

## Going **BEYOND** Awards

# THE EMBEDDING PROJECT

Led by Dr. Stephanie Bertels at Simon Fraser University, the Embedding Project is a global public-benefit research project that helps companies embed environmental and social sustainability into their operations and decision making.

While an increasing number of companies have recognized the need to embed sustainability, most still struggle to do so.

**Embedding**  
**PROJECT**



Globally, a set of leading executives have begun to integrate social and environmental factors into their company's core decision-making and their growing knowledge and experience is ripe for broader application; if only it could be effectively harnessed and adapted for more wide-spread use.

The overall goal of the Embedding Project is to bridge this gap. We do this by partnering with dozens of companies in two Regional Peer-to-Peer Networks (P2Ps) in North America and Africa and the Middle East where researchers facilitate a candid knowledge exchange regarding their efforts to embed sustainability. Our partner companies also undergo regular in-depth assessments where we inventory their efforts to embed sustainability and the outcomes of those efforts.

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Data from these assessments and P2Ps are used for theory development and the production of academic articles, and also leveraged to develop practice-oriented resources that are tailored for use in companies. We pilot and refine those resources and then release them publicly through our website.

The Embedding Project spans 3 continents and brings together academic researchers from: SFU, the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business, Cambridge University's Judge Business School, HEC Montreal. It has also brought together 36 large multinational companies (including Teck Resources, TD Bank, lululemon, the Port of Vancouver, QuadReal, Vancity, Suncor Energy, Woolworths, Nedbank, and others), and partnered with 5 industry associations and non-governmental organizations (including CPA Canada and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development).

Students have been an integral part of this work through the years, participating in data gathering and analysis, guidebook and case study writing, meeting coordination and facilitation, and graphic design and video production.

To date, 3 postdoctoral researchers, 8 doctoral students, 8 master's students, and 5 undergraduate students have been involved in our work. Through their participation, students are able to gain a deep understanding of key sustainability concepts and their applications in companies, as well as develop their professional networks and gain access to career opportunities.

### **ABOUT SFU BEEDIE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

Founded in 1982, Simon Fraser University's Beedie School of Business is ranked in the top 10 business schools in Canada by Maclean's and is dual accredited, holding both AACSB and EFMD (EQUIS) accreditations. SFU Beedie has more than 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students from around the world, studying at three campuses in Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey, British Columbia. SFU Beedie is home to those who believe in the power of business to spark new ideas, fuel social innovations, and advance society.

Through teaching and learning powered by world-class research, meaningful community engagement, and a global outlook, SFU Beedie takes business education beyond the walls of academia and empowers people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives to reimagine the role of business in tackling society's most significant challenges.

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## PROGRAM IMPACT AND SUCCESS

**The Embedding Project has helped dozens of companies benchmark their efforts to embed sustainability, develop action plans to further their maturity, and set more ambitious goals that recognize the need to do their part to contribute to the resilience of communities and the environment.**

The project has also fostered long-lasting professional connections with global peers working to change their companies and their industries. As one long-time member describes it, "...it's learning in the fast track with leaders in the field."

Research data from the project has supported 5 PhD dissertations and 9 articles in top management journals. We have written 25 practitioner-oriented reports and guidebooks and over 50 case studies, and have created 3 public databases, 3 video series, and 17 blog posts.

These materials are all freely available on our website, have been accessed by the public over 80,000 times in total, and have been included in at least 12 university courses for graduate and MBA level students across various institutions.

We have also reached over 6,000 sustainability practitioners, academics, and students through presenting at hundreds of events around the globe and release a monthly newsletter to over 600 subscribers.

The project has received awards that recognize its impact:

1. the 2019 AACSB Innovations that Inspire Award for inspiring new approaches to thought leadership and increasing its impact through the co-creation of knowledge
2. the 2018 Academy of Management's inaugural International Impactful Collaboration Award for practical and scholarly impact
3. two Clean50 "top project" awards (for 2016 and 2019), which annually recognize leading Canadian projects with an impact on improving corporate sustainability

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## SDG IMPACT

Through supporting a wide variety of global organizations in their efforts to embed sustainability, our work addresses all 17 SDGs and more importantly, helps companies to identify where they can best contribute to the SDGs & develop a credible strategy to do so. However, our work most directly addresses:

- **SDG 12:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- **SDG 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts



## LOOKING FORWARD

We plan to continue to maintain and grow our global network of partner companies and to continue to leverage the knowledge exchange and research described above into practical tools to support companies in embedding sustainability. Our current short-term focus is on developing a suite of tools to help companies drive sustainability throughout their value chain.

Our efforts are also currently directed towards developing video modules on core sustainability concepts that can be used by educators around the world and by sustainability professionals to broaden their understanding and skill set in the field.

We've curated a selection of the most relevant resources and tools to help you better embed sustainability into your company.



[Click here for our position database](#)