



## **TASK™ by Sulitest – The Assessment of Sustainability Knowledge**

### Position Paper — Executive Summary

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*To build a sustainable future, it is imperative that all humans improve their sustainability knowledge. Educators must ensure that the rising generation of graduates and professionals achieves a sufficient level of knowledge and understanding of sustainability, as well as the ability to integrate such learning into personal and professional practice, social interaction, civic action, and political decision-making. The Sulitest team and movement provide online awareness, engagement, and assessment tools that enable the mainstreaming of sustainability literacy within both higher education and professional and corporate organizations across the globe. Embrace the urgency of our collective mission and join us today!*

In early 2023, Sulitest introduced TASK™ – The Assessment of Sustainability Knowledge – with the aim of **transforming education by (re)setting the standard of sustainability knowledge**. Sulitest defines the concept of sustainability knowledge as "knowledge and understanding of Earth's planetary boundaries, the social foundations of human welfare, the action-based levers of opportunity that inform and influence our ability to build a sustainable future, and the systemic interlinkages existing between and across them". Sulitest now provides access to TASK™, a robust, research-based online assessment tool that provides an internationally recognized sustainability knowledge certificate. Accessible through a user-friendly platform, TASK™ offers measurable metrics for monitoring and steering sustainability education across any educational program.

While TASK™ is but one tool in Sulitest's education for sustainability toolbox — focused on core cognitive knowledge — it fills a critical gap in sustainability assessments, employing a holistic, interdisciplinary approach. The tool's development involved defining a sustainability knowledge model, designing assessments, pilot testing, and continuous improvement through iterative quality control processes.

**TASK™ is the "game changer" that makes sustainability a common language for all.**

To address the complexities of sustainability, Sulitest's model draws inspiration from three key sources: the **UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, the **Stockholm Resilience Center's Planetary Boundaries** concept, and **Kate Raworth's Doughnut Economics**. Together, these frameworks inform Sulitest's unique sustainability knowledge model.

Sulitest's Model of Sustainability Knowledge transcends disciplinary boundaries, focusing on thematic, integrated, embedded, and systemic literacy. The model articulates three frameworks:

1. **Earth Systems** – includes two Domains: *Core Planetary Boundaries* and *Regulating Planetary Boundaries*, both of which indicate the safe operating space for humanity. Together, these constitute the Environmental Ceiling of the framework.
2. **Human Welfare** – includes three Domains: *Safety and Basic Needs* for all, *Social Welfare* for people, and elements that contribute to *Human Flourishing*. Together, these constitute the Social Foundation of the framework.

3. **Levers of Opportunity** – includes four Domains: *Governance, Economy and Finance, Science and Technology, and Individual and Collective Action*. Together, these indicate Levers of Opportunity or actions that make sustainability possible.

The TASK™ Matrix of Sustainability Knowledge presents a more complete picture both of the detailed content of sustainability knowledge, as well as the structure of TASK™ assessment questions. The matrix consists of these 3 higher-order Frameworks (e.g., Earth Systems), which are broken down into 9 second-order Domains (e.g., Core Planetary Boundaries), 28 third-order Subjects (e.g., Climate Change), and 96 test Items at the most granular level (e.g., Definition of climate change). TASK™ employs a sequential process, assessing knowing and understanding before exploring systemic interlinkages. As also designed by the academic and research experts of the Sulitest Task Force, and as indicated in the matrix, there are **four discrete types of sustainability knowledge** assessed by TASK™, organized under one of **two unifying forms of human cognition**. The two forms of cognition and four types of knowledge are the following:

1. Knowing and Understanding	2. Interlinkages
i. Descriptive knowledge	iii. Causal knowledge
ii. Contextualized knowledge	iv. Integrated knowledge

As indicated in the TASK™ matrix, the first two frameworks are threshold-based, constituted as they are by a set of boundaries for both **Earth Systems** (a "ceiling") and **Human Welfare** (a "foundation"). As such, in our model of sustainability knowledge, the subjects of these two frameworks are tested across all four types of knowledge: descriptive, contextualized, causal, and integrated. The third framework of the matrix—**Levers of Opportunity**—is conceptually different in nature from the other two. It represents the many levers of action that provide us with opportunities to build a sustainable future. This framework is tested across the first two types of knowledge: descriptive and contextualized. For all the four types of knowledge, the descriptors and signifiers used to inform the question design process are the following:

**1.1 – Definitions and Key Concepts** – Descriptive Knowledge

*What are we talking about? How does this work?*

i.e., identify & describe principles, states, functions, processes, and concepts.

**1.2 – Current State and Trends** – Contextualized Knowledge

*Where are we now? How are things changing?*

i.e., identify & describe evolving states, change processes, mutation of processes.

**2.1 – Major Causes** – Causal Knowledge

*Why is this happening? Who is doing what and why?*

i.e., identify & describe drivers, factors, and forcings of boundary transgression.

**2.2 – Systemic Impacts** – Integrated Knowledge

*What are the related effects? How is this affecting the larger system?*

i.e., identify & describe impacts of boundary transgression on other concepts.

In summary, Sulitest's innovative TASK™ methodology offers a new standard in sustainability literacy assessment. With its solid foundation built on global frameworks, its interdisciplinary approach to knowledge, and its meticulous assessment design, TASK™ helps propel individuals and organizations into a future where sustainability knowledge is not only measurable but also integral to informed decision-making and action.