

White Paper

Symbiotic Value Orientation Competency Framework

A meta-neutral, evidence-based framework for assessing and developing sustainable value orientation and competence across human–nature systems.

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Table of Contents

Note: In Word, use References → Table of Contents to auto-generate after editing.

1. 1. Executive Summary
2. 2. Why SVOCF: The need for a new competence language
3. 3. Core Definitions
4. 4. Design Principles
5. 5. SVOCF Architecture
6. 6. Competence Levels (L1–L3) and Progression
7. 7. Assessment Model and Evidence Standards
8. 8. Governance, Quality Assurance, and Ethics
9. 9. Implementation Pathways
10. 10. Alignment and Mapping
11. 11. Roadmap (0.1 → 1.0)
12. 12. Glossary
13. Annex A: SVOCF Subsystem Descriptors
14. Annex B: Evidence Examples and Templates (summary)

1. Executive Summary

SVOCF (Symbiotic Value Orientation Competency Framework) is a unified framework that defines, develops, and evaluates competence for sustainable value orientation in interdependent human–nature systems. It operationalises a simple claim: long-term sustainability depends not only on technical skills, but on the capacity to prioritise values, navigate trade-offs, and regenerate capability and resources after disruption.

SVOCF is designed to be meta-neutral: it does not impose cultural, religious, or ideological doctrine. Instead, it provides a systems-based evaluation language that can be locally mapped in diverse contexts. SVOCF supports individual development, organisational capability building, and partnership-based certification through an evidence-first model.

This White Paper defines the core concept (SVOC), the framework structure (SVOCF), competence levels (L1–L3), the evidence standard, and governance principles required for credible and scalable certification.

2. Why SVOCF: The need for a new competence language

Across education, industry, and civic systems, sustainability initiatives often fail at the same weak link: value decisions. People may understand sustainability goals in principle, yet lack competence to translate them into consistent choices under pressure, uncertainty, and competing incentives.

SVOCF addresses this gap by formalising value orientation as a competence that can be trained and assessed—similar in status to critical thinking or leadership, but explicitly anchored in interdependence (symbiosis) and regeneration.

SVOCF is intended for:

- Individuals seeking structured development for sustainable living and decision-making.
- Organisations building culture, capability, and governance for sustainability performance.
- Certifying bodies and partners that require transparent, evidence-based evaluation rules.
- Education and training providers aligning programmes with competence outcomes and real-world evidence.

3. Core Definitions

3.1 SVOC (Symbiotic Value Orientation Competency)

SVOC is an evidence-based competency to (a) prioritise values, (b) resolve value conflicts, and (c) make sustainable decisions that support mutual wellbeing within interdependent human–nature systems.

SVOC focuses on three capacity domains:

- **Self-regulation:** Maintain functional stability and ethical consistency under internal/external pressure.
- **Adaptation:** Respond to change while preserving long-term objectives and system viability.
- **Regeneration:** Recover, renew, and improve capability/resources after disruption or depletion.

3.2 SVOCF (Framework)

SVOCF is the framework that defines constructs, levels, indicators, evidence rules, and governance processes used to develop and certify SVOC. It provides a common language for competence description, a progression logic, and an assessment system.

3.3 Key Terms

- **Value orientation:** Stable patterns of prioritising and acting on values across situations.
- **Symbiotic:** Interdependent, mutually influential relationships across people, society, and ecology.
- **Evidence-first:** Competence judgement is grounded in verifiable artefacts and observable behaviours.

4. Design Principles

- **Meta-neutrality:** No prescribed ideology; local mapping is allowed without altering the core evaluation logic.
- **Systems coherence:** Competence is evaluated in relation to feedback loops, trade-offs, and interdependence.
- **Evidence integrity:** Clear rules for evidence quality, authenticity, and triangulation.
- **Progression clarity:** Levels represent increasing complexity, responsibility, and recovery capacity.
- **Ethical safety:** Safeguards for fairness, privacy, and non-harm in assessment and data handling.

5. SVOCF Architecture

5.1 Subsystems (Domains of capability)

SVOCF models competence as a system-of-systems. The following subsystems provide a stable domain structure while allowing local interpretation of activities and evidence.

15. **Physical and Vitality:** Energy, recovery, health routines, and sustainable performance capacity.
16. **Psychological and Emotional:** Emotion regulation, resilience, stress coping, and recovery after setbacks.

17. **Cognitive and Learning:** Critical thinking, learning agility, problem solving, and anticipatory reasoning.
18. **Social and Ethical:** Cooperation, trust, responsibility, and ethical decision-making in social systems.
19. **Environmental and Planetary:** Ecological awareness, stewardship, and action within environmental limits.

5.2 Functional Cycle: Create–Maintain–Regenerate

SVOCF evaluates sustainable value through a functional cycle. The same cycle applies to individuals and organisations.

- **Value creation:** Generate beneficial outcomes (wellbeing, capability, social contribution, stewardship) through aligned subsystems.
- **Value maintenance:** Sustain alignment over time via monitoring, balancing, and feedback-driven adjustment.
- **Value regeneration:** Restore and upgrade functioning after disruption, enabling renewed viability and learning.

5.3 Competence Logic: Orientation → Decision → Action → Recovery

SVOC is expressed through a repeatable sequence: value orientation shapes decisions; decisions shape actions; actions change system conditions; recovery and reflection update the orientation. Assessment focuses on the consistency and quality of this loop.

6. Competence Levels (L1–L3) and Progression

SVOCF uses three levels to represent increasing complexity, autonomy, and systemic responsibility. Levels can be applied to individuals or organisational units.

- **L1 — Foundation:** Demonstrates basic value clarity, stable routines, and simple trade-off awareness in familiar contexts.
- **L2 — Practice:** Applies value-based judgement under uncertainty; manages trade-offs across subsystems; produces consistent evidence.
- **L3 — Leadership:** Designs or steers systems that enable others to act sustainably; builds recovery capacity and ethical governance.

Progression rules:

- Progression requires evidence of increased scope (from self → team/organisation → ecosystem).
- Higher levels require stronger triangulation (multiple evidence types, independent verification where feasible).
- Regeneration capacity is a key discriminator between L2 and L3 (ability to restore and redesign systems after shocks).

7. Assessment Model and Evidence Standards

SVOCF is evidence-first. Self-report can support reflection, but certification decisions must rely on verifiable artefacts and/or observable practice. Evidence is assessed for authenticity, relevance, sufficiency, and impact.

7.1 Evidence Types

- **Portfolio artefacts:** Plans, logs, projects, outputs, audits, designs, prototypes, reflective notes.
- **Performance evidence:** Observed practice, demonstrations, simulations, role-play, or task completion.
- **Third-party validation:** Supervisor/peer statements, client feedback, community partner confirmation.
- **Data traces:** Non-invasive metrics (e.g., participation records, process indicators, resource-use logs) with privacy safeguards.

7.2 Evidence Quality Rules

- **Authenticity:** Evidence must be attributable to the candidate or assessed unit, with clear provenance.
- **Triangulation:** At least two evidence types should support each major claim at L2–L3.
- **Context clarity:** Evidence must specify context, constraints, stakeholders, and decision trade-offs.
- **Outcome linkage:** Evidence should show outputs and, where feasible, outcomes (behaviour change, reduced harm, improved resilience).
- **Non-harm and privacy:** Sensitive data must be minimised, anonymised, and handled under explicit consent.

7.3 Assessment Workflow

20. **Registration:** Candidate selects track and scope; receives evidence guide and ethics notice.
21. **Evidence collection:** Candidate develops portfolio using SVOCF indicators; optional coaching is separated from assessment.
22. **Review and scoring:** Assessors evaluate evidence against level descriptors using transparent rubrics.
23. **Verification:** Sampling checks, interviews, and/or third-party confirmation for high-stakes claims.
24. **Decision and feedback:** Certification decision with developmental feedback and improvement actions.
25. **Appeal:** Independent review process for disputes.

8. Governance, Quality Assurance, and Ethics

Credibility requires governance. SVOCF defines roles, quality assurance mechanisms, and ethical boundaries for certification.

8.1 Roles

- **Framework Owner:** Maintains SVOCF definitions, version control, and public change logs.
- **Certification Body:** Manages operations, assessor training, audits, and issuance of certificates.
- **Assessors:** Apply rubrics consistently; document decisions; maintain confidentiality and impartiality.
- **Candidates:** Provide honest evidence; respect non-harm and privacy rules; accept audit sampling.
- **Partners:** Contribute contextual mapping and practice environments; follow SVOCF integrity rules.

8.2 Quality Assurance

- Assessor calibration sessions and inter-rater reliability checks.
- Random sampling audits for L2–L3 decisions.
- Conflict-of-interest declarations and separation of coaching vs assessment.
- Versioned rubrics and public change notes (what changed and why).
- Periodic review of adverse outcomes and fairness metrics.

8.3 Ethics and Safeguards

- Meta-neutrality: avoid ideological or religious endorsement in official materials.
- Non-discrimination: accessible assessment options and reasonable accommodations.
- Data governance: minimal data, explicit consent, secure storage, time-limited retention.
- Safeguarding: special protocols for youth or vulnerable participants (if applicable).
- Anti-greenwashing: claims must be evidence-backed; marketing is audited for accuracy.

9. Implementation Pathways

SVOCF is designed for phased adoption. Implementation can start with low-stakes self-assessment and scale to third-party certification as partners, rubrics, and evidence standards mature.

9.1 Minimum viable implementation (pilot)

- Define local mapping: translate subsystem descriptors into context-specific activities without altering core meaning.
- Run L1 pilot with portfolio-based evidence and developmental feedback.
- Calibrate rubrics using a small assessor group and revise unclear indicators.
- Publish pilot lessons learned and update SVOCF change log.

9.2 Organisational deployment

- Integrate SVOCF into onboarding, leadership development, and sustainability governance.
- Use SVOCF evidence tags in project reviews and learning logs.

- Establish internal assessor pool; conduct periodic external moderation.

9.3 Partnership deployment

- Define partner roles and co-delivery boundaries (training vs assessment).
- Agree on evidence verification protocols and shared safeguarding rules.
- Set mutual recognition mapping where standards are comparable.

10. Alignment and Mapping

SVOCF can be mapped to major sustainability and competence frameworks without becoming dependent on any single one. Mapping is presented as a compatibility layer rather than a replacement.

Suggested mapping targets:

- UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an outcome reference layer.
- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) competence approaches as learning alignment.
- Organisational ESG and sustainability reporting as evidence and governance interfaces.

Mapping should preserve SVOCF's meta-neutrality: local partners may align to national qualification frameworks, industry standards, or educational outcomes, provided the SVOCF evidence rules remain intact.

11. Roadmap (0.1 → 1.0)

- **0.1 (current):** Core definitions, subsystem architecture, levels, and evidence rules published for consultation.
- **0.2:** Rubric prototypes, assessor handbook draft, and pilot templates released.
- **0.5:** Pilot results consolidated; fairness and reliability metrics reported; governance charter finalised.
- **1.0:** Stable release with validated rubrics, partner onboarding kit, and public registry rules (if applicable).

12. Glossary

- **Candidate:** An individual or organisational unit seeking SVOCF-aligned certification.
- **Evidence tag:** A label that classifies evidence by subsystem and function (create/maintain/regenerate).
- **Local mapping:** Context-specific interpretation of activities that preserves SVOCF core definitions.
- **Regeneration:** Restoration and upgrade of capability/resources after disruption, not merely recovery to baseline.

- **Triangulation:** Using multiple evidence sources to support a competence claim.

Annex A: SVOCF Subsystem Descriptors (extended)

Physical and Vitality

Energy, recovery, health routines, and sustainable performance capacity.

Typical indicators (illustrative): clarity of practices, consistency under stress, decision trade-offs, impact awareness, and recovery/renewal behaviours. Local partners may adapt examples while keeping the indicator intent.

Psychological and Emotional

Emotion regulation, resilience, stress coping, and recovery after setbacks.

Typical indicators (illustrative): clarity of practices, consistency under stress, decision trade-offs, impact awareness, and recovery/renewal behaviours. Local partners may adapt examples while keeping the indicator intent.

Cognitive and Learning

Critical thinking, learning agility, problem solving, and anticipatory reasoning.

Typical indicators (illustrative): clarity of practices, consistency under stress, decision trade-offs, impact awareness, and recovery/renewal behaviours. Local partners may adapt examples while keeping the indicator intent.

Social and Ethical

Cooperation, trust, responsibility, and ethical decision-making in social systems.

Typical indicators (illustrative): clarity of practices, consistency under stress, decision trade-offs, impact awareness, and recovery/renewal behaviours. Local partners may adapt examples while keeping the indicator intent.

Environmental and Planetary

Ecological awareness, stewardship, and action within environmental limits.

Typical indicators (illustrative): clarity of practices, consistency under stress, decision trade-offs, impact awareness, and recovery/renewal behaviours. Local partners may adapt examples while keeping the indicator intent.

Annex B: Evidence Examples and Templates (summary)

This annex summarises example evidence items. Detailed templates are released in SVOCF-2.x assessor and candidate toolkits.

- **L1:** Routine logs, simple impact reflections, basic decision records, participation proof.

- **L2:** Project case with trade-off analysis, stakeholder feedback, process metrics, improvement cycle notes.
- **L3:** System redesign case, governance artefacts, audit results, mentoring evidence, recovery after disruption narrative with data.