



**Wuppertal Institute**  
for Climate, Environment  
and Energy



## **Module B1**

### **»Sustainable Development«**

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[www.eurocrafts21.eu](http://www.eurocrafts21.eu)

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## 1. Module description

The worldwide occurrence of catastrophes caused by floods, draughts and severe storms recently directed public attention to the scientifically proven connection between climate changes and human-caused influences, such as the sharp rise in the consumption of raw material and energy. For this reason, initiatives were launched on different levels, e.g. politics, science and associations in order to counteract current developments and to introduce future-compliant courses of action. Responsible and innovative economists have recognised sustainability as an important business principle, which increases long-term competitiveness whilst opening considerable opportunities for innovation.

The entire economy is in a state of constantly accelerating change. The crafts sector too is affected more and more by technological and social developments, progressing globalisation as well as changes in demand. Craftsmen and –women who wish to market their products successfully will need to adapt their marketing activities and ways of thinking to these developments. As a result, there will be major challenges ahead for entrepreneurs and management. The market requires careful monitoring and changes call for timely recognition so that businesses can be adapted accordingly or restructured if necessary. Furthermore, craftsmen and –women will need to open up new markets and to approach their clientele actively. The detection and development of niches, innovative ideas and business concepts may be deciding for success and economic survival. This is where the concept of "sustainability" may play an important part since hardly any other branch of industry embodies the principle of sustainability as much as the crafts sector does.

Enterprises within the crafts sector need successful strategies for the future; strategies that are adapted to future challenges in order to secure economic competitiveness and preserve jobs. In other words, they require a strategy that should eventually optimise labour and performance within crafts enterprises integrally under economic, social and ecological aspects. Orientation on the concept of »Sustainable Development« may be a basis for such a strategy.

This module covers "Sustainable Development" and deals with the question of what sustainable development actually stands for before moving on to describing the process of sustainability and to naming the challenges facing the economy. The two closing components discuss internal and external processes relating to future-compliant activities in the crafts sector.

Appropriately the "Sustainable Development" module consists of the following five parts:

- Component A: What is sustainable development?
- Component B: The sustainability process
- Component C: Sustainable development – challenges for business
- Component D: Future-compliant activities in the crafts sector – internal processes
- Component E: Future-compliant activities in the crafts sector – external processes

## 2. Component A: What is sustainable development?

*Relevant keywords: sustainable development, future-compliance, "Brundtland Report", the four earths*

### In this component you learn about

- What is behind the idea of sustainable development?
- The three pillars of sustainability
- The relevance sustainability has for future generations

### 2.1. The planet's limitations

For years, highly developed countries have been behaving as though they had three further "earths" in reserve at their disposal (figure 1). Inhabitants' different life styles account for an extremely uneven spread of the consumption of natural resources → [B1-A1 - Sustainable development \(Power Point Presentation\)](#).



**Figure 1: ... as if we had four earths (Source: Wuppertal Institute)**

Even today, our planet's ecological limits are exceeded by far in many regions, while in other regions, mainly in development countries, the exploitation of natural re-serves is markedly lower than in industrialised states. If the entire world population were to reach the level of prosperity of the highly developed countries, the ecosystem "Earth" would undoubtedly collapse. Only if our stewardship of available natural resources is economical in a global sense, and if we utilise its resources in a considerably more efficient way, can we continue to live comfortably on our planet in future → [B1-A2 - The ecological footprint](#).

### 2.2. The concept "Sustainable Development"

→ [B1-A3 - Sustainability – What is it? Opinions from the general public](#)



The concept of "sustainable" or "future-compliant" development has been on the agenda of international and national environment-, economic- and social politics since the beginning of the 1990s. An important milestone for today's understanding of sustainability was set by the »World Commission on Environment and Development«, that specified sustainable development under the chairmanship of minister president Gro Harlem Brundtland in 1987 as follows:

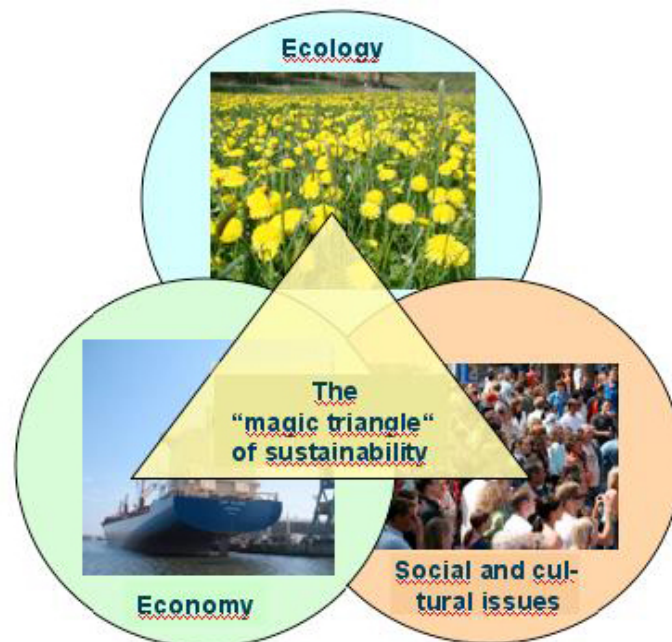
*"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without risking that future generations are unable to satisfy their needs." [World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987]*

Thus, the concept aims at allowing all people to live in a way that enables them to satisfy their needs:

- now (fairness between North and South) and
- in future (fairness for future generations).

→ B1-A4 - What do we give to the next generation?

The concept of sustainable development connects three components: an economical, an ecological and a social component (see figure 2).



**Figure 2: The Magic Triangle (Source: Wuppertal Institute; Photos: Pixelio)**

→ B1-A5 - Cross-linking of processes – the magic triangle

Primary objectives are the protection of the ecosphere, a stable economic development and the just distribution of prosperity. The implementation and enabling of sustain-able, future-compliant development comprises practically all areas of social life and thus demands an intense dialogue and negotiation process between all social players.

### 3. Component B: The sustainability process

*Relevant keywords: UN Conference on environment and development, Agenda 21*

#### **In this component you learn about**

- The process of sustainability in Europe
- The Agenda 21

*The future is the time at which you will regret that you did not do what you can do today (Léon Tolstói).*

#### → B1-B1 - The Boomerang – for a sustainable fairness

In June 1992 representatives of 179 countries met at the UN conference on environment and development in Rio de Janeiro. It was the first time in history that so many states joined together to discuss the problems of "System Earth" and to push forward a joint plan of measures.

An important result of the earth summit was the "Agenda 21" – a schedule for a positive ride into the 21st century. The "Agenda 21's" leading idea "think global – act local" makes it clear that sustainable development can only be achieved through a worldwide action plan. Consequently, it lies in the responsibility of the individual states to implement the "Agenda 21" contents and objectives in the form of a strategy adapted to national circumstances and requirements. With their signatures, 179 states confirmed their will to implement the concept nationally in all political areas and to do so by including the public as well as industry and commerce. → B1-B3 - Milestone Agenda 21.

The European commitment in sustainable development started officially in 1997, when it was set as an overarching objective of EU policies in the Treaty of Amsterdam (came into effect in 1999). The first EU sustainable development strategy was launched at the Gothenburg Summit in June 2001. It focused on issues as climate change, poverty, and emerging health risks and how to meet these threats to our life. As a helpful result from this strategy, an Impact Assessment has to be carried out for each major policy proposal.

Despite the important step in 2001, the unsustainable development continues in many parts of Europe. The gap between rich and poor enlarged, the climate change and the ageing of societies still persist. The strategy needed a revision as it was not effective enough and had to be focused stronger and with clearer divisions of responsibilities. In renewed strategy was adopted by the European Council in June 2006.

The strategy sets overall objectives and concrete actions for seven key priority challenges for 2010:

- Climate change and clean energy
- Sustainable transport
- Sustainable consumption and production
- Conservation and management of natural resources
- Public Health
- Social inclusion, demography and migration
- Global poverty and sustainable development challenges

#### → B1-B4 - Perspectives for Europe

Apart from the political actions in Europe there are a lot of national initiatives, activities and NGOs that stand up for a sustainable development.

As in many other European countries, activities were introduced on a national level in Germany (i.e. National Sustainability Strategy, Sustainability Council, Commission of Enquiry »Globalisation of the World Economy – Challenges and Answers«, Commission of Enquiry »Sustainable energy supply under conditions set by globalisation and liberalisation«), on a federal state level (i.e. Zukunftsrat Nordrhein-Westfalen) and on a community level (see table 1).

1992	AGENDA 21
1999	Commission of Enquiry »Globalisation of the World Economy« implemented
2000	Commission of Enquiry »Sustainable Energy Supply« implemented
2001	BMBF-Development Initiative INA (Operational Instruments for Sustainability Management)
2001	EU-Summit in Gothenburg - EU Sustainability Strategy
2001	Founding of the Council for Sustainable Development
2002	UN World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg
2002	National Strategy for Sustainable Development (»Perspectives for Germany«)
2004	BMBF-Programme for Sustainable Development
2005	"Wegweiser Nachhaltigkeit - Bilanz und Perspektiven" (Federal Government)
2006	Sustainable Development in Germany - Indicator Report
2006	New EU Sustainability Strategy

**Table 1: Example - milestones of sustainable development in Germany (Source: Wuppertal Institute)**

#### → B1-B2 – Sustainable consumption and production

## 4. Component C: Sustainable Development – Challenges for the Economy

*Relevant keywords: Sustainability management, corporate social responsibility (CSR), economy's ecological and social responsibility, resource efficiency, increase of efficiency*

### In this component you learn about

- economy-related challenges held by the concept of sustainability development and
- areas of sustainability already existent and/or already implemented by the economy.

### 4.1. Sustainable Development in Business

Sustainability is an internationally recognised ideal and has long been established as an important strategy in successful enterprises. Numerous companies in Europe have accepted the challenge and many have meanwhile established themselves in top positions in sustainability ratings and rankings dealing with sustainability issues.

Sustainability management stands for a company culture that soundly balances economic success, environmental impact as well as the relationship the business will have with its social environment in the long-term. Operational environment- and social policy are not seen as an end in itself but much rather as a way to promote the company's success. Thus, innovatively managed enterprises employ environment management systems as a means to increase efficiency. There is also a growing consciousness of social and ecological responsibility in consumer and financial markets that motivate companies to further engage themselves in sustainability. In some industries, the credible proof of responsible social- and environmental economic conduct has already become a prerequisite for access to international supply chains → B1-C1 – Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

### 4.2. Keyword Resource Productivity

If in the past the topic of ecology mainly covered issues related to environment- and nature preservation maintenance, the increase of resource productivity can also be described as a process of “contribution service”.

Products produced in more sustainable scenarios, can for example be replaced by services and/or be supplemented by services of higher value. Such products would have a correspondingly higher benefit and would be planned to enable a longer or more intense use from the start. Given this background it is logical to develop scenarios from the results of structural changes for and with people working in the crafts sector and consequently to develop services and products that may each form part of the solution for a problem together with innovative companies. It goes without saying that when creating such developments the

client, including his needs and habits, should be considered right from beginning to the end: from product concepts to service design → B1-C2 – Resource Efficiency.

#### 4.3. Example “Eco-efficiency-Check Crafts” (for businesses in the crafts sector with less than 250 employees)

This instrument, which is specially orientated towards the requirements of businesses in the crafts sector, illustrates the advantages of resource-efficient management (e.g. cost reduction, increase of competitiveness, environmental relief) and points out how these can be utilised.

##### **Example: Vogelsberg Innenausbau GmbH**

This company with its team of 30 employees in Mechernich, Germany, manufactures individual furniture and interior fixtures. The question was how to reduce VOC emissions and the use of lacquer without a reduction in quality. By automating clear varnish surface applications, solvent-free lacquers can be used in future. Simultaneously the time needed for the varnishing process was reduced by up to 90%. (see <http://www.efanrw.de>)

→ B1-C4-Sustainability in the crafts sector – sustainable product cycle.

#### 4.4. Sustainable Development in the Crafts Sector

*“For craftsmen and –women, the preservation of the environment and sustainability management is no academic stage on which to view with one another for political demands. For the crafts sector it is all about realistic activities in the interest of the environment”.  
[Hörning, o.J.]*

Even today, the crafts sector stands out due to high structural sustainability in its core areas: regional purchase of raw material, very durable products of high repair-friendliness as well as an operational market function: production is decentralised and the supply of differentiated trade goods and services is located primarily in the region in which the company operates. Businesses in the crafts sector advice, develop, produce, sell, build in, maintain, repair and dispose of waste. Thus, they portray the entire value creation chain. The primarily small structure of enterprises in this sector allow a flexible reaction to market changes and their mainly regional orientation offers advantages such as enabling the early recognition of client needs and making full use of the same. This applies to new products as well as to new services. Market opportunities for example consist in the implementation of innovative ideas that in turn provide chances for new, sustainable jobs. But new areas of activity are also created by environment policy guidelines:

- reduction of emissions and noise,
- cleaning and reduction of waste water and
- avoidance, recycling and disposal of waste products.

Price increases in energy resources, in particular, provide an example for possible developments. Development trends in the energy technology sector open up new market opportunities for respective businesses, while also making training and development and optimisation of technology necessary. Important business areas include the increased use of renewable energy, heat pumps, the modernisation of heat and ventilation systems or thermal- and sound insulation (see table 2).

Sanitary, Heating and Climate Trade	Saving energy on heating and ventilation: new heating technologies (condensing boiler technology), block-type thermal power stations (decentralised energy supply), heat recovery through controlled cooling and from industrial water, improved local- and district heating concepts, waste air cleaning systems, decentralised purification of effluents, use of industrial water, rainwater utilisation systems, pit heat storage, systems for the generation of energy from water.
Sanitary, Heating and Climate Trade, Electrical- and Metal Trade	Utilisation of renewable energy (installation of solar-thermal plants, cultivation of photovoltaic conversion, building control systems.
Construction- and Finishing Trade, Wood	Improvement of buildings' thermal insulation, construction of low-energy housing, ecological building (use of biologically harmless building material), passive use of solar energy, energetic renovation of buildings, prefabrication of wood parts, project development and project management.

**Table 2: Opportunities for action related to climate protection in the crafts sector (Source: Fehrenbach, 1999)**

#### 4.5. Starting Points for Sustainability Management in the Crafts Sector

In enterprises, the consideration of aspects relating to sustainability management can be applied to two areas: company-internal and market-related processes, in other words, the integral optimisation of all internal and market-related business processes. Internally this may include the increase of resource and work-efficiency, while market-related processes could be the utilisation and development of business areas based on sustainability.

The differentiation of company-internal and market-oriented objectives is based on a variety of aspects.

Innovations are a prerequisite for the establishment of new markets. At the same time, they demand systematic development within the company as this is needed for putting innovations related to products and services supporting sustainable development into

practice. For this, the company not only requires the proximity of its clients but also corresponding management-, operational- and planning structures.

Ultimately, the result of sustainability management should prove that consideration of ecological and social issues in business operations are rewarding in the mid- to long-term even though they may require additional short-term expenditures. [see Klemisch/Rauhut/Rohn 2005] → [B1-C3 – Institutions for Sustainable Management in Europe](#).

## 5. Component D: Future-compliant activities in the Crafts Sector – Internal Processes

*Relevant keywords: Mission statement, strategy, organisation, leadership, personnel, training and development, finance and controlling*

### In this component you learn about

- integrating a mission statement pertaining to sustainable development in all business processes and
- what company-internal processes play a part in doing so.

A sustainable development concept can be successfully implemented in all crafts sector business processes. In line with the afore-mentioned differentiation, component D looks into the internal processes → **B1-D1 – Demands on the craftsman of tomorrow.**

### 5.1. Concept and Strategy – Serving as an example for future generations by showing commitment

Especially since 2002 (Earth Summit in Johannesburg), the concept of »Sustainable Development« has been one of the strategically important economic and political debates in Europe. The willingness of a modern enterprise to contribute to putting sustainability into practice is mirrored in the entrepreneurial vision and the pursued strategy. The wide spectre of sustainable development contains many individual objectives such as the production of high quality, durable products, the taking on of responsibility for education and employment, the compliance with environmental laws and guidelines or the fulfilment of regional responsibility.

Not only the public profits from the acceptance of social responsibility, but also the enterprise itself draws advantages from e.g. increased motivation of employees and the development of new clientele. Christine Ax has drawn up four mission statements for sustainability criteria in the crafts sector:

- “Weekly market in place of world market”,
- “Repair rather than disposal”,
- “Made to order instead of mass production” as well as
- “Quality over quantity”.

[see Ax, 1997] → **B1-D2 – Criteria for Sustainability in the crafts sector.**



## **5.2. Organisation and Leadership – utilising competitive advantages by improved management**

Entrepreneurs and master craftsmen - the management in the crafts sector – are personal guarantors for their business' future. Besides their day-to-day operational activities, they develop visions and mission statements, have an exemplary function for their staff, and ensure the implementation of processes and their continuous improvement. They work together with clients and partners as well as reorganising operational structures. To cope with the many tasks and challenges, it is advantageous to introduce a management system that is adapted to the requirements of the crafts sector and which offers quality assurance as well as labour- and environment protection. This creates new options for securing businesses in the mid- and long-term as well as for sustainability management. While operational objectives are executed with the help of a management system, the company benefits from its implementation e.g. through improvement and transparency of operational processes, the optimisation of production processes as well as the reduction of environmental damage and related costs. Furthermore, the implementation of a management system allows systematic improvement of internal processes as well as the inclusion of employees, which in turn boosts their motivation. → B1-D3 – Challenges for sustainable action in the crafts sector.

## **5.3. Personnel – improvement of working climate, opening up of potentials for motivation and innovation**

Employees who are competent, committed and act entrepreneurially form the most important factor in a company's success. They are the ones who are able to lighten their management's workload (principle of delegation), bring forth the working crew's »hidden« potential and help push the company forward by contributing with innovative ideas and performance.

A large variety of measures serve to develop human potential and to improve work-place atmosphere. These include:

- company shares for employees,
- improvement of company-internal information and communications processes,
- health and safety protection measures,
- equal opportunities,
- system for suggestion of improvements.

The above measures promote employee motivation, creativity and employees' expertise while leading to a better utilisation of personal objectives. Their implementation is closely connected to corporate culture and the introduction of a management system.

#### **5.4. Training and Development / Educational Qualification – development of new opportunities and promotion of ideas through development of competencies**

Employees that are trained well and practice-oriented are a deciding prerequisite for the maintenance and improvement of productivity and quality forming the competitive advantage of a company. Rapid changes in technology and economy as well as the trend towards trade-transcending services require great flexibility from crafts businesses. Only by providing employees with continued and life-accompanying training it is possible to overcome these challenges. By integrating future-relevant topics in crafts training and development programmes, potential new fields of activity are opened, e.g. renewable energy technologies (photovoltaic, block type thermal power stations fuelled biologically, solar energy) and environmental protection (thermal- and sound insulation, water-saving devices, mechanical engineering for waste disposal, sewage treatment etc.). → B1-D4 -Profession with a future – the solar industrialist

#### **5.5. Finance and Controlling – securing of company stability, tracking down of potential for improvement**

“Economic responsibility” means regularly checking a company for its future-compliance, tracking down of potential areas for improvement and reacting correspondingly. Consequently »Sustainability Management« for a business on the crafts sector means securing its company's stability in the long-term without being influenced by short-term profit opportunities. This strategy's determining factor demands sound financial stability, good knowledge of turnover, profit, price structures and orders on hand. The introduction of a controlling system simplifies systematic recording, controlling and improvement of entrepreneurial activities and forms a good basis for risk provisions. Seen from a more long-term perspective, it supports the assurance of a company's stability and makes continued improvement processes possible.

#### **5.6. Production and Service - Reduction of costs, environment protection and promotion of competitive edge through efficiency**

“Efficiency” – describes the reduction of costs due to improved utilisation of resources. It is a key word towards sustainability management necessary in securing the economic existence of companies. Optimising processes for establishing services from a sustainability point of view means to:

- employ innovative, energy- and resource-saving technologies,
- safeguard quality,
- minimise risks,
- exploit recycling potentials and to
- improve work and production processes.

Efficiency measures not only mean cost savings taken into account in times of fast rising raw material costs, but also have a positive effect on the environment and society as a whole.

→ B1-D5 – Learning partnerships – regional responsible acting

## 6. Component E: Future-compliant activities in the Crafts Sector – External processes

*Relevant keywords: Products, service, innovations, new markets, networks, regional economic cycles, global responsibility*

### In this component you learn about

- Market-relevant processes that are of importance when implementing sustainable development in a company.

#### 6.1. Clients and Products – Developing an innovative product- and service portfolio

The aim of economic activity is to provide products and services that both meet clients' demands and noticeably reduce social energy- and resource consumption. Products and services that consider economical, ecological and social aspects throughout their life-span can fulfil this claim. When developing sustainable products and services businesses in the crafts sector profit from their proximity to their clientele. This allows new products and services to be developed practically. Over and above that, the proximity to one's clients' permits further opportunities for sustainability management such as the offer of maintenance and repair work.

As processor of regional products (e.g. food or wood), crafts businesses can open up niches for themselves and thereby contribute to the positive development of their region. The participation in voluntary labelling-programmes (e.g. environment and quality seals) helps companies to improve their market position, to discover new market niches and to fill them. Established and clearly defined labels will always be a significant source of information and provide orientation for clients → B1-E3: "Eco-labels".

#### 6.2. Innovation – acting pro-actively – development of new markets

Innovations are a basis for the future of a company, especially in the crafts sector. In times of fast developing technical progress a pro-active stance is a necessary strategy for every enterprise's future. Besides technological innovations, social innovations too bring forth substantial potential. Employees' ideas as well as the collaboration with other businesses in the crafts sector are needed for the development of such innovations.

Orientating a company's entire activities on the concept of sustainable development may trigger innovative new products and services (e.g. renewable energies).

### 6.3. Cooperation – Profiting from networks with cooperation partners

The necessity of cooperation in the crafts sector comes from today's clients' demand for a complete package of services from one source. Especially small and medium-sized enterprises can only properly meet the changed and often more particular demand if they join forces. Depending on their form and aim, cooperation agreements may help to widen one's range of products or services and, over and above that support the development of one's own core competencies. Cooperation partners jointly develop new products and gain access to new market segments.

This also allows for meeting completion deadlines of larger contracts as well as balancing personnel resources in special situations. By jointly organising acquisition, advertising, administration, order processing and many other entrepreneurial activities cooperation partners can achieve valuable improvements in efficiency and new income opportunities.

Collaboration with suppliers and clients, service cooperation for comprehensive products requiring more than one trade as well as cooperative purchasing and waste disposal help to achieve synergetic effects. Participation in regional and national initiatives may also prove advantageous for all involved → **B1-E2 – Benefiting from clusters.**

### 6.4. Regional Economic Cycles and Global Responsibility – act regional, think global

Many companies have meanwhile discovered that regional economic cycles are the basis for their business. Their businesses create and maintain jobs locally and offer places for vocational training, whereby they secure their independence and the existence of regions. The crafts sector can accentuate its strengths compared to the producers of mass products. Strengths include:

- individual solutions,
- reliable repair service,
- offers to take back worn-out products etc.

Rational participation in regional economic cycles leads to clearly defined effects on environmental protection. In this connection however, one's own »global way of thinking« should always play a role in order to utilise international trends and developments for one's own company → **B1-E1 - Regional economy cycles – Sustainability in the region.**

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## 8. Materials

### **Module A: What is sustainable development?**

B1-A1: Sustainable Development (PPT)

B1-A2: The ecological footprint

B1-A3: Sustainability – What is it? – Opinions from the general public

B1-A4: What do we give to the next Generation?

B1-A5: Cross-linking of processes – the Magic Triangle

### **Module B: AGENDA 21: The Sustainability Process**

B1-B1: The Boomerang – for sustainable fairness

B1-B2: Sustainable consumption and production

B1-B3: Milestone AGENDA 21

B1-B4: Perspectives for Europe

### **Module C: Sustainable Development – Challenges for the Economy**

B1-C1: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

B1-C2: Resource Efficiency

B1-C3: Institutions for Sustainability Management in Europe (PPT)

B1-C4: Sustainability in the crafts sector – sustainable product cycle

### **Module D: Future-compliant activities in the Crafts Sector – internal processes**

B1-D1: Demands on the craftsmen of tomorrow

B1-D2: Criteria for Sustainability in the Crafts Sector

B1-D3: Challenges of sustainable action in the crafts sector

B1-D4: Profession with a future – The solar industrialist

B1-D5: Learning partnerships – regional responsible acting

### **Module E: Future-compliant activities in the Crafts Sector – external processes**

B1-E1: Regional economic cycles –Sustainability in the region

B1-E2: Profiting from clusters

B1-E3: Eco-labels