technical aim of this project is to develop innovative sustainable solution, based on a data gathered from field research. The purpose of the product is to reduce companies' greenwashing by creating a safe space where companies and other users can find facts about other companies and leave a comment about product or service used by them. The goal of the company EcoEval is to establish the web service as one of the leading online platforms for sustainability evaluation and grow its business through 2 main channels. One channel is the revenue generating channel consisting of businesses subscribing to the service. The other channel is adoption by a broad line of non-paying consumers using the service to find information.

This means that the development process needs to ensure that the needs of both groups are met and well designed.



4.3.3 Requirements

The list with requirements for the project can be seen under *Appendix 9 - EcoEval software requirements*.

4.3.3.1 Functional Requirements

Visitors to the website should be able to register as users

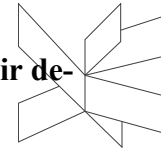
For users to register they have to enter the sign-up form. They have to click on the sign-up hyperlink in the header and it redirects them to the register page. From there they need username, email, password and to choose type of subscription, as options are paid or free. The username and email address must be unique so they can register. After they click the registration button their profile is successfully created. An activity diagram can be seen in appendix under *Figure 10 Activity diagram of register page*.

Visitors of the website should be able to receive information quickly

When people visit the website they should be able to have information quickly available, not in full paragraphs but in summarized facts. If they would like to read more about something a “Read More” button that expands the text is provided.

The web application should include a review section

The users are able to read and write reviews for a specific company. This includes giving a rating of a company on a scale from 1 to 5 visualized by stars and as an option they should be able to write comments on their rating. The three most recent reviews with comments are displayed for the user to see in the company information page, and if he/she would like to read more comments they could click on read more comments and be redirected to all the comments that are given. The activity diagram can be seen in appendix under *Figure 9*.



The website users should be able to see the company's certificates and their description

The certificates of the company the user is searching for as well as their description should be visible for the user on the company page. It should also be validated so that the user gets transparent information about the certificate and a description. If it is not valid a red border should appear around the box containing the certificate and its description and text saying "Not checked for validity" in red should also appear below the certificate.

Users should be able to edit and delete their profile and the profile of the companies they have created

From the profile page users can modify and delete not only their profile but also the one of the companies they have created. They can change their profile picture, username and password. All the information about the company can also be manipulated. Here the user also has the option to logout, add new company or go to the home page.

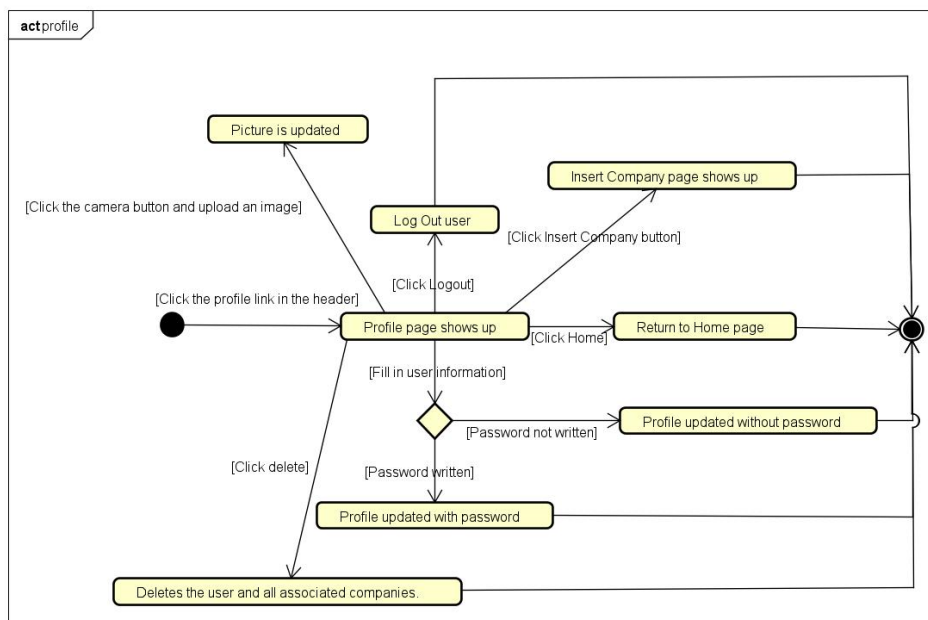
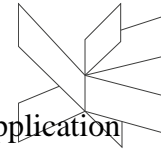


Figure 2 Activity diagram of profile page



The website should include a search function

The application should include a search feature that the users of the web application can use to search for specific companies. This is instead of having to click on multiple buttons and look through the whole website to find information for the company they are searching for.

Intuitive and user-friendly UI/UX

The web application should have an intuitive and user-friendly interface allowing users to navigate the website and find the information they need as quickly as possible. The information shown in a text format should be short, with the option to expand it if the user would like to read more about it. The interface should load smoothly without any errors or glitches, so the users do not get confused and receive the right information.

4.3.3.2 Non-Functional Requirements

Security

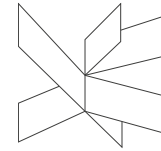
The application should collect user information, for instance emails and passwords and store them using industry standard encryption and in a secure database. The system should also undergo regular security checks to identify and fix potential vulnerabilities.

Availability and Reliability

The system should be available 24/7, except if there is an issue that needs to be fixed. The web application should have an uptime of 99.9% and should be able to automatically recover from server failures if possible. The system should also provide backup and recovery of the data to ensure data availability.

Performance

The application should have a response time of less than 10 seconds for loading pages. It should also support a concurrent user load of at least 100 users.



4.3.4 Design

Architecture

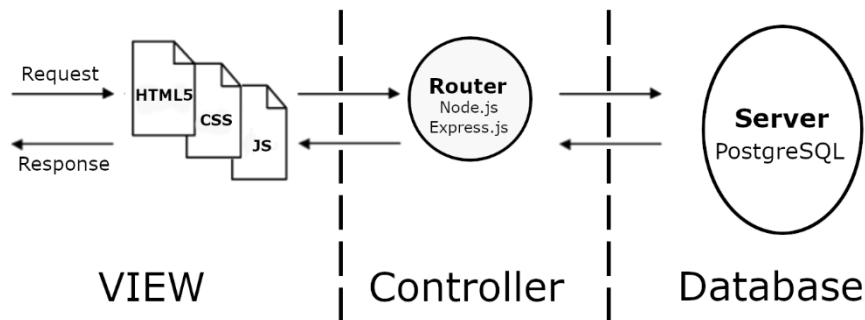


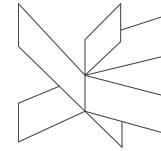
Figure 3 Design of the prototype

The design for the prototype's architecture is inspired by the MVC (Model-View-Controller) pattern. The difference is in the Model which is skipped as the modelling of the data is made in the controller part. By doing a simpler prototype stakeholders can look earlier in the development stage and big changes could be made faster.

The View component contains HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. When combined, these technologies create the prototype's interface. Users can navigate, read and write data through this interface. The HTML is written in the EJS file format due to its capability to connect various HTML components seamlessly while allowing focused development on specific parts.

The controller component serves as a middleware between the view and database. It contains of Node.js and packages as Express.js, Multer and pg. routers are created to handle data from different parts of the website, as they receive it and then through SQL queries send it to the Database.

The Database component contains only the database which is established in PostgreSQL. Pool connection was used, because of its ability to reuse connection and reduce traffic. That way connections to the Database are reduced as much as possible and connection errors are reduced. More about the structure of the database and explanation can be seen in *Data Models*.



4.3.4.1 Technologies

The main technologies used in this project are:

Backend: Node.js with Express.js for creating the server and handling HTTP requests.

Support modules such as pg and multer were also used.

Database: PostgreSQL was chosen for building our database and storing data in it.

Frontend: HTML (written in EJS files), CSS, and JavaScript served for building the user interface.

Alternative technologies considered were React for the frontend and Firebase for the database. However, Node.js was chosen for its non-blocking I/O model which is efficient for data-intensive real-time applications, and PostgreSQL for its wide useability.

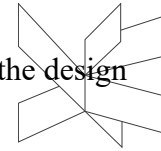
4.3.4.2 Design Patterns

The repository pattern is used as an inspiration, to abstract the data layer, making the application more flexible to changes and easier to test. This pattern allows us to encapsulate the logic required to access data sources, which separates the concerns among the modules.

4.3.4.3 UI Design Choices

For the UI Design Choices, separate user tests were conducted. During these tests, participants were asked about their preferences for information presentation and what they expect to see when entering a website. Detailed information about the entire process can be found in Appendix 11.

The design of the page involves the use of HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. The company page allows users to access information about different companies and share their experiences by leaving comments. The arrangement of information on the company page is based on insights gathered from IDX (Interactive Design) research. Participants were shown various examples of possible page designs and were asked for their preferences. They were also invited to provide feedback on whether any element of their chosen design should be modified or if there was something they liked from other example pages. As well as a profile page where individuals may monitor and update their own profiles.



To help visitors educate themselves on typical certifications and ESG ratings, the design also has a glossary page.

Several iterative procedures were used to complete the design process. Using paper and posters with potential designs, Lo-Fi prototyping was the initial procedure. Making sure the product would have the appropriate functionalities for the test users was more important than creating the prettiest possible product. To find out what features, layouts, and information the users preferred to have displayed, several versions were made.

The design was refined in the second iteration based on a summary of the data gathered from the first round of interviews. At this point, HTML and CSS could be used to construct a more intricate design. One instance of each of the website's primary pages was the end result. This was purely visual design; functionality was not included.

The third and final iteration of the design step summarized the key points from the TA (think aloud) tests. Respondents' points were grouped and prioritized based on Emotional design and Cognitive aspects. (Sharp, 2019)

4.3.4.4 Data Models

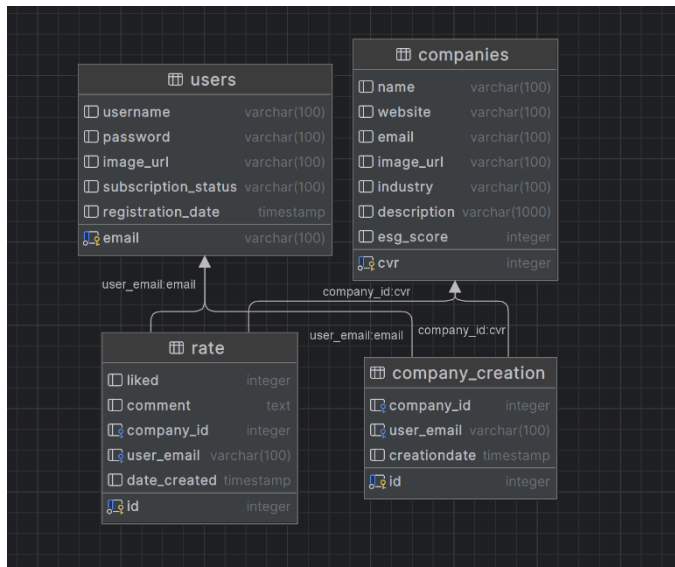
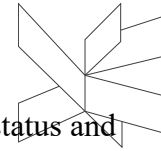


Figure 4 Database model

The data model includes several entities: Users, Companies, Rate, and Company_creation. They together store the dynamic data needed for the website.



Each row in Users has username, password, email, image_url, subscription_status and registration date. Email is set to be the primary key as every user needs to have a unique one, so creation of duplicated account is prevented. The username is also unique, but it is checked for its uniqueness in the saving process.

Companies' rows have the attributes cvr, name, website, email, image_url, industry, description and esg_score. The cvr is a special unique 8 digits number for companies which makes it ideal for this entity primary key.

Company_creation entity contains attributes id, creationdate, company_id and user_email. Its purpose is to keep track of every company created by user as company_id and user_email are foreign key leading to the primary keys of Users and Companies.

Rate entity contains attributes id, liked, comment, company_id, user_email and date_created. Its purpose is to store the likes and comments given by users to companies. As with company_creation here the foreign keys are company_id and user_email. Date_created is used to keep track of how old the comments are.

4.3.5 Test cases

4.3.5.1 Login

Requirements: User has to have registration on the website.

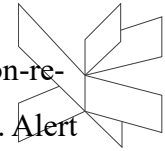
Steps: User has to click on the “Log in” hyperlink, then enter his username and password and click “Log in” button.

Result: User is redirected to main page and logged in successfully.

4.3.5.2 Insert company

Requirements: User must be logged in.

Steps: User must navigate to the profile page. From there click on the button ‘Insert company’ and be redirected to the page. From there the user must fill in information about the company such as cvr which must be 8 digits and a ESG score between 1 and



80. The user can choose to create a company without photo, that is the only non-required field. After the information is filled, the button Insert should be clicked. Alert window opens with message for successful operation and the user is redirected to the profile page.

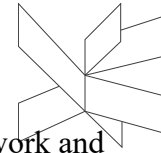
Result: New company has been added.

4.3.5.3 Delete company

Requirements: User must be logged in and have created at least one company before.

Steps: User must navigate to the profile page. From there scroll down and see a list of companies. Every company has its own box with CVR, name of company, edit and delete button. To delete a company the user must click on the button delete and alert message will pop. The alert message contains the CVR of the company. To confirm it user must click ok. When ok is clicked the company is deleted successfully.

Result: Company has been deleted.



4.3.6 Implementation

The web application was developed using Express.js as the server-side framework and PostgreSQL as the backend database. The selection of these technologies was driven by the need for simplicity, flexibility, and robustness.

4.3.6.1 Express.js Server Configuration

The Express.js framework was chosen for its simplicity and flexibility. Key components of the server setup include middleware configurations, route definitions, and session management.

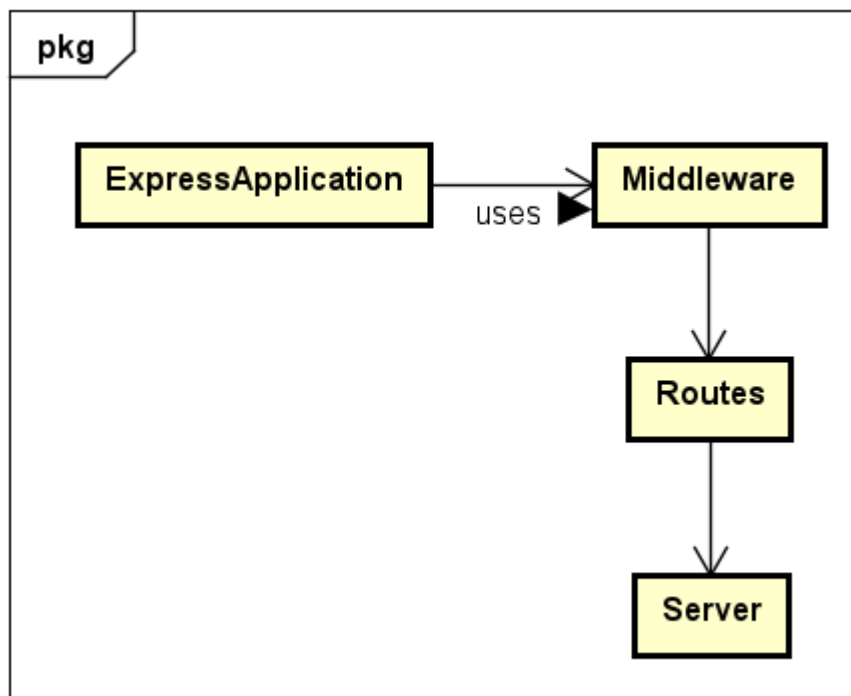


Figure 5 Express.js Server Setup Diagram

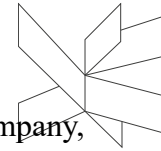
Middleware Setup:

- **body-parser:** Parses incoming request bodies.
- **cookie-parser:** Parses Cookie headers and populates **req.cookies**.
- **express.static:** Serves static files from the 'public' directory.
- **express-session:** Manages user sessions.

View Engine and Views Configuration:

- Set the view engine to 'ejs' and specify the 'views' directory.

Routes Configuration:



- Define routes for different application components.
- Example routes include index, login, register, user, company, insertCompany, and header.

Server Start:

- Start the server and listen on the specified port (default is 3000).

4.3.6.2 View Implementation

The client-side implementation is done using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript.

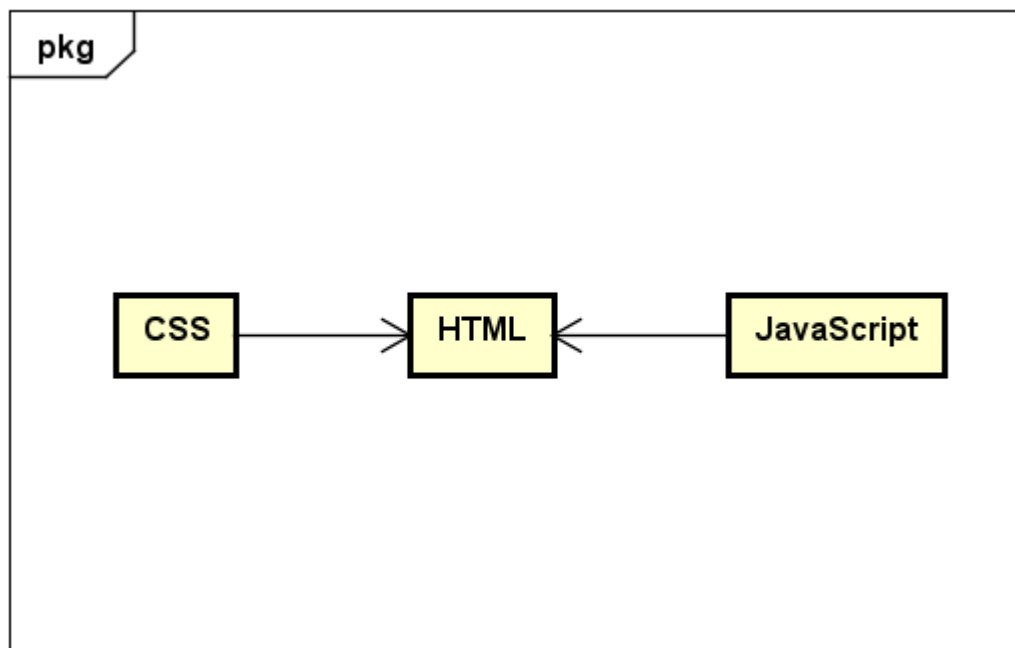


Figure 6 View Implementation Diagram

4.3.6.3 Database Interaction with PostgreSQL

Database interaction is handled through PostgreSQL, with SQL queries executed using the pg library.

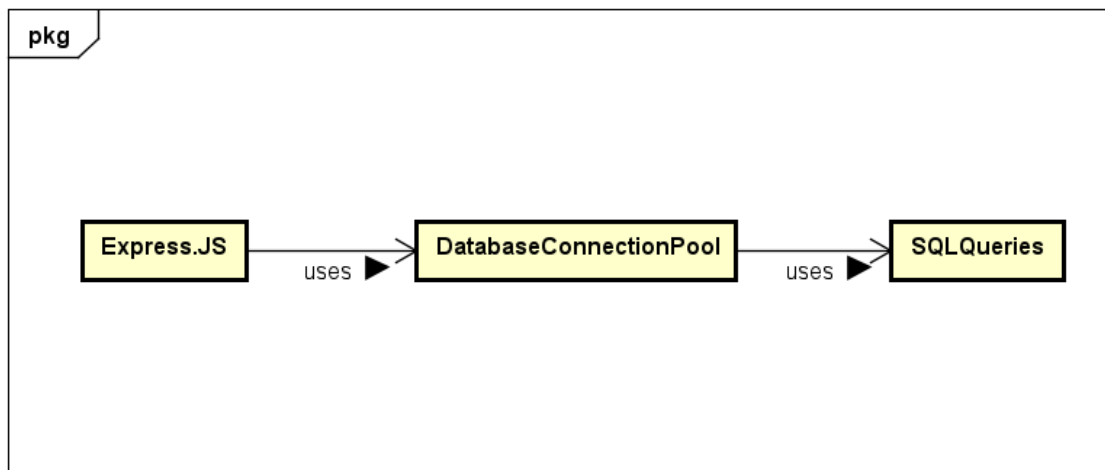


Figure 7 PostgreSQL Database Interaction Diagram

The following points summarize the database connection setup:

Database Connection Setup:

- Use the pg library to create a connection pool.
- Establish connection details (user, host, database, password, port).
- Set the search path to 'ecoeval' to use the correct schema.

Connection Handling:

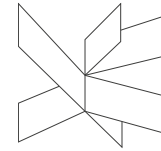
- Use **pool.connect()** to establish a connection to the database.
- Set the search path when a client connects to ensure queries target the correct schema.

Connection Error Handling:

- Handle errors during the connection process.

Signal Handling (SIGTERM, SIGINT):

- Listen for SIGTERM and SIGINT signals to close the connection pool when the application is stopped or interrupted.
- Ensure the pool is closed before exiting the process.



Exit Event Handling:

- Listen for the 'exit' event to close the pool when the application exits.

4.3.7 Summary of Libraries and Design Patterns

Notable libraries include express, body-parser, cookie-parser, express-session, and pg. Design patterns such as middleware pattern in Express.js and the singleton pattern in the PostgreSQL connection pool are highlighted.

4.3.8 Test and Evaluation

The purpose of the testing phase was to verify if the requirements of the system have been fulfilled. The system was tested using a combination of White Box and Black Box testing strategies. (Mahak_jain, 2023)

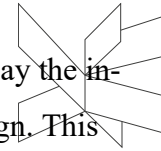
White Box testing was used to test the internal workings of the application in the form of error handling of individual functions, ensuring that the code works as expected. However, aspects of the White Box testing such as Unit testing, Integration testing and regression testing were not conducted because the web application is a small prototype which only includes the main features the application has. Knowledge of using testing frameworks like Jest and tools like Supertest for end-to-end testing was also limited, which made the execution of the earlier mentioned aspects harder.

Black Box testing was carried out to evaluate the application's user interface and user experience. Users' opinions on the application's functionality and design were gathered through Think Aloud tests and interviews. The input gathered played a crucial role in moulding the application's design and guaranteeing that it satisfies users' requirements and preferences.

4.3.8.1 Test Specifications

Multiple methods were used to test the system's functional requirements. These tests were created to make sure the system performs as planned and offers a positive user experience. The functional requirements given in the Use Cases served as the foundation for the test specifications.

Here are some of the test specifications for the functional requirements:



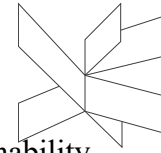
1. Present a specific company's information: The application should display the information of a specific company in a simple and nicely structured design. This was tested by checking that the company's information is correctly retrieved from the database and displayed on the company page.
2. Visually present ratings: The application should visually present ratings using stars. This was tested by submitting ratings for a company and checking that the ratings are correctly displayed on the company page.
3. Display ESG certificate/descriptions: The application should display the ESG ratings and certificate/descriptions of a company. This was tested by checking that the ESG ratings and certificate/descriptions are correctly displayed on the company page.
4. Include a search feature: The application should include a search feature. This was tested by performing searches and checking that the search results are correct.

These test specifications were designed to ensure that the system fulfils its functional requirements. The tests were carried out using manual testing. The results of the tests were used to identify and fix issues in the system, and to guide further development of the system.

4.3.8.2 Evaluation

The test results gathered played a crucial role in determining the application's adherence to functional requirements. The found issues were fixed quickly, contributing to the system's improvement. Although the intended functionality was proven during the testing process, user feedback gathered during Black Box testing impacted both user happiness and design improvements. Test findings and user feedback were also used to inform development suggestions.

This modified framework allows for a smoother transition from testing specifics to an overall evaluation, emphasising the impact of testing on the application's performance and user experience.



5 Conclusions

In conclusion EcoEval is positioned to address the growing demand for sustainability evaluation and ESG analysis/ratings. Through field research the demand for the platform was discovered by doing interviews with potential customers from various industries.

The company recognizes the importance of a thorough understanding of the competitive landscape, doing a feature comparison with direct and indirect competitors. By strategically differentiating itself with a focus on B2B collaboration and sustainability insights, EcoEval aims to create a community committed to genuine sustainability practices with the possibility to give reviews and comments, with a focus on limiting the risk of "greenwashing".

From a technical standpoint, EcoEval's web application stands out for its robust foundation. The modular, manageable, and scalable architecture, achieved through Express.js and PostgreSQL, ensures an efficient separation of concerns. Rigorous testing of the user interface demonstrates its capability to meet functional requirements seamlessly, providing a visually appealing and user-friendly experience.

EcoEval has to consider the potential threats and weaknesses of using an online platform such as data privacy, lack of track record and intense competition.

The financial overview outlines the initial costs, monthly expenditures, revenue growth projections, and return on investment, emphasizing the importance of effective financial planning and forecasting. The financial statement also highlights the opportunity to expand to the rest of Scandinavia in the near future.

However, EcoEval acknowledges the need for initial growth in the Danish market before it is venturing into other Scandinavian countries but a possible venture will generate growth for the company.

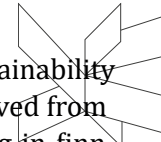


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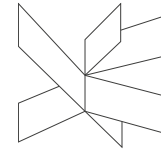
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7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 - Macro Analysis, PESTLE, Scandinavia

For a macro analysis, a PESTLE analysis was conducted, however while the Political, Economic, Sociocultural, Technological, Environmental, and Legal factors are important, the most crucial ones that must be considered based on the software solution are Sociocultural, Technological, Environmental, and Legal factors.

The following text delves into these four crucial factors for the Scandinavian countries, specifically Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the macro-environmental factors that could impact the operation of the web application in these countries.

The analysis of the Nordic countries reveals a strong emphasis on sustainability, technological advancement, and legal protections for employees.

In Finland, the sociocultural landscape is characterized by a high degree of gender equality and a positive attitude towards work-related immigration. This could influence companies' willingness to adopt the software solution. Technologically, Finland is advanced and has a high level of computer literacy, focusing on technology-based teaching and learning. However, it faces tech labor shortages. Environmentally, Finnish people are cautious about the environment and there is emissions control. Legally, permission procedures are time-consuming and there is too much bureaucracy and regulations this could impact the data gathering and storing in the web application.

Finland Sources:

(Autere, 2019)

(David, PESTEL analysis of Finland, 2022)

(Federation, 2022)

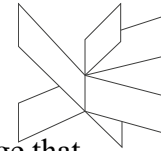
(Federation, 2022)

Sweden, on the other hand, has a highly educated and knowledgeable workforce, which could mean a higher likelihood of companies understanding and appreciating the value of ESG ratings. The country's robust social welfare system and high standard of living create a supportive environment for businesses committed to social responsibility and sustainability. Technologically, companies and researchers are well-versed in green technology and the government is particularly focused on artificial intelligence. Sweden is known for its high level of internet penetration and investments in research and development, making it a hub for innovative companies. Environmentally, Sweden strongly emphasizes sustainability and environmental protection and is a global leader in green technologies and practices. Legally, labor laws in Sweden are very employee-friendly, with strict regulations on working hours, holidays, and benefits. All these factor make it a great place for EcoEval to expand in the Swedish market.

Sweden Sources:

(Momin, 2023)

(Rahman, 2023)



(LECo)

Denmark is a country where almost all people see climate change as a challenge that must be taken seriously. Consumers prioritize long-term investments in sustainability, which can also benefit their private economy. This is a great opportunity for EcoEval to be adopted by companies in the Danish market Technologically, Denmark is considered very advanced and has a very reliable internet service. However, there is a shortage of skilled tech workers. Environmentally, Denmark faces some environmental problems e.g. air pollution, excessive noise, and pollution of rivers, lakes, and open sea by animal wastes and pesticides. Legally, Danish law protects employees in a variety of areas and the country encourages innovation and entrepreneurship.

Denmark Sources:

(What is the attitude of Danes to climate and sustainability?, 2023)

(Bush, 2020)

(David, PESTEL analysis of Denmark (Denmark country profile), 2020)

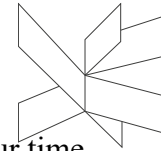
Norway has a high standard of living and places a great emphasis on education and research. It also has a strong culture of equality and social justice, which could influence companies' willingness to adopt a web application. Technologically, Norway has a highly developed technology sector, with a high rate of internet usage and digital literacy. Environmentally, Norway is a global leader in environmental sustainability and has strict environmental regulations. It also has a strong focus on renewable energy. Legally, Norway has strong labour laws that protect employees.

Norway Sources:

(Busch)

(Fruw, 2020)

In conclusion, the Scandinavian countries have a strong focus on sustainability, technological advancement, and legal protections for employees. These factors make them attractive for the operation of the software solution.



7.2 Appendix 2 - Market Segmentation

The segmentation of B2B market analysis is used to determine how to you your time and resources most effectively eliminating focus on companies that will never buy from EcoEval.

Total addressable market (TAM)

Firmographics

The **size** of the companies could be either SMEs with relatively low to moderate headcount and annual revenue as well as larger enterprises with a more significant headcount and revenue.

The **sector** can be categorized into two main segments: Sustainable industries and Traditional industries. The primary focus is on businesses that prioritize sustainability in their day-to-day operations and collaborations with partners and already have sustainability initiatives in place and are committed to ESG.

The second segment consists of traditional industries, which is also very important to target. A growing number of companies within this sector are progressively embracing sustainable practices in their manufacturing processes, etc.

The platform is designed for **international use**. The platform has been developed in English, and its scoring system is benchmarked against the international ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) rating system. To strengthen accessibility and understanding, the platform features a comprehensive dictionary, providing explanations for various international certificates within its own framework.

This ensures that users can easily access and understand the details of different certifications relevant to sustainability practices on a global scale and not just on a regional scale.

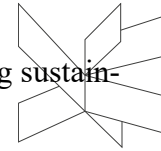
Collaboration Readiness: businesses actively seeking partnerships and collaborations for mutual sustainability goals.

Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM)

For EcoEval, the Serviceable Obtainable Market involves grouping users according to their unique objectives and behaviors.

A significant segment of users consists of those doing research and information gathering, looking to gain an understanding of different ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) rating systems and international information, as well as those seeking insights into sustainable practises across industries. Businesses that compare the sustainability performance of companies within a certain industry or look at possible partners for their sustainability activities make up another important group.

The platform helps anyone involved in the decision-making process by looking at sustainability standards. It also allows for businesses with various sustainability initiatives to display it on the platform showcasing that this company actually do have sustainable initiatives and has background on how this has been done/obtained. Recognizing and addressing these intent segments allows the platform to adapt responses, content, and



features to meet the specific needs and goals of a wide range of users regarding sustainability and responsible business practices.

Customers/users

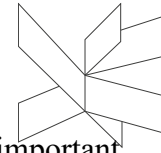
Paying Customers (Business wanting to feature themselves):

The paying customer segment consists of business' looking to showcase themselves and their sustainability practices on the platform and will be working as the primary revenue source for the website. Their engagement on the platform is vital not only got the common community but also for the financial success of EcoEval. These customers are thoroughly discussed above in Market Segmentation B2B.

Content Consumers (Users consuming the content)/ Consumers with Sustainable Interests (Free Users).

Content consumers are those who are actively engaging with and consuming the platform's content and they play a fundamental role in the website's success as well. While they are not a direct source of revenue, their engagement contributes to the overall activity and appeal of the platform. Other than that this segment also enhance the platform's credibility. Content users generate valuable content through making reviews/rating, enhancing SEO and visibility and provide insights for analytics such as user behavior, preferences and trends to improve user experience.

Allowing free users for content builds trust and competitiveness and they also work as a testing ground for improvements. The quality of the functionality and content of the platform contributes to the overall success and loyalty to the website (Close Deals Faster With B2B Market Segmentation).



7.3 Appendix 3 - Maslows Hierachy of Needs

When researching the segment that EcoEval should be marketed towards it is important to look into the perceived mentality of the potential user. In an attempt to visualize the perceptive of B2B customers interview with a random sample of companies has been made to get insight into how Companies in different industries perceive being green and how they will go to be seen as an ecofriendly company. The interviews will be evaluated using Maslow's Hiarchy of needs both for a B2C customer and a B2B customer since the B2B customer will have their B2C customers in mind when marketing their sustainability.

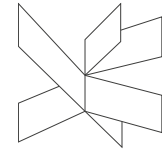
When using Maslows pyramid of needs it is important to look at the different layers and find the specific place that EcoEval would be placed at. This can help show EcoEval how important they are to the customer in a effort to both make the best service by giving what a customer need but also for pricing so that EcoEval doesn't give away their service for a too low cost and doesn't ret rejected because of too high a cost.

The interviews made for this research of customer needs and boundaries when it comes to EcoEval consist of there individual interviews. The Companies are: Salling Group BioMar and Riisfort. Each of these companies' value sustainability and being green high but for different reasons. Sailing group values sustainability because their customer often choses sustainable products on daily basis their customers choices when it comes to what to buys is in the top of the normal Pyramid of Needs where products chosen is part of self-actualizations and morality. Because of this Salling group has to make sure that their products meet their customers' demands.

For BioMar Sustainability is important because their section of the maritime food business is the one who creates most waste.

As for Riisfort, they are a wood distributor, and they therefore need sustainability to be a favourable for their customers.

Now using the Maslows Pyramid of needs for B2B we can see that all of the interviewed companies will be able to use EcoEval on the mid-level called "Ease of doing business Value" EcoEval will not be the most important factor for any of the companies to gain customers and survive on their market but it will instead help ease the process for their customers and suppliers to gain information and create transparency about their companies. Furthermore, EcoEval can help create new relationships as it can be used as a filter to find new suppliers and customers who are likeminded when it comes to sustainability (Dodd, 2018).



7.4 Appendix 4 - Interviews/Fields Research

Interview 1

Who are you?

- Sales Manager at the wholesale company Riisfort for 27 years.

What company are you employed in?

- Riisfort – sells wood-based panel products for furniture, kitchens, tabletops and other industries.

Are you aware of the environmental footprint of your own business?

- Yes, they have an employee responsible for ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) initiatives)

Are you aware of what your partners/suppliers do to act more sustainable?

- Specifically monitors products produced with a focus on sustainability from their suppliers.
- Suppliers should at least sign a COC (Certificate of Compliance) ensuring that products comply with REACH regulations and avoid harmful chemicals

Is sustainability an important factor in your company's buying process?

- They do not impose requirements on their suppliers, but they monitor the sustainable initiatives taken by their suppliers.
- Customers want the cheapest option but also pay attention to sustainability in production.
- Purchasing recycled plastic and recycled particleboard for panels.
- Emphasizes the importance of products being produced with recyclable materials.
- Driven by market trends and demand as well as a personal interest in recycling and sustainability.

What steps have you taken in order to make your own business more environmentally friendly?

- FSC and PEFC certified (involving the replanting of trees, etc.).
- Transitioning to electric and hybrid vehicles.
- Solar panels on the company's roof.
- LED lighting in the buildings.
- Waste sorting practices.

Would you be interested in having your company on a sustainability site that enforces your company to act sustainably?

- Yes we would use that

What tools are you currently using to research partners/suppliers?

- Documentation, reports from the partners/supplier

What tools would make it easier for you to do better research?

- Database where companies submit their reports, allowing users to search for a specific company and view information such as environmental certifications, instead of relying on direct inquiries to partners.



What specific information are you looking for or would you like to have more easily available?

- Environmental labels, REACH compliance, FSC and PEFC certifications, general responsibility goals, current initiatives, and sustainability reports.

Platform specific questions

If this website existed, what features would you think were important to have.

- Star rating system providing an overview of all ratings.
- Quick overview of their sustainability practices.
- Ability to communicate with each other.
- Companies can add comments to their own page (e.g., if they are in the process of obtaining a certification, they can provide updates).

Do you know Trustpilot?

- Yes

Would you subscribe to such a platform?

- Would probably be willing to pay for it if it were a one-time purchase.
- Preferably minimal advertising for business users.

What is more important in the tools you use – Easy interface and usability or as much information available as possible (Quick facts or thorough paragraphs)

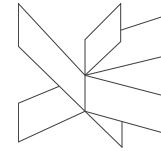
- Simple and clear text with basic information.
- More detailed information as users delve deeper.
- Access to a company's comprehensive report from their own website.

Would you be willing to share data about your own company on a platform to boost your credibility when it comes to greenwashing?

Would you share information or rate your business partners?

Anonymously or directly?

- Anonymously



Interview 2

Who are you?

- Team Leader of automatic production NonFood warehouse in Aarhus. •
What company are you employed in? Salling Group A/S

Are you aware of the environmental footprint of your own business?

- As part of Salling Group, especially part of logistics, we cannot deny amount of waste that we can produce by simply receiving and delivering goods to shops across Denmark, Germany and Poland. Carton, plastic both clear and colored, paper and different other waste, including chemicals and of course emissions that trucks are producing during transportation. At the same time, if we talk about footprint produced by our stores, that would be food waste, when food related products are reaching expiry date.

Do you know what your partners/suppliers do to act more sustainably?

- Salling Group is actively working with all our suppliers to reduce carbon emissions. We are also working and collaborating with different organizations across country that are supporting sustainable way of living, as an example would be quite popular platform called “Too Good to Go” that helps us to reduce waste, especially in Netto stores.

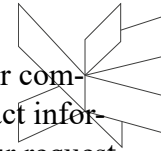
Is sustainability an important factor in your company's buying process?

- As I mentioned, it is quite important when we approach our policies. We are working with suppliers based on a strict set of rules that not only requires specific quality of a product, for example øko products, but also ethical norms as fair pay and honest environment for a labor.

What steps have you taken to make your business more environmentally friendly?

- Salling Group has committed themselves to the Paris Agreements goal to keep the increase in the global average temperature below 1.5 degrees, therefore we are taking responsibility for our CO₂ and emissions overall. As couple of main examples, Salling Group has invested 2.4 billion DKK in energy transition, meaning that we are reducing energy consumption and installing solar panels across whole Denmark, Germany and Poland. Next to our shops we are installing more and more charging networks for electric cars and by 2025 we have set for ourselves a target of 1.000 charging stations at Bilka, Netto and Fotex stores across the country. Also, Netto has become first retail chain in Denmark to test a climate label “Skyen”. This label helps our customers with guiding them towards less climate damaging food alternatives. At the end, our goal before 2030 is to halve our own operational CO₂ emissions, we will have as a requirement to $\frac{3}{4}$ of our suppliers to have approved climate goals, we will start to recycle 85% of our waste and halve our food waste.

Would you be interested in having your company on a sustainability website that enforces/promotes your company to act sustainably?



- To be honest, regarding this question you would need to contact our commercial department. As I am not allowed to provide you their contact information, you could try to contact our reception, who would take your request. They can be reached by the phone +45 8778 5000.

What tools are you currently using to research partners/suppliers?

- We have whole buying department that is dealing with our suppliers who has an enormous number of tools when it comes to research. I am sure that we are asking our suppliers certain ISO certifications and quality licensing.

What tools would make it easier for you to do better research?

- Unfortunately, I am not qualified to answer this question as I am unaware of all tools, we have in Salling Group. As we are a big company, I believe it is challenging to provide for us something that we are already not using. That would be good for some small to medium businesses.

What specific information are you looking for or would you like to have more easily available?

- I believe that answer to this question is somewhat similar to the previous one, but from my own experience it might be always a challenge to work with suppliers, especially if companies have different procedures and what is more important, mindset. It always takes a huge amount of correspondence in between businesses, to make sure that we can work with each other.

If written on the website. Which facts about your company would make you feel uncomfortable and pull out of the website?

- Salling Group has nothing to hide. We are quite responsible when it comes to our business within. If you dig deeper, we always work based on our IPACE values, which are Integrity, Passion, Agility, Competitiveness and Efficiency and that is imprinted in our work, especially in the high chain management. However, that comes from my personal experience, maybe more informed staff can tell you more about it. Platform-specific questions (questions marked with (o) are sub-questions to the main ones, so could you please answer on both)

If a website/platform for evaluating how sustainable companies existed, what features would you think were important to have?

- That would be rating of certifications, emissions, policies for recycling and future goals. It is a huge work to collect it all and I believe that would save up a lot of time in purchase division of the business.

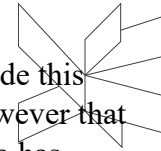
Do you know Trustpilot?

- Yes, I am aware of this platform.

Would you subscribe to such a platform/website?

- Unfortunately, I am not authorized to answer this question on behalf of the company, however I personally think that it is a great idea.

What features would make you want to subscribe to such a platform/website?



- In my personal opinion we should be realistic about it. From one side this webpage would definitely boost up companies and their image, however that would give an enormous advantage to already big corporations who has enough recourses to invest in sustainability, because, let's be real, it is not cheap. That would limit significantly your clientele. For small businesses, goals that Salling Group has are not realistic at the first steps. I believe on this platform a lot of attention should be put into company's vision and specific steps to ensure that this vision will be executed. That feature would make more businesses attracted to your concept. o What is more important in the tools you use – Easy interface and usability or as much information available as possible (Quick facts or thorough paragraphs) If we talk B2B end, that would be information as a main thing, if it is B2C, that is interface and usability. So to sum it up, if end user is a business, they need info, if it is a consumer, then interface is more important.

Would you be willing to share data about your own company on a platform to boost your credibility regarding greenwashing?

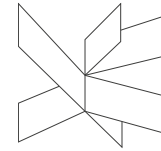
- Again, unfortunately I am no authorized to answer this question. I am ready to provide you with any information that is not classified, however all information about Salling Group and its foundations is publicly available at our website. o Would you share information or rate your business partners?
Again, unfortunately I am no authorized to answer this question.

Anonymously or directly?

- Again, unfortunately I am no authorized to answer this question.

Do you believe that information is more trustworthy when the writer is not anonymous?

- I believe that information must be shared directly, otherwise it is not transparent enough to ensure credibility. Author should take ownership.



Interview 3

What is your role in your company?

- My role is “Marketing Assistant” and I mainly work with Social Media and sustainability communications.

What company are you employed in?

- BioMar Group, Global Headquarters in Aarhus

Are you aware of the environmental footprint of the company you are working in and of the business itself?

- Yes, I am aware of the environmental footprint of our company and the aquafeed business as a whole. Aquafeeds (which include all seafood feeds for aquaculture) represent about 80% of the carbon footprint in the aquaculture industry this is why in BioMar we place a strong emphasis on sustainability, and we continuously assess and address our environmental impact, such as our sourcing of raw materials, energy use, and waste management.

Do you know what your partners/suppliers do to act more sustainably?

- We have strong partnerships with our suppliers, and we work closely with them to ensure they share our commitment to sustainability. We monitor and encourage sustainable practices in our supply chain, including responsible sourcing of ingredients and traceability.

Is sustainability an important factor in your company's buying process?

- Sustainability is a paramount factor in BioMar's buying process. We prioritize suppliers and partners that align with our sustainability goals, and we are committed to ensuring that the products and services we use meet our environmental and social responsibility standards.

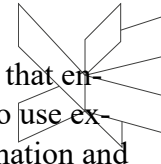
What steps have you taken to make the business more environmentally friendly?

- BioMar has taken various steps to make our business more environmentally friendly. We have invested in research and development to improve the sustainability of our aquafeed products, implemented energy-saving measures in our production facilities, and actively promote responsible aquaculture practices to our customers and the end consumer.

Would you be interested in having your company on a sustainability webapp that enforces/promotes your company to act sustainably?

- We would be very interested in having our company featured on a sustainability web app that enforces and promotes our commitment to sustainability. Such a platform would provide us with an additional avenue to showcase our environmental efforts and engage with the community.

What tools are you currently using to research partners/suppliers?



- We have a very committed Sustainability and Sourcing department that ensures our research into partners and suppliers is carried out. We also use external traceability partners such as ORIVO, which facilitates information and traceability on our raw materials.

Do you enjoy using this tool and do you have any complaints about them?

- We have some of the best Sustainability and Sourcing experts in the aquaculture and marine fisheries industries and together with our traceability partners are a great fit for us and our mission.

What specific information are you looking for while researching and what would you like to have more easily available?

- When researching, we are primarily looking for information related to a company's sustainability practices, certifications, and track record in terms of environmental responsibility. Having easy access to this information, such as through a standardized format, would be beneficial.

Which facts about your company would make you feel uncomfortable and pull in case when you create a company profile?

- Anything that is competitor sensitive, such as recipes, specific raw materials and pricing.

Which information you think is necessary to be included on your and/or other companies profiles?

- Necessary information for company profiles on a sustainability web app should include the company's name, logo, a summary of their sustainability initiatives, certifications, and statistics related to their environmental and social impact.

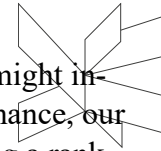
If there is an webapp for evaluating how sustainable companies existed, what features would you think were important to have?

- For a web app evaluating sustainability, important features would include a rating or score system based on sustainability criteria, a directory of companies committed to sustainability, a news or update section highlighting sustainability trends.

Do you know Trustpilot? Would you create a profile for your company in such an webapp?

- Yes, I am familiar with trust pilot. However giving access to anyone to comment and give their opinion on a company's sustainability practices may not be beneficial for anyone, as opinions are biased depending on whose perspective you're looking from, and the opinion of the general public, the direct competition and parties that belong to non-related industries may affect the overall score of a company and its sustainability image.

What features would make you want to subscribe?



- Features that would make us want to subscribe to such a platform might include in-depth and objective analytics on our sustainability performance, our sustainability news throughout the year and the possibility of having a ranking of top aquaculture players. There are many types of sustainable accounting, and it is important that all data is retrieved and analyzed in the same accounting method, so data is more reliable and comparable between businesses and interested parties.

What is more important in the tools you use: Easy interface and usability or as much information available as possible?

- In the tools we use, a balance between an easy interface and usability and the availability of comprehensive information is essential. Having both is ideal, as it allows for efficient research while ensuring we have all the necessary details. However if we must choose one we believe that as much information available as possible is more beneficial for the industry as a whole.

Would you be willing to share data about your own company on a platform to boost your credibility regarding greenwashing?

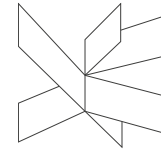
- We would be willing to share data about our own company on a platform to boost our credibility regarding greenwashing, as transparency and accountability are essential in the sustainability space.

Would you share information or rate your business partners if yes- anonymously or directly and why?

- We would be open to sharing non-competitive-sensitive information and rating our business partners, preferably directly, to encourage accountability and promote sustainable practices in the supply chain.

Would you like to comment on others companies after working with them with the idea to share your experience in the web app?

- Commenting on other companies after working with them is a valuable feature as it allows for sharing experiences and feedback within the community, which can lead to better, more responsible business practices and partnerships. However, in order to prevent fake and unfaithful reviews there must be a system in place to ensure that the companies commenting have actually collaborated with the organization in question.



Interview 4

Who are you?

- Product Manager in Digital and Technology.

What company are you employed in?

- Global Retail leader in luxury goods

Are you aware of the environmental footprint of your own business?

- Yes

Are you aware of what your partners/suppliers do to act more sustainable?

- Yes

Is sustainability an important factor in your company's buying process?

- Yes

What steps have you taken to make your own business more environmentally friendly?

- Manufacturing facilities and offices are fully powered by green energy sources. Moreover, 97% of materials used in production are recycled.

Would you be interested in having your company on a sustainability website that enforces your company to act sustainable?

- Yes

What tools are you currently using to research partners/suppliers?

- Code of Conduct for every partner before we agree to work with them.

What tools would make it easier for you to do better research?

- Transparent reporting on energy consumption and materials used. Ethical salaries

What specific information are you looking for or would you like to have more easy access to?

- Same as above, as well as fair trade.

If written on the website: What facts about your company would make you feel uncomfortable and pull out of the website?

- None.

Platform regarding questions

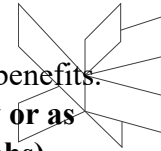
Do you know Trustpilot?

- Yes

Would you subscribe to such a platform?

- If yes Yes, already have

What features would make you want to subscribe?



- Transparency of work condition, sustainability, compensation and benefits.

What is more important in the tools you use – easy interface and usability or as much information available as possible (quick facts or thorough paragraphs).

- Having access to as much information as possible.

If this website existed, what features would you think were important to have in general?

- Benchmarks between industry leaders about, e.g. % of recycled materials used in manufacturing.

Would you be willing to share data about your own company on a platform to boost your credibility when it comes to greenwashing?

- Yes.

Would you share information or rate your business partners?

- Yes

Anonymously or directly?

Depends on what is the local policies about data protection.

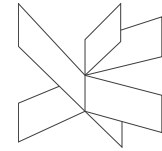
Do you believe that information is more trustworthy when the writer is not anonymous?

- Not more trustworthy, but for sure more complete

Is there anything you would like to add or see that was not touch point the questions above? If yes, please name it.

- NA

Thanks for taking time to read through and answer our questions, your input is valuable to us! Students in Global Business Engineering, Software, VIA University



Interviews 5

Where are you employed?

- Salling Group - Terminal Holme. Department manager who is responsible for around 60 % of the production.
- The input I received from Dovile is about the CSR inside the warehouse.
- The sorting of the garbage in terminal Holme is a very important task. In 2022 the sorted garbage percent was 96%. The year-to-day percentage is 96.6% and the goal is to reach 98% by the end of the year, which is very amazing. Terminal Holme is in first place for sorting out trash compared to the other Salling's logistic warehouses in Denmark. Additional information can be seen in the given materials.
- Charging stations for cars are coming to terminal Holme, so people can charge their electric cars and also people are encouraged to by one.
- A lot of food is donated to people. Every package that contains a broken piece cannot be send to the shops. So instead of throwing it away, for example, six packs of flavor (5 are good), they send them to be cleaned and sent to WeFood. For 2023 they have donated to WeFood - 62 085 eaches¹. And also to FoodBank they donated around 50 000 eaches. Last year the total number was 227 000 eaches.
- Salling is also helping handicap people to find a job. Couple years ago, Salling won a prize in such project with focus on women who are unable to talk and are physically unable. Salling hired them to pack Bilka shops in packing department.
- Dovile does not have direct connection with the suppliers but information was given in the form of materials. What is the goal for their suppliers and how Salling Group is reducing their footprint.

What would make you want to join the website?

- The information on the website should be easily accessible. Good to have a lot of information about the suppliers. Values and projects could be a good input about a company. A good thing would be to have an approved badge that we can give to companies that are doing well. Something as trustworthy partner.

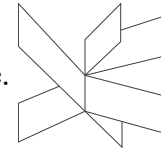
Is sustainability an important factor in your company's buying process?

- Yes, it is.

What steps have you taken to make your own business more environmentally friendly?

- Can be seen in the given papers. They use plenty of sensors for the corporate automated lightening system.

Would you be interested in having your company on a sustainability website that enforces your company to act sustainable?



- It is not a problem because Salling Group could be a good example.

What tools are you currently using to research partners/suppliers?

- It is not part of her job.

What tools would make it easier for you to do better research?

- Search engine optimization would be a good help. Good interface would be beneficial.

What specific information are you looking for or would you like to have easier access to?

- All the information which mentioned above would be interesting to be on the website. A collaboration companies – fx NASPO certification and their footprint and she is happy to see we have already that in place.

If written on the website: What facts about your company would make you feel uncomfortable and pull out of the website?

- I do not think based on the result there is something.

Platform regarding questions

Do you know Trustpilot?

- Yes, using it for big purchases.

Would you subscribe to such a platform?

- Yes

What features would make you want to subscribe?

- Good interface which makes it easy to find what they need information for. She recommends we focus on communicating what value do we bring for the customers who choose to sign as premium. Example - saving time in researching companies, trustworthy screening of information, as time for business is money related.

What is more important in the tools you use – easy interface and usability or as much information available as possible (quick facts or thorough paragraphs)

- Easy interface and key words that could grab attention. Like bigger font and bold.

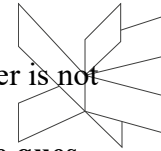
If this website existed, what features would you think were important to have in general?

- See answer to q12

Would you be willing to share data about your own company on a platform to boost your credibility when it comes to greenwashing?

- Would you share information or rate your business partners? – Yes

Anonymously or directly? – It would be more trustworthy if it is directly.



- Do you believe that information is more trustworthy when the writer is not anonymous?

Is there anything you would like to add or see that was not touch point the questions above?

- If yes, please name it. – She thinks we covered the main touch points and enjoyed what we did.

7.5 Appendix 5 - Competitor Overview

The primary direct competitors are:

EcoVadis provides sustainability rating for global supply chains, looking at companies based on environmental, social and ethical performance. EcoVadis is a direct competitor to EcoEval as the company focuses on sustainability ratings for business. Their ratings are, however, based on a score the platform gives and are more like a report than an interactive platform.

The company's **competitive advantage** is a comprehensive evaluation framework, established reputation and global reach.

(The World's Most Trusted Business Sustainability Ratings, n.d.)

CSRHub provides ratings on many sustainability factors by normalising and collecting CSR data and showcase them on one platform. The CSRHub base their rating system from thoroughly collected sources to create a holistic view of a company's sustainability practices. CSRHub is a direct competitor as it concentrates on corporate social responsibility data and sustainability ratings. The company has a focus on a broad range of CSR and sustainability metrics.

The company's **competitive advantage** is an extensive database, diverse and well-established metrics and user-friendly interface.

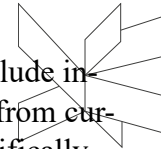
(CSRHub's ESG ratings and data help Corporate Managers, n.d.)

Sustainalytics specializes in ESG research and ratings. The company offers insights into a company's sustainability performance, risk management and overall environmental impact. This company is a direct competitor as it focuses on ESG research and ratings. EcoEval and Sustainalytics share a common goal of encouraging businesses to prioritize sustainability and gives a detail insight into a company's environmental practices.

The company's **competitive advantage** is that they are able to do in-depth ESG analysis, more than 30 years of delivering a holistic ESG assessment, is pioneering ethical investing and has global reach and collaborations.

(Company ESG Risk Ratings, n.d.)

The primary indirect competitors are:



Glassdoor is primarily a platform for employee reviews, but this may also include insights into a company's sustainability practices through anonymous feedback from current and previous employees. This is an indirect competitor as it does not specifically focus sustainability, but it allows employees to rate and review companies based on different factors such as workplace practices which could include social responsibility practices.

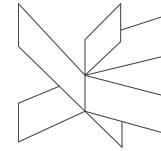
The company's **competitive advantage** company culture and work environment transparency.

(Your work people are here, n.d.)

Google Business Profile is an online platform provided by google that allows businesses to manage their online presence. It's a hub where companies can control how they appear in Google search results. Businesses can provide essential information, engage with customers through reviews and give updates. Google Business Profile is an indirect competitor to EcoEval because it provides a platform for business to show their presence including ratings and reviews. It does not specialize in sustainability, but it is an opportunity for companies to showcase their practices here.

The company's **competitive advantage** is unrivaled online visibility and customer interaction through reviews and ratings.

(Virksomhedsprofil, n.d.)



7.6 Appendix 6 - Company Features Comparison

EcoVadis

Product features

The company offers a comprehensive variety of sustainability assessment tools, such as an in-depth sustainability rating and scorecards. The platform also includes supplier sustainability rating. The platform also showcases a strong risk assessment tool where companies can identify and change potential environmental risk. EcoVadis also offers collaboration and improvement tools.

Price

Subscription- based pricing.

The price is determined by an assessment of the company size and needs. The above is based on subscription for Denmark.

- The price for an extra small company with less than 25 employees is 379€ for 1 year subscription and 909€ for a 3-years subscription.
- The price for a small company with 26 – 99 employees is 649€ for 1 year subscription and 1559€ for a 3-year subscription.
- The price for a medium company with 100-999 employees is 989€ for 1 year subscription and 2379€ for a 3-year subscription.
- The price for a large company with 1000+ employees is 1649€ for 1 year subscription and 3959€ for a 3-year subscription (Plans and Pricing, n.d.).

Service offered

Sustainability information/insights and partner collaboration platform.

Age of audience served

EcoVadis is primarily targeted at B2B companies. Its services align with individual sustainability issues and obligations that companies in the corporate sector face.

Style and design

EcoVadis uses a professional and business-oriented design, while reflecting the serious commitment to sustainability using green and light colors. The platform has been developed to show efficient navigation and easy use of its many features.

Ease of use

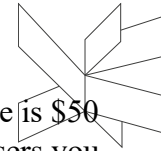
EcoVadis strives to have a user-friendly platform while acknowledging that their platform is complex with many features. The company lays a lot of focus on their easy-to-use sustainability scorecards.

(The World's Most Trusted Business Sustainability Ratings, n.d.).

CSRHub

Product features

CSRHub distinguishes themselves with wide ESG ratings. Businesses can use data visualization tools to improve the understanding of complex ESG data and measure their sustainability performance against industry competitors. CSRHub has made their own data schema to evaluate and create reports. They make reports and dashboards where they analyse and compare with customers competitors in ESG and CSR.



Price

The company also has a subscription-based pricing model. The beginning price is \$50 per user per month when you have 1-10 users. The price decreases the more users you have all the way down to \$40 per user per month. You have to pay \$3,000/year minimum. (CSRHub, n.d.)

Service offered

The service is primarily aimed at businesses. CSRHub provides ESG ratings and sustainability performance insights through reports. The product serves as a valuable resource for companies seeking to align their practices with ESG principles and compare them to competitors.

Age of audience served

With the primary focus on businesses CSRHub customizes its services according to companies' ESG analysis requirements, keeping up with the increasing global focus on ethical business practices.

Style and design

CSRHub's design is clean and data-focused with a focus on clarity and simplicity in presenting delated ESG information. The interface itself places a high focus on making the platform easy to understand for users.

Ease of use

The company has a user-friendly interface to navigate complex sustainability data. The platform ensures that businesses can efficiently extract meaningful insights from their ESG assessments.

(CSRHub's ESG ratings and data help Corporate Managers, n.d.).

Sustainalytics

Product features

Sustainalytics specializes in ESG risk ratings and research offering businesses and investors valuable insights into environmental considerations. Their whole rating system is based on how high the ESG risk is. The platform includes portfolio analysis and screening tools for informed decision-making. The reports can also be used in CRM systems and other exciting systems to track new leads and enhance accounts.

Price

Subscription based model. They have the possibility of a free trial period. The full price cannot be found (Our Global Data: Deals, n.d.).

Service offered

Sustainalytics focuses on delivering ESG and corporate governance research supporting stakeholders in making sustainable and responsible investment decisions.

Age of audience served

Sustainalytics customizes its services to the unique needs of investors, businesses, and financial institutions.

Style and design

The website has a modern and professional design, appealing to their target audience. With the selected earthy and green colors the company has made considerations regarding promoting environmentally friendly and sustainable.



Ease of use

Sustainalytics is a generally user-friendly tool, although depending on which features are being used, it might be more or less complex as there are many features to choose from. The platform's design aims to achieve a balance between accessibility and sophistication. However, it is difficult to be guided to the price of the service/product.

(Company ESG Risk Ratings, n.d.).

Glassdoor

Product features

The company Glassdoor stands out as a platform for providing employee reviews and ratings, offering an insight into company culture. The company platform is mostly used to display data like salary etc., but sustainability could also be a subject discussed.

Price

Basic features on Glassdoor are free, while paid options offer enhanced insights. For an enhanced profile you have to contact the company's Sales department (Glassdoor Plans & Pricing, n.d.).

Service offered

Glassdoor's core service revolves around employee-generated company reviews and insights.

Age of audience served

Glassdoor offers a platform for open company reviews while addressing the needs of employees and job seekers navigating the labour market with a broad focus on a broader audience.

Style and design

Glassdoor keeps its user interface simple to use and offers easy access to content created by employees. The platform's design places a high value on usability for people looking to learn about corporate cultures.

Ease of use

The platform is very intuitive which ensures that users can easily navigate through employee reviews and company insights. The simplicity of the interface contributes to a nice user experience, allowing individuals to access valuable information effortlessly and effectively.

(Your work people are here, n.d.).

Google Business Profile

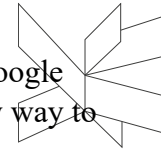
Product features

In order to improve local search experiences, Google Business Profile focuses on delivering business information and user reviews. Users can quickly locate and evaluate businesses based on their location and customer reviews thanks to integrated Maps capability.

Price

Google Business Profile's basic features are free, which makes it an affordable platform for companies looking to build an online presence. More advertising choices would cost money for companies looking to get more exposure.

Service offered



Customer ratings and company listings are the main features of the service. Google Business Profile offers a broad audience by providing users with a trustworthy way to find and assess nearby companies.

Age of audience served

They have a wide range of consumers, as all individuals that uses google can give ratings and reviews.

Style and design

Google Business Profile keeps its interface simple and easy to use by sticking to Google's integrated and clean design. The design follows Google's general design standards by placing a high priority on accessibility and simplicity.

Ease of use

Google Business Profile ensures that people can locate relevant data about local businesses fast and is incredibly easy to use. Both customers and business owners benefit from an effortless user experience that is enhanced by the user-friendly interface. (Virksomhedsprofil, n.d.).

EvoEval

Product features

EcoEval is a B2B enterprise-specific platform. Businesses can evaluate and score one another according to sustainability and ethical practices using this platform (individual customers can also rate and review). Detailed listings and sustainability reports are provided by the company itself on the platform, which also makes it easier to create firm profiles with an ESG score entry and customer reviews.

Price

800kr monthly

Larger customers can obtain a small discount.

Service offered

By gathering and simplifying sustainability data EcoEval, which markets itself as a platform for B2B collaboration and sustainability intelligence, helps spread the word about ethical business practices and lessens the problem of "greenwashing."

Age of audience served

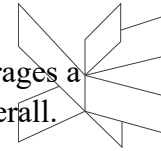
The platform is primarily targeted at B2B enterprises, recognizing the unique challenges and responsibilities faced by businesses in the corporate environment.

Style and design

EcoEval's platform is designed with professionalism and a business focus. The significance and importance of sustainability considerations in business settings is expressed in the style and design. The platform's credibility is further strengthened by its professional and business-oriented style which positions it as a reliable platform for companies to participate in significant sustainability partnerships. In addition, images of nature and earthy hues like green should support the emphasis on sustainability.

Ease of use

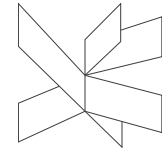
The platform considers that users interacting with sustainability data have different abilities and aims to provide a simple interface for them. Businesses can easily navigate through complex environmental evaluations and collaborative tools due to the design's



simplicity and user-friendly interface. The commitment to accessibility encourages a broader embrace among B2B businesses and improves the user experience overall. (Team Asana, 2022).

Overview

	EcoVadis	CSRHub	Sustainalytics	Glassdoor	Google Business Profile	EcoEval
Product features	Comprehensive sustainability assessment tools, risk assessment, collaboration tools	Wide ESG ratings, data visualization, custom data schema, reports and dashboards	ESG risk ratings, portfolio analysis, CRM integration	Employee reviews, company culture insights	Business information, user reviews, integrated Maps	B2B collaboration, sustainability intelligence, ratings and reviews
Price	Subscription-based pricing. Price ranges from 379€ - 1649€ for a year and 909€ - 3959€ for 3 years.	\$50-\$40 per user per month, \$3,000/year minimum	Subscription-based, free trial available	Free basic features, enhanced options contact Sales	Free basic features, advertising costs extra	800kr monthly. Larger customers can obtain a small discount.
Service Offered	Sustainability information, partner collaboration	ESG ratings, sustainability performance insights	ESG and corporate governance research	Employee generated company reviews	Customer ratings, company listings	B2B collaboration, sustainability intelligence
Age of Audience Served	Primarily B2B	Primarily businesses	Investors, businesses, financial institutions	Broad audience, employees, job seekers	Wide range of consumers	Primarily B2B
Style and design	Professional, business-oriented, green colors	Clean, data-focused, emphasis on clarity	Modern, professional, earthy and green colors	Simple, easy to use, focuses on usability	Simple, Google's integrated design standards	Professional, business focus, images of nature, earthy scheme
Ease of use	User-friendly with a focus on scorecards	User-friendly interface, data-focused	Generally user-friendly, design balances accessibility and sophistication	Very intuitive, simple interface	Incredibly easy to use, follows Google's design standards	Simple interface, user-friendly for B2B businesses



7.7 Appendix 7 - Marketing Mix

Price

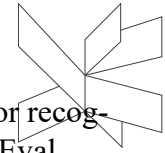
EcoEval will be a subscription-based model. Here businesses will pay to have themselves featured and have a page for consumers/customers to see. This aligns with common SaaS pricing strategies that are well established and known to customers (Saluja, 2018). Having predetermined prices and an estimate of subscription growth gives EcoEval a predictable revenue stream.

Prices will be standardized. However, there will be a large amount of negotiation room on the prices in the budget. This is because it will be important to land large clients early on. Also there will be options for multi-business corporations to sign multiple subscription deals.

An easy way to set the prices would be a flat rate for the service. This can of course be discounted for purchase of longer periods. This kind of price promotion/discount is done in the hope of incentivizing long-term subscriptions. Flat rates are easy to communicate in terms of what is included and easy for the customer to see through. These flat-rated prices will be readily available on the website for interested clients to look at. However, this works the best for SMB (Small to medium businesses). These might not need more than a single page and a user login and will handle setup and integration all by themselves. A flat-rate and a sign-up process of a few clicks is easy for them to handle and get going quickly. For large corporations a more nuanced price option is necessary (Law, 2021).

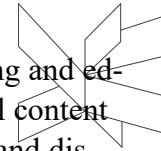
It is important for EcoEval to recognize that larger corporations have different and relative needs and landing them as clients provides a higher revenue generation. Allowing the option for price promotions and special contract negotiations will be crucial. The terms will be individual for the clients, but promotions might be given based on the number of businesses subscribed to the platform and acceptance of longer subscription periods.

Another option would be a tiered price system. Here customers would be offered deals with differentiated access or control over their company profile. However, as the product does not include that many features as it is would be hard to cut it to the bone to sample a cheaper option. We do not want the customer companies to be confused about options in the decision process and down play the importance of the entire package. In the future if EcoEval has a more differentiated suite of products available this might be an option but not for the core product.



Promotion

As EcoEval is a newly founded startup they do not have a strong brand name or recognizable name yet. The promotion section here will discuss what strategies EcoEval should use to communicate its value proposition to its target customers and the broader population of potential users out there.

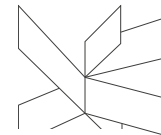


In order to promote interest in the concept EcoEval is selling content Marketing and education of the market will be one of the most important first steps. Educational content on the importance of sustainability and sustainable branding can be produced and distributed. This can be achieved through blog posts – however as EcoEval does not have an existing follower base other initial steps need to be taken. Whitepaper materials, brochures and videos and be distributed through cold calling, emailing and at conferences (Wetdew, 2023).

Social media campaigns will be a good strategy for reaching non-paying consumers/users. This can boost brand awareness while it provides valuable analytics of what target groups actually interact with the product (Harrison, 2022). In compilation with social media campaigns, it will be smart to adopt influencer marketing. This will reach wider audiences through tapping into the influencers existing follower base. Using serious influencers such as sustainability bloggers etc. can help establish brand awareness through trusted industry voices (Annie, 2023).

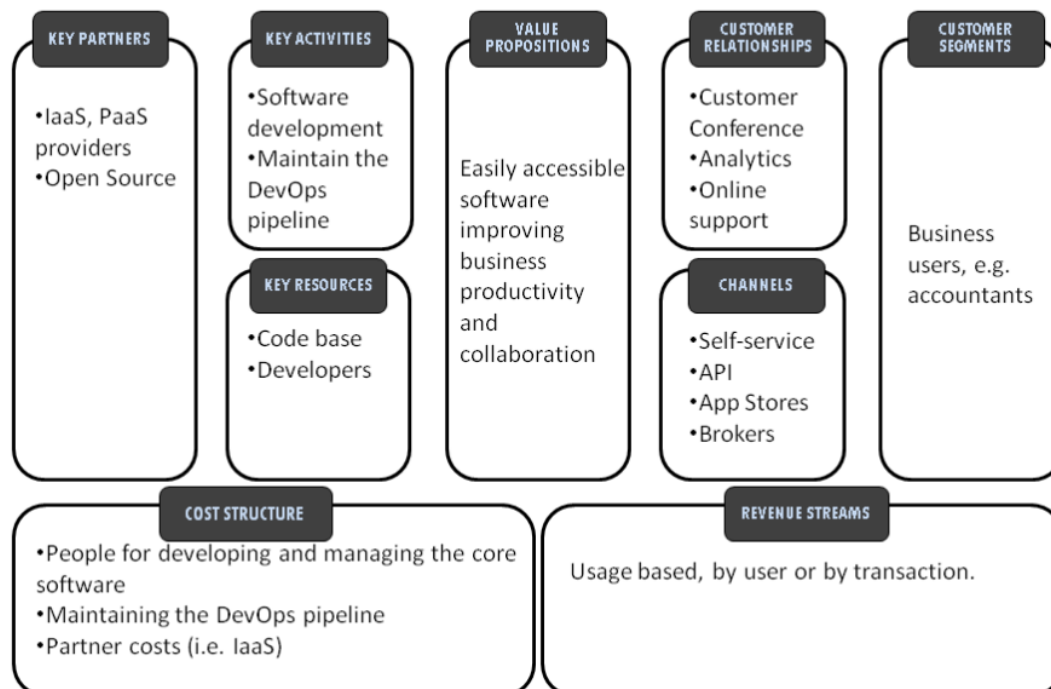
There are other strategies to grow EcoEval's brand name and create awareness. However, a lot of these are B2C focused. In order for EcoEval to generate revenue it needs to parallelly focus on B2B marketing to get paying customer businesses.

For larger corporations like Salling group and Danske Supermarked and construction corporations account-based marketing will be a good solution. This approach targets specific accounts/potential clients by tailoring its marketing and sales materials. When the material has been produced for one sector it can easily be re-tailored to match individual large clients. It is rather time-consuming and should be considered each time (Guiliani, 2023).



7.8 Appendix 8 – Business Model Canvas (BMC)

Sample SaaS Business Model Canvas



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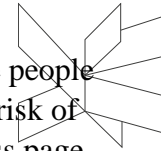
Customer Segments

The customers segment is divided into different categories as some are paying customers and some are users consuming the content of the website. Each is equally important as the website has no value without both sides. However, communication and marketing has to be done differently for each segment.

- Business wanting to feature themselves. These will be the primary source of revenue. These will provide the content for the page.
- Consumers with sustainable interests. This could be anybody. While free users will not provide direct revenue for the site it is still valuable to have active users spreading awareness of the page. These can be companies interested in finding business partners or simply private consumers with an interest in sustainability.

Value Proposition:

EcoEval will help companies showcase their environmental initiatives and summarize otherwise complicated ESG reports and ratings. This will help paying companies to enhance their own brand image and attract more business through sustainability conscious partners AND consumers.



Paying customers gain a dedicated space to document their efforts right where people who have an interest are already present and searching. The site mitigates the risk of consumers and partners getting lost in research and never finding your business page with sustainability information.

For consumers and interested partners EcoEval offers a centralized information hub where they can discover, evaluate, and discuss businesses that are trying to be more environmentally friendly. In addition to the base product EcoEval will feature an educational tool through the dictionary page. This allows consumers to understand what is actually meant by complex terminology and abbreviations surrounding ESG ratings and certificates. It will enable consumers and partners to make more informed decisions while it promotes transparency for businesses and corporate sustainability.

Channels

Potential channels - can be changed when we do more marketing....

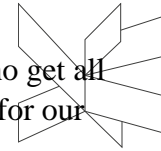
1. Website
2. Email marketing
3. Social media
4. Content marketing
5. Partnerships
 - a. Danske supermarket
 - b. Salling group
 - c. Other large corporations

Customer Relations

- Customer support - EcoEval will provide customer service for paying customers. Guiding them through which content gets a lot of traffic and what doesn't. Although the goal is transparency some certificates and other initiatives might get more search results than others on the site and can be put at the top of a company page for easy access and more views.
- Feedback mechanisms - EcoEval will be in open dialogue with paying customers about feedback they might have on the actual site without compromising the values of it.
Feedback will work through surveys, user interviews and direct contact with customers.
- Educational content - EcoEval will provide educational content for both paying and nonpaying site users. This will provide value for all users who are interested and establish a kind of trust around EcoEval as a source of information searching.

Revenue Streams

EcoEval will generate revenue through subscription fees. This is elaborated in the pricing model.



Other revenue streams might be larger partnerships like chain corporations who get all their businesses on the site for a collective price. This generates more content for our site, gets more paying users and allows corporations to save money.

Key Resources

- Code base of the website itself.
- Data about companies ESG ratings and certificates gathered from users.
- User search and trends information.
- Technology powering the site - developer team for maintenance and improvement, servers, databases, software.
- Employees familiar with product and passionate about work area. This includes dev team, customer support and service, marketing team, sales and management.
- Partnerships with larger customers such as multi business corporations are key resources. Other partnerships will be EcoEval's corporations with sustainability organizations that can help the site reach larger audiences.

Key activities

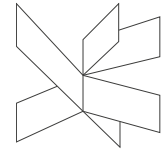
- Developing and maintain the website itself. The site will be continuously updated and improved to keep it user friendly and secure.
- Data collection - Both for the dictionary describing terminology but also data on what companies and specific certificates are actually interesting to consuming users.
- Content creation - keeping the dictionary page up to date and keep expanding it.
- Marketing of the site.
- Customer support
- Partnership management
- Financial management

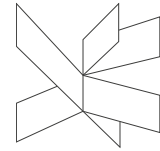
Key partnerships

- Subscribing businesses
- Sustainability organizations
- Tech providers - hosting service partner of database, website

Cost structure

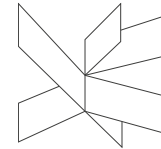
- Main initial cost will be platform development and maintenance - developing, hosting, maintaining, servers, domain name, other software's used...
- Marketing and user acquisition. This will be the second biggest initial and continual cost..
- Staff salary
- Operational costs of setting up office and running it.
- Accounting and financial management
- Legal advice for ensuring EcoEval is compliant with regulations etc.





7.9 Appendix 9 - EcoEval software requirements

1. Visitors to the website should be able to register as users.
 - a. Every user must have a unique email address.
2. When registered, users should have a username and password so they can log in.
 - a. Additionally, they can upload a profile photo.
3. Every user should be able to create a company.
 - a. Each company must have a unique CVR and ESG score.
4. Companies should have an email, website, description, image, and industry they are involved in.
5. Every user should be able to update and delete his profile and profile of a company he has created.
6. All companies should be listed in one place to make it easier for users to navigate and choose one.
7. When a user clicks on a company, a new page should open with presented information about the company and its green impact.
8. Paying users should have the ability to create a company.
9. Users should be able to search for a company using a search engine implemented on the website.
10. The website should be developed to be responsive based on the device used.
11. The UI should be intuitive and user-friendly, allowing users to easily navigate the website and find the information they need.
12. The UX should be smooth and seamless with minimal errors or glitches.
13. The website should have a page with definitions so users can better understand terms used by the companies.
14. Every company should have a comment section where reviews can be given by users.



7.10 Appendix 10 - Software Use Cases

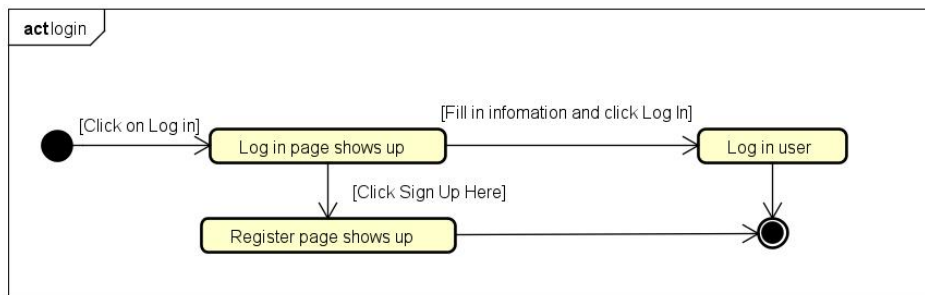


Figure 8 Activity diagram of login page

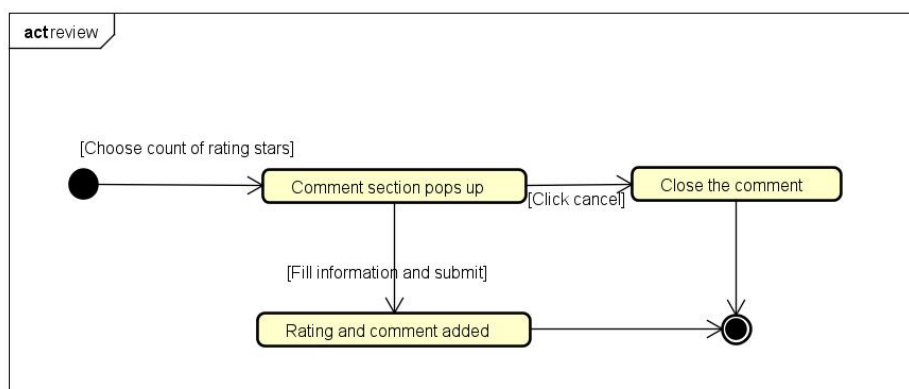


Figure 9 Activity diagram of review page

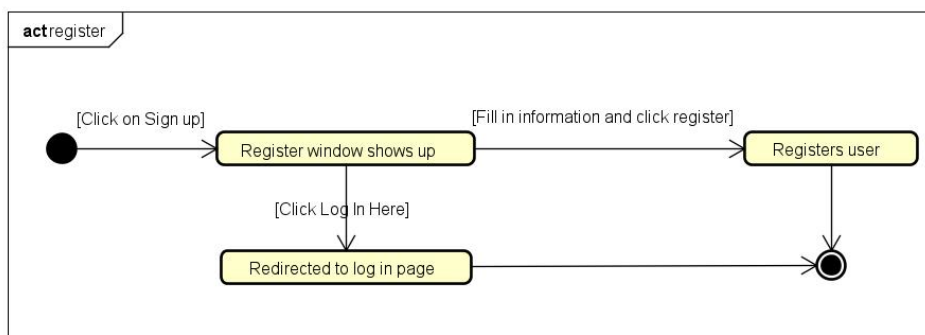
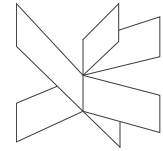
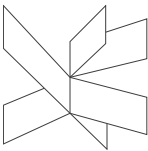


Figure 10 Activity diagram of register page



7.11 Appendix 11 - EcoEval – Video Presentation

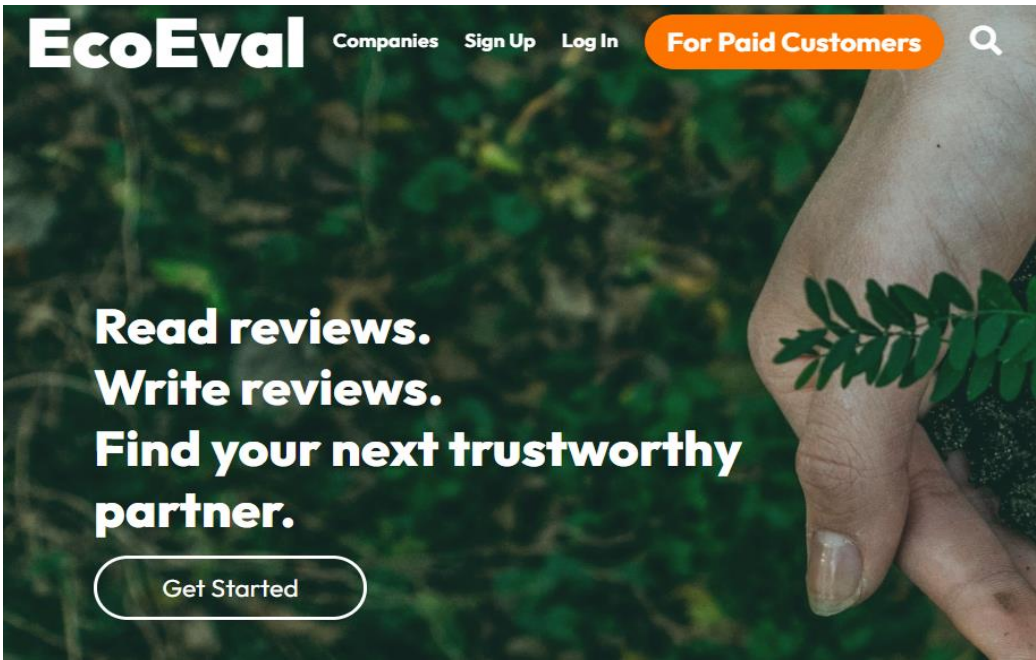
<https://youtu.be/48iKmqic9AE>



7.12 Appendix 11 - IDX Report

IDX Course Assignment

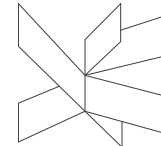
Conceptual design of EcoEval Website



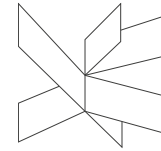
Written by
Rasmus Thorsøe - 316137
Cecilie Juhl - 316126
Martin Donchev - 316145
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1. Introduction

An idea for a web application was born from a recognition of sustainability challenges within the corporate landscape. The absence of a dedicated platform for evaluating the sustainability practices of companies and identifying potential B2B or B2C partners with a commitment to sustainability became apparent. Initial empirical research aimed to ascertain the existence of comparable platforms, revealing Trustpilot as the closest match to our concept.

To validate the viability of our idea, a series of surveys and interviews were conducted with both large and small enterprises. The inquiries probed into the preference for utilizing such a platform and its potential impact on enhancing business operations and revenue and helping businesses act more sustainably. The survey encompassed diverse aspects, including considerations for a premium application version with enhanced features and more detailed reports, as well as the willingness to share sensitive company information.

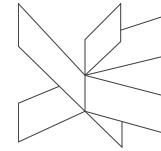
Upon gathering conclusive insights from these inquiries, the focus shifted to the design phase of the web application. The complexity arose from the transition from a static website to an interactive web app, necessitating a balance between aesthetics and functionality. Crafting a Lo-Fi version of the main pages facilitated a strategic integration into subsequent surveys, enabling active participant engagement to discern preferences and gather valuable user experience insights. This iterative methodology proved instrumental in refining design elements based on authentic user feedback, ensuring alignment with user expectations.

The progression through these stages prompted strategic decisions, necessitating periodic reviews of design and conceptual aspects. Flexibility emerged as a critical consideration, particularly in response to evolving user demands. The decision-making process and methodologies benefitted significantly from a feedback loop established through interview and iterative design sessions.

In summary, a dedicated commitment to understanding customer needs, responsive adaptation to input, and iterative refinement underscored the entire developmental journey, from conception to design. The dynamic nature of developing an interactive online application reinforced the importance of a meticulous and adaptable design process, affirming our commitment to a user-centric development approach.

2. Methodology

The main method used in the process of designing the website was the double diamond model (Double Diamond Forklaret). The four phases of Discovery, Defining, Developing and Delivering was iterated over several times. In the report the stages are referred to differently to reflect the actual process that was carried out in this example of the website prototype:



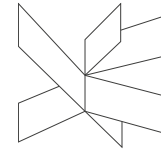
1. Idea generation phase
 - a. Discover
2. Design process
 - a. Define
3. Data gathering methods
 - a. Discover
4. Implementation and prototyping
 - a. Develop
5. Iterate back to step to include a feedback loop in the model.
 - a. Results from tests gave new perspectives to the first steps.
6. Deliver

Steps explained

1. In the **idea generation phase** empirical desk research was carried out to see whether similar products existed. In this process the core idea was narrowed down to specific requirements for the final product. Feasibility was not the most important factor at this stage broadening the options for testing and possibilities for functionalities was more important.
2. The **design phase** was carried out over multiple iterative processes.
 - a. The first process consisted of Lo-Fi prototyping(<https://www.in-visionapp.com/inside-design/low-fi-vs-hi-fi-prototyping/>) using paper and posters with possible designs. The focus point was not to make the prettiest product but to make sure the product would include the right functionalities for the test users. Different variations were created to see what layouts, functionalities and information's the users liked to have presented.
 - b. In the second iteration the results from the first line of interviews (data gathering) were summarized and the design was narrowed down. At this stage a more complicated design could be implemented using HTML and CSS. The result was one example of each of the main pages of the website. This did not include functionality and was strictly visual designs.
 - c. The third and final iteration of the design step summarized the key points from the TA tests. Respondents' points were grouped and prioritized based on Emotional design (Emotional Design) and Cognitive aspects (Interaction Design, Rogers, chapter 4)
3. The **data gathering process** was also carried out in multiple stages.



- a. The first iteration consisted of simple interviews and showing of the design sketches. The data in the first iteration was recorded by taking notes from the interview.
- b. In the second iteration of the data gathering step, a line of Think Aloud (TA) tests was performed on 5 subjects (Nielsen, 2012). The prototype they were presented was the result of the second iteration of the design phase. Each subject was explained the concept of the website as the prototype only consisted of a layout with limited functionality and made-up content.



3. Findings

3.1 FIRST ITERATION

As explained in methodology the process started by sketching 5 different webpages (see appendix 3) on paper to that could be shown to random individuals to get their comments and critique.

From these interviews user opinions and possible changes on the layout was acquired.

The most recurring comment was that the layout shouldn't be too creative. The critique was that even though it was different and could be used for other kinds of websites the design was too confusing when too many variables was implemented in it.

Furthermore, findings from the interview showed that people would rather have a design that was clear and made them feel safe than creative and fun when the purpose of the webpages was to be informal and trustworthy.

The interviews also showed that with the amount of data on the site it was important to make the layout easily understandable with a clear user scoring system that both showed user score in number and start for the best possible understanding.

From these findings a new web page layout was made with the findings from the interviews in mind which then could go to the next iteration.

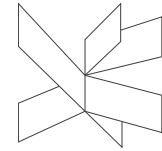
To see all the findings from first iteration see *Appendix 1*.

3.2 SECOND ITERATION

In the second iteration, the results from the initial phase were used to develop a more specific layout for the website. The final implementation of these improvements underwent testing through the Think Aloud Testing method (Nielsen, 2012). The following summarizes the findings from five Think Aloud Tests conducted with five different individuals.

The test results highlighted the importance of making adjustments to various layout elements, including spacing between boxes, color schemes, and sizes of logos and boxes. Users expressed a preference for additional informative details, such as displaying total reviews, including posting dates on comments, and incorporating sorting options for comments. Furthermore, there is a consensus on the need to reposition and modify buttons on the page to enhance overall usability. These findings emphasize the significance of fine-tuning design elements and introducing user-friendly features to improve the overall user experience on the website. For a more thorough overview of all findings from the Think Aloud Test please refer to *Appendix 2*.

These results provide valuable user insights that helps the team make severe improvements to the website. Conducting this test has allowed the team to uncover user perspectives that may have otherwise gone unnoticed. It encouraged the team to prioritize usability and enhance design features.



3.2 SECOND ITERATION

Besides implementing the findings from the Think Aloud Test from the second iteration, in the third iteration Emotional Design is also implemented to connect with users on a deeper level (Emotional Design: Why It's Important and How to Master, 2023). In this approach, emotional design is essential in creating a user experience that speaks to the user's inner feelings, aligns with self-image, and optimizes performance to the fullest.

Visceral considerations:

This level speaks to the users' first impression of the website. Here are some design choices that was implemented based on the visceral level in order to appeal to the users first impression of the website:

Visual Appeal

- Content has been divided into boxes to show structure of content
- The website has a pleasing and harmonized color scheme
 - o Lighter color scheme should suggest openness, transparency and trust
- Colors on website are calming and earthy such as greens, and browns, to evoke a sense of nature and sustainability
- The contrast color “orange” enhances the visibility of the button, drawing attention to it.
- Incorporating natural elements as leaves in graphics to capture attention

Layout and Structure

- Clean and organized layout for easy navigation, avoiding excessive text upon first glance
- Key elements, such as headers and menus, have been placed in standard and intuitive locations for user familiarity
- The clean and uncluttered layout suggests that it is easy to use

Motion and Animation

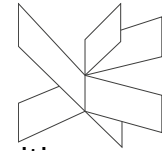
- Subtle animations to enhance user engagement
 - o Highlight or underline text when mouse hovers over it
 - o Header fades when in top of page

Behavioral considerations:

This level looks at how well the design of the website helps them achieve their goals and how easy it is for them to do so. Here are some design choices that have been implemented based on the behavioral level.

Clear Navigation

- User-friendly structure for easy access to information on the webpage
- Clear labels and headings to guide user



- All tabs have been simplified to improve user effort and reduce cognitive load

Clear Information Hierarchy

- Clear and logical information hierarchy that is used to guide users through the content
- Content structured to only display important information for more effective information search/gathering
 - o Important information is displayed first and read more buttons and expanding images are used for more information

Personalized User Profiles

- Enable users to create personalized profiles to display their sustainability actions
- Provide recommendations based on users' sustainability activities

Reflective considerations:

At this level, the website's design aims to resonate emotionally with users, fostering a connection to their values and aspirations. Through the integration of reflective design choices, the aim is to provide a meaningful engagement that aligns with users' core values and aspirations.

Compelling images

- Use of high-quality, nature images to resonate with the values of sustainability
- Images of renewable energy sources, and nature to evoke positive emotions towards the website

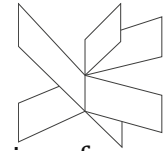
Interactive Features

- Interactive elements that allow users to engage with the content emotionally have been added through posting reviews and delegating stars
- Users can share their own stories and experiences, fostering a sense of community and improve self-image by promoting sustainability actions

(Emotional Design: Why It's Important and How to Master, 2023)

4. Discussion

This project was adapted to use the double diamond model, which offered an organized and iterative framework for the design process. Feedback from Idea generation and Design phases shows that this approach helped create a user-oriented design.



The initial interview feedback (Appendix 1) played a crucial role in the design of the website. It showed that the main issue was to make the page more straightforward and make a good emphasis on the ESG rating because that is the first thing a user would look at furthermore the design should be clear so that it wouldn't look cluttered even if there was a lot of certificates on the screen at the same time. Furthermore, the interviews showed a large focus on the user ratings which meant that decision on how the user rating should be shown had to be done. This ended up with showing the rating both with stars for visual information and with number to show the rating more precise with decimal numbers

The findings from the interviews where good but another time it could have been done better. For example, the 5-page layout was made without any actual information in any of the different information fields, so the interviewed persons had to imagine it themselves which wasn't optimal when we want their opinions of the layouts because they didn't get to see the whole picture.

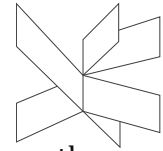
During the data gathering phase, two forms of feedback was collected. One using Think Aloud (TA) tests (Appendix 2) and one with straightforward interviews (Appendix 1). The prototype received insightful feedback from the TA tests, which proved to be essential for improving the design. The feedback, for example, showed that it was important to position the main content in the center of the page or on the left side of the page, which was the carried through to the designs. Other important feedbacks from the TA's was that there was a need for a clearer link back to the homepage and a consistent colour scheme across different pages. The feedback also provided a more conceptual consideration. It was important to make it clear that the scores in the top are user-generated scores rather than an official one.

The overall expected outcome of the design decisions was made to improve usability. This is seen in the decision to place important content tends to be seen more often led to the placement of this content on the left or in the middle of the page was based on the understanding that these areas typically receive more attention. This indicates some familiarity, reducing the cognitive effort required to navigate the website.

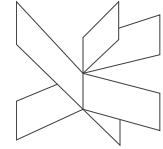
In addition to conducting user tests and interviews, principles of Emotional Design was also thought into the design choices. The decisions about emotional design were guided by an emphasis on enforcing a meaningful connection with the user. Considerations on these emotional design choices aimed to contribute to the creation of a lasting and positive impression of the website.

Still, the study was not without flaws. A small sample of users provided the feedback, so it might not accurately reflect the user base as a whole. Furthermore, the tests were done on individuals with the same demographics, somewhat skilled IT users in their twenty's. In the future a more varied test group would be preferred to avoid biased results thus still considering who the end user will be.

Project Description – Group 8



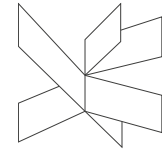
All in all, the product is still a prototype for further implementation. However, the processes described above all ensure that the design and wireframe is centred around user experience rather than a developers gut feeling. The prototype is in its final design stage a great foundation for actually implementing the final website and concept.



5. Conclusion

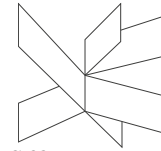
Since the project is only a prototype, only one page has been fully developed. After using the data gathered from several interviews and TA tests the web page that was designed has reach a satisfactory point. From here on the next step would be to do over the process again with other pages of the website so that the design would be visually coherent on all of the webpages making the user experience of our website coherent.

If the project was to be continued a User Test would also be a good idea to do. A User Test could be conducted when introducing more functionality and pages to the website to avoid the mistake of designing the sites with assumptions that users have the same needs and preferences. Also, this would require that the site was also populated with actual content on many different companies.

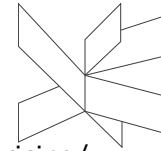


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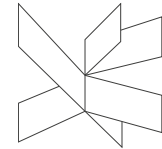
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Appendices'

LIST OF APPENDICES

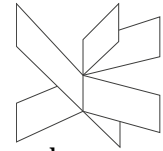
Appendix 1 – Results from interviews based on prototype drawings

This appendix contains a list of all the feedback points received from interviewing VIA students and teachers. The product that was showed them was prototype drawings of the website in different formats seen in later appendices. All subjects was given an explanation of the concept of the website before commenting on the design.

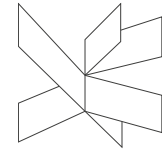
The page presenting a specific company should:

- Not be to experimental or 'fancy'. It is more distracting than useful. Bubbles for content is pretty and eye catching but not good for focusing on content.
- Be structured nicely
- Fields should not be presented in rigid boxes – they should be styled to be eye pleasing and blending in more nicely.
- It should be kept simple.
- Ratings should be presented visually and not numerically. The users were drawn more towards the leaf representation of a score than a star and not at all to a number.
- The name and company of the logo should not be what first pops into the users eyes. The user will know what company page they entered. A big name tag and logo will remove focus from the content the user is trying to see.
- More immediate focus on the ESG ratings and certificate/descriptions. This is what the user is trying to find in the first place.
- People like having information quickly available – not full paragraphs but summarized facts.
- Stars for visualizing scores were more trustworthy than leaves. Stars on the other hand were much associated with Trustpilot.
- Leaves represent sustainability – people thought it worked well with the idea.
- Logo and score centered – looks better
- A grid layout looks more trustworthy than experimental and unorganized layout.
- The splitting up of boxes in the layout are more messy for the eyes to look at.

Project Description – Group 8



- The grouping option on number 4 makes sense since the information that belongs together are presented together.
- Number 5 had too much information for being the first page you enter – but would be a nice addition that you could click on.



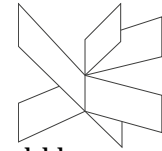
Appendix 2 – Results from Think Aloud tests based on a prototype implementation.

Individual 1

- When we're designing the website, keep in mind that the left side usually gets more attention than the right. So, it's a good call to place your important content on the left or in the middle of the page.
- When users see EcoEval, it's not immediately clear that it serves as a link to the home page.
- The company link in the nav bar is not useful in the company page.
- The background color on the company page is too bright and lacks contrast with the navigation bar initially; it only darkens when you scroll.
- We need to consider the name of premium and free options. Do they remain as they are?
- Several buttons appear non-functional. We should review and remove them if necessary. Despite this, the animations are smooth.
- The footer currently contains too many options, making it challenging to fill with relevant information. Some options overlap, so we need to decide which ones to keep.
- On the Amazon page, the line separating the name and description of the company behaves oddly. It should be made static, remaining in place regardless of the text content.
- It's a good idea to include definitions for various abbreviations.
- Otherwise, the company page is tidy and clean, except for the color. The positioning of the content is good.

Individual 2

- Understanding how to navigate is straightforward— you can choose a company from the front page and be directed to that company's sustainability profile
- Likes the stars that indicates that you can give a review/make comments. it's appreciated that the rating system is functional, although the comment section did not appear as expected. The user does not know where to comment
- Nice that the read more button works so that it is possible to expand the comments if you want to read more
- It would enhance user experience if clicking on a company's name directed you to that specific company that made the comment



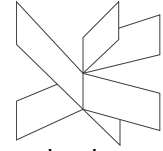
- Improving the readability by allowing the expansion of pictures would be a welcome feature.

Individual 3

- Logo and navigation bar is clear on the home page
- Search feature is appreciated, but there's uncertainty about what criteria to use for searching
- First section features useful options to read and write reviews and find a possible partner
- Liked the display of various metrics like logo, domain, reviews, and number of reviews
- Suggestion to include the number of people who provided scores for better context
- Positive comments about the company description, certificate, and the option to read more about certificates
 - Also, on the design of the comments section, especially the ability to read more or less.
- Questioned the current placement of the subscription option, suggesting it might be more appropriate elsewhere
- There was a little bit confusion whether the comments are from customers or other companies
- Suggested that it would be nice to have a sorting option for comments, like for example whether they are the latest, best-rated, etc.
 - Including a posting date of the comments
- Positive remarks about the presence of social media links to check the company's mission, vision, and values alignment.

Individual 4

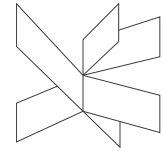
- Good structure of the website
- On the front page the **FOR PAYING USERS** button is confusing. What extra content is there? Should a user click there or on the log in button to access it? Also it is orange so seems way more important than it is...
- On the **Company page** it seems like there is too much space around everything. Leave empty spaces on the left and right of the page or fill it out. I looks like it isnt done like this.
- The color scheme should match between pages
- Beige and blue are not good color choices for the company page – stick with the ones from the front page
- Certificate Logo is way too big. It seems like you want the user to look at that rather than the text – which is what I came here to read....



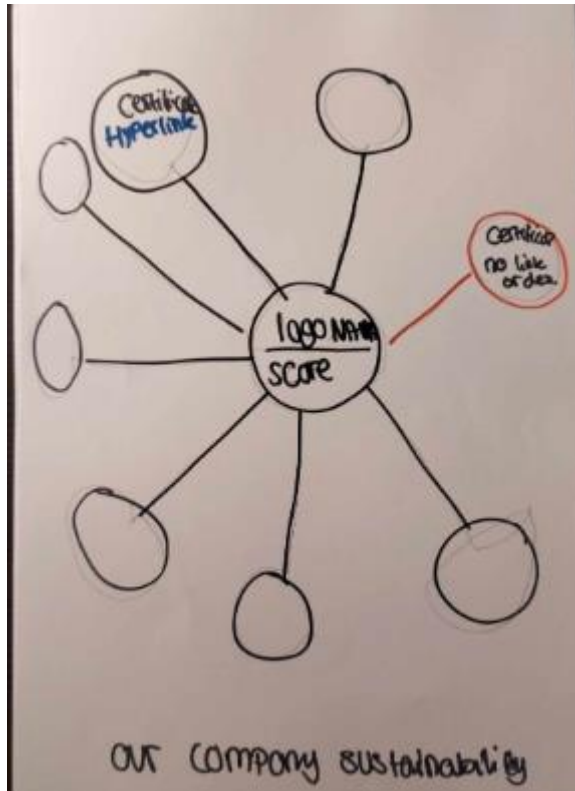
- IMPORTANT – clarify that the score is a USER score and not any important official score. I read it as an overall summary score but found out it is just like likes on facebook... which is not so trustworthy.

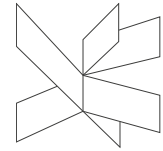
Individual 5

- Nice Home page
- Comment section should mention that people should comment on environmental and sustainability themes
- There should be a title saying “Certificates” above the certificates
- Colour scheme should be changed to match the home page
- Explain what ESG is so that everybody understands the score system

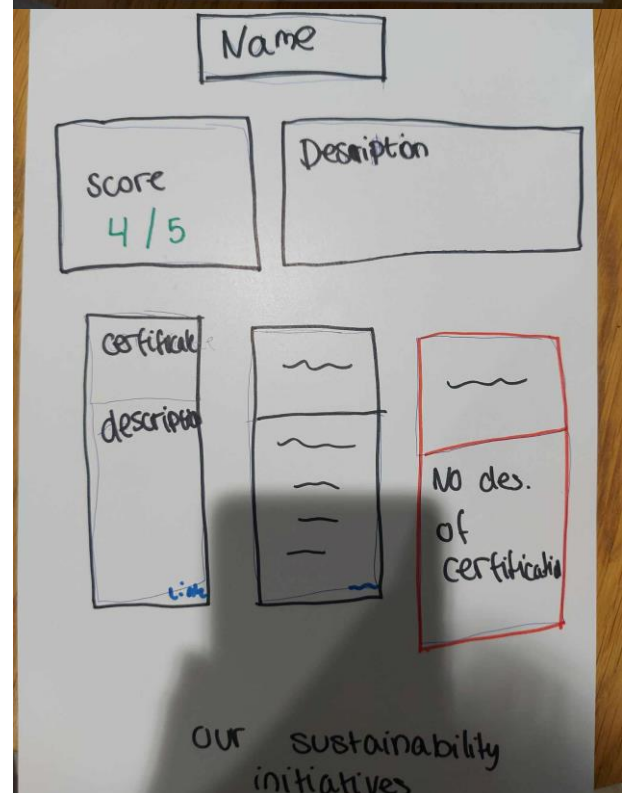
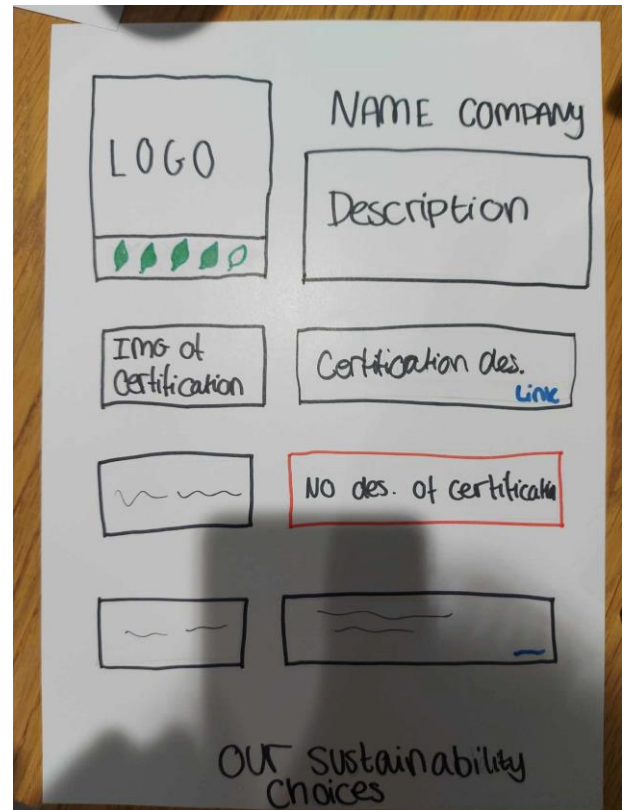
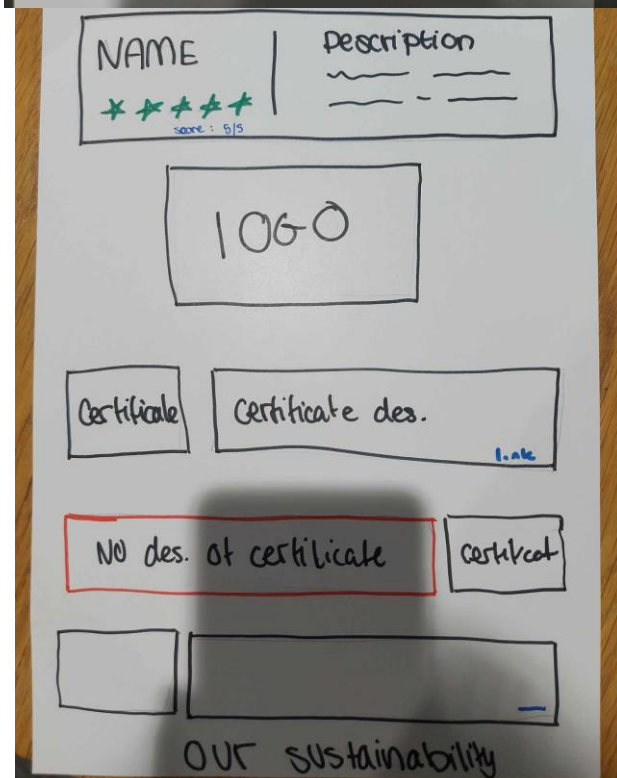
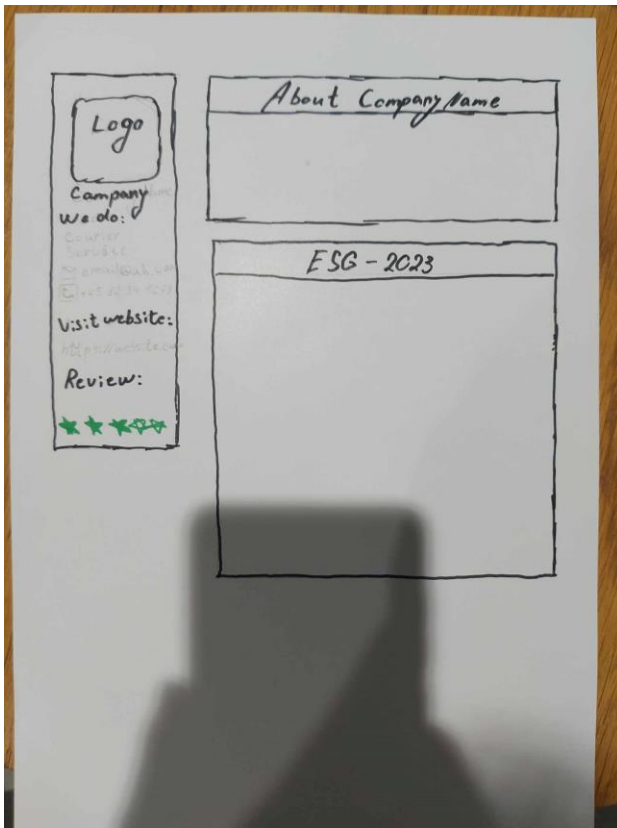


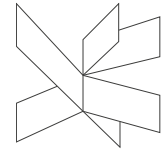
Appendix 3 – First line of prototype designs





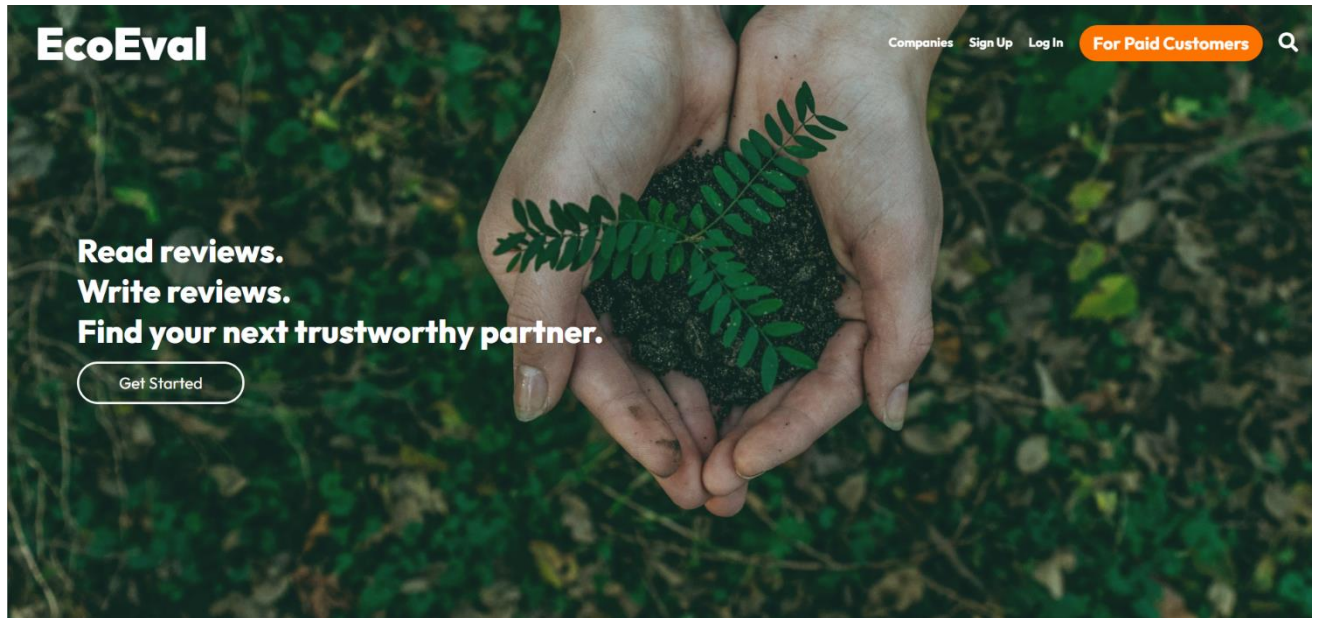
Appendix 4 – The second iteration of the pro-



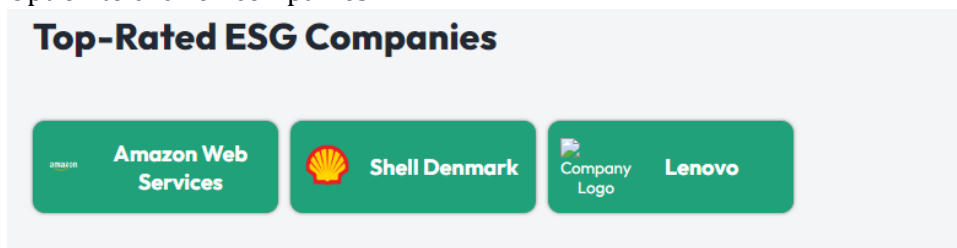


totype HTML,CSS,JS implementation

Homepage/landing page for the customer

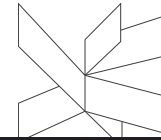


Option to click on companies



Specific company page

Project Description – Group 8



EcoEval

[Companies](#)[Sign Up](#)[Log In](#)[For Paid Customers](#)

Amazon Web Services

Reviews: 231 • Score: 4.8/5



Who are we

Amazon.com, Inc. is an American multinational technology company focusing on e-commerce, cloud computing, online advertising, digital streaming, and artificial intelligence.



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Give Us A Rating



Reviews



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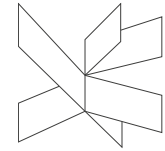


3 days ago

Tried to charge an electric vehicle...

Tried to charge an electric vehicle using shell recharge I was charged £45 and

[Read More](#) ▼



7.13 Appendix 13 – Project Description

Semester Project 5

“Selection process of non-greenwashing business partners”



Students

Cecilie Juhl – 316126, Sigurd Kristensen – 303530, Martin Donchev – 316145, Rasmus Thorsøe Jensen – 316137, Dimitar Terziev – 316133

Supervisors

Kresten Tang Andersen (KTAN) & Asbjørn Thalund Binderup (ASBI)

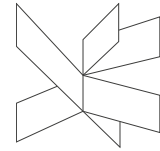
Global Business Engineering

5th Semester

14.09.2023

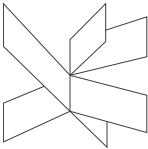
Number of characters: 12935

Table of content



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3 Problem Statement	1
4 Delimitation.....	3
5 Choice of models and methods	4
6 Time schedule.....	5
7 Risk assessment.....	6
8 Bibliography.....	8

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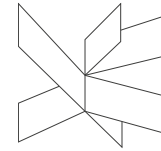


List of figures and tables

[OBJ]

Table 1 Models and Methods 4

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Background description

Being environmentally conscious has become a big trend over the past few years. More and more companies are transitioning into a greener way of doing business. There are as many different approaches to a green transition as there are companies trying to accomplish it. However, the incentives for transitioning have many commonalities. Reasons for going green might include brand imaging, reduction in operational costs or just a good morale wanting to make the world a better place (Crew, 2022). Knowing how businesses operate the economic incentives often comes first in line here. There are several well-known incentives such as Carbon emission Fees and taxes, reduction in electricity consumption. Newer trends and incentives to go green include a change in customer behavior. Increasing amounts of customers are looking for green choices when looking at companies sourcing and production choices. Furthermore, companies are rated based on their CSR (corporate social responsibility) profiles (Panday, 2023). Included in this are companies' green profiles which can also be measured on their ESG score (Hayes, 2023). This is directly linked to a company's incentive for investors and fund raising.

In this way a company's green profile can affect its business partners. This creates a problem when companies are disingenuous in their profiling of themselves. The issue is well described by the term greenwashing. Meaning companies make themselves appear more environmentally friendly than they are in reality.

Over the years several tools have been created for customers to help examine if a company is legit like. One example is Trustpilot where customers review their experience of dealing with specific companies. While service and product quality currently are easy for customers and partners to evaluate greenwashing is hard to spot. It often requires a bit of research whereafter a customer might not have a definite answer to whether a company is greenwashing.

This research will often be made on the internet where reports and ESG certificates can be found from the different companies. But it takes time to do research. If instead there was a software solution customers could have an easier time looking up sustainability reports and ESG ratings and find the company that best suits their needs. Often times this might lead to customers giving up and neglecting the process.

Definition of purpose

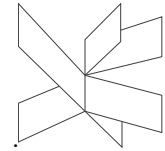
The purpose of this project is present a low-fidelity design of a system capable of giving companies and customers a higher level of transparency into companies' green profiles. The attractiveness/market potential will be evaluated through field research among potential customers and general needs/trends.

Problem Statement

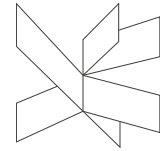
The aim of this project is to develop innovative sustainable solution, supplemented by business plan, based on a detailed field research. Problem statement focuses on the following questions:

1. How can an innovative solution / service be effectively channelled toward the creation of sustainable products or services that balance environmental, economic, and societal reflections?

Project Description – Group 8

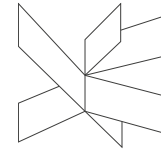


2. What challenges to be considered while maintaining innovation in various design disciplines?
3. How do continuously growing customer expectations and pressure from competitors impact the sustainable innovation in the market?
4. What methods and models can be used to conduct in depth market research and develop prototypes that effectively communicate sustainable product or service ideas to potential investors?



Delimitation

- This project will focus on developing a sustainable software solution, specifically the B2B and C2B sectors.
- This project will focus on creating a business plan including a budget. However, the business plan would not include any corporate information.
- The technical development will make use of open-source software and standard programming languages.
- Data for market research and analysis will be sourced from publicly available reports, industry publications, and online databases. Proprietary data sources will not be accessed.
- The project will primarily analyze the top three competitors in the sustainable technology market, with a brief overview of other key players. The market research and product/service deployment will not be limited to Denmark.
- The project will prioritize the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials and emphasize energy-efficient manufacturing processes.
- The project will target a development of a software solution which will be limited to the technologies learned in the IDX1, DAT1, WEB1, ERP1 and CAO1 courses from the current and last semester.

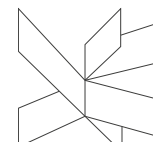


Choice of models and methods

Table 3 Models and Methods

Partial problem:	Purpose:	Expected outcome:	Which methods, models and theories will be used?
How to get the relevant information?	To be able to showcase the relevant data to the end-users.	Relevant data in tabular format.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk research • Secondary data analysis • Data and knowledge sharing with partner group
How to choose what product/service to design?	To figure out what design is actually needed on the market.	Determined our final product/service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field research • Market research
How to design a database to store data about solar panels' specifications, measurements, and production capacity?	To have a logical and easy to understand database design for the efficiency of storing and retrieving data.	Well-designed, relational database with meaningful relationships and populated with initial data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SQL • PostgreSQL • DDL
What is the best way to develop an interactive Graphical User Interface software application?	To have a GUI for users to interact with.	User-friendly, interactive software for showcasing data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HTML • JavaScript • CSS
How to integrate a database with the software to showcase data in a user-friendly manner?	To have the front-end integrated with the database and be able to retrieve data through the app.	An interactive software integrated with the database.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Node.js
What strategic components of a business plan can be implemented in a plan introduced to potential customers/investors?	To show: a roadmap for the business, risk management, market analysis, target market, company summary.	Get an overall plan that defines and clarifies the strategy and direction of the final service/product.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Description • Competitive Analysis • Target Market • Marketing Plan

Project Description – Group 8



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Statement
What are the risks associated with different designs?	To define and understand risks associated with different scenarios.	Better understanding of risks and input for the final decision of the solar panel system choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Assessment

Time schedule

Time Schedule

Team 8

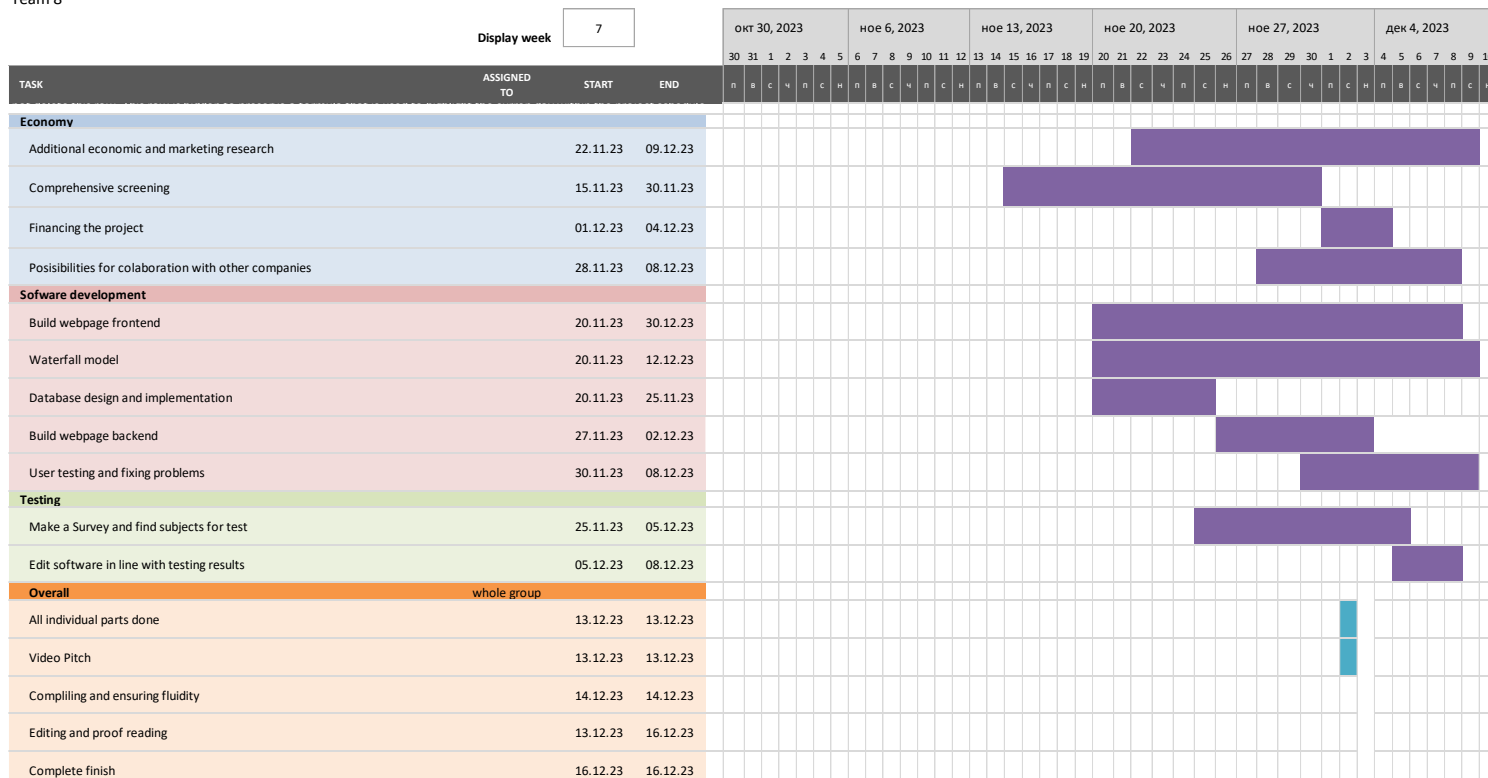
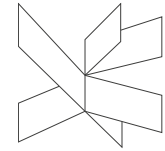


Figure 11 GANTT Chart

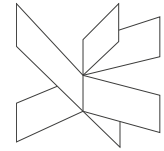


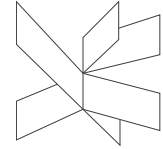
Risk assessment

Table 4 Risk Assessment

Risk	Description	Likelihood Scale: 1-5	Severity Scale: 1-5	Product of likelihood and severity	Risk mitigation	Identifiers	Responsible
Risk 1	Lack of time before hand-in	1	3	3	Stretch the meetings and put in more hours of work; work on weekends if required	Making excuses, not taking responsibility	All Group Members
Risk 2	Poor project presentation and lack of preparation	1	3	3	Prepare and practice for presentations ahead of time. Go through the material as a team and help each other out	Lack of confidence when presenting	All Group Members
Risk 3	Project purpose is not well defined	1	4	2	Revise project materials and ideas as a group before presentations and working on the project	Lack of communication within the team	All Group Members
Risk 4	Adding unnecessary features	1	2	2	A good understanding of the requirements	Not reading through the materials in detail	All Group Members
Risk 5	Lack of communication	1	4	4	Setting physical or online meetings where all group members can attend	Conflicts and confusion on some or most parts of the project	All Group Members

Project Description – Group 8





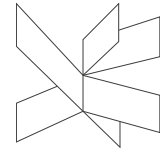
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[OBJ]



Appendices

Group Contract

Group Name: Group 8

Date: 08/09/2023

These are the terms of group conduct and cooperation that we agree on as a team.

These are the following terms that were agreed upon:

Section 1: Participation

Be on time for the meeting that we all agree to. It is okay to not be on time if a person has a good reason or has given a heads-up a few days before. Should the person be late, the rest of the group should always be given notice.

Be open about our abilities and limitations regarding the tasks we take on and be open about the progress made on these tasks.

Share information regularly and listen attentively when others do this.

Participate in all group discussions seriously

Use the time efficiently when we do meet to not waste other members' time.

Section 2: Communication

Effective communication:

Utilize Messenger as our primary communication platform. All crucial information will be disseminated through this channel to ensure that individuals unable to attend meetings can access future meeting plans and updates.

Document Management:

Employ OneDrive for the storage of all documents and notes.

Organized Filing:

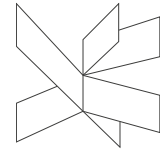
Maintain the organization and tidiness of OneDrive folders. This entails saving documents in the appropriate folders and avoiding the creation of duplicate files.

Timely Responses:

Promptly respond to inquiries or, at the very least, acknowledge receipt of messages and questions to ensure effective communication.

Section 3: Meetings

Strive for a balance between remote work and in-person meetings.



We collectively agree that occasional remote work enhances efficiency.

Commit to weekly in-person meetings during the end-of-semester writing period.

Maintain flexibility regarding meeting locations, arranging them as necessary.

Section 4: Conduct

Inclusive Collaboration:

Strive to involve everyone in all tasks to ensure everyone benefits from the entire project.

Leveraging Diverse Competencies:

Acknowledge our varying competencies and commit to supporting and tutoring each other rather than taking over.

Maintaining Respectful Communication:

Agree to maintain a respectful tone in all interactions.

Addressing Social Frustrations Constructively:

Commit to honesty regarding social frustrations that may impact our work, with a focus on preventing conflict escalation.

Section 5: Conflict

Balanced Workload and Relations:

Strive to minimize conflicts by ensuring all members are content with their workload, level of influence, and personal relationships within the group.

Constructive Criticism Etiquette:

Maintain a rule against making personal remarks during constructive criticism.

In the rare event of such an occurrence, promptly convene a meeting focused on problem-solving.

In case of such situations, prioritize resolving the issue as the primary concern for all group members.

Recognize that personal disputes can significantly hinder team collaboration, affect the overall project quality, and diminish the motivation of other group members.

Section 6: Deadlines

Practical Deadlines Over Optimistic Ones:

Establish deadlines that are realistic, avoiding overly optimistic timelines.

Proactive Deadline Adjustments:

Project Description – Group 8



Foster openness in the group by proactively adjusting deadlines before they are missed, instead of allowing them to be broken.

Transparent Deadline Sharing:

Record all deadlines in the group chat for easy reference by everyone.

This approach minimizes excuses and serves as a helpful reminder to all team members.

Signature of understanding of agreement

Group member's name	Student number	Signature
Martin Donchev	316145	Martin Donchev
Cecilie Juhl	316126	Cecilie Juhl
Sigurd Horsholt Kristensen	303530	Sigurd Horsholt
Rasmus	316137	Rasmus Thorsøe Jensen
Dimitar Terziev	316133	Dimitar Terziev