

## National Database New Business Models in the WEconomy

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL CLOVER BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

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#### INTRODUCTION

Hundreds, maybe even thousands, of (civil) initiatives exist in society that could be wholly or partially labeled as “New Business Models” (NBM)<sup>1</sup>. How many initiatives there are, what they focus on, where the most or the least of them are located, if they consist of a plan, a pilot, or if they are ‘in business’, and whether they are proliferating or becoming successful are all questions that are without answers. To gain insight into the nature, extent, and impact of this development, the Radboud University, Nijmegen School of Management, introduced the initiative of the National Database New Business Models. The aim of this database is, first, to register and describe as many initiatives as possible. To this end, cooperation is sought with a number of Dutch Applied Universities (HBO’s). Together, we will try to systematically identify and enter existing initiatives in a database. This will be based on publicly available sources.

**Goals.** By mapping out as many existing initiatives as is possible in the coming period, we would like to achieve a couple of different goals. The first goal is to give people insight into what (in their neighborhood or region) is happening and to support people and organizations by supplying them with appropriate new business models to support and accelerate their own transition. This offers the possibility that people might come into contact with each other and/or may be inspired by the database with NBMs. This eliminates the need to constantly re-invent what has already been invented elsewhere which prevents wasting valuable energy and time. Furthermore, this initiative is intended to contribute to the embedding of applied research into sustainability in the Dutch Applied Universities curricula. Students gain access to a national database that they can utilize to develop and establish graduation assignments. Finally, we hope that all this (indirectly) contributes to accelerating a transition towards a sustainable society.

**Cases.** A case-study will be published weekly during the construction of the database. For this purpose, the editors of the database will select weekly from the cases developed by the students on the basis of this interview protocol. In exceptional cases, the founders themselves will be asked to complete a questionnaire in order to provide the content for the case study; however, this is not preferred. After the interview/completing the questionnaire, the student, together with the teacher, will conduct an internal editing. The result will be submitted for approval to the initiator to request an agreement before it is submitted for possible publication

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<sup>1</sup> We understand a new business model as an initiative organized by a collective of people and/or institutions and/or companies that creates multiple forms of value and in which all parties share in the realized value.

on duurzaamnieuws.nl and nieuwebusinessmodellen.nl. The ambition is to compile a selection of the published cases annually in a hard-copy edition.

### **Points of departure & core assumptions**

This document describes the structure and the associated interview questions that should lead to a case study and description. The aim is to have guidelines when answering a series of related questions which together lead to the completion of the Cloverleaf Business Model Canvas (CBMC). Please note: questions should preferably be answered in a clear and concise manner.

- Design:** The interview / questionnaire is based on a series of open questions.
- Style:** The response style of the interview protocol is a formal "you". Nothing is stopping you from actually using a more informal style if the interviewee has no objection. Please pose the question of how to address people with care either in the preparation for or at the beginning of the interview.
- Recording:** The interview should be recorded (can be done with almost every phone). Ask in advance for approval of the respondent for this recording. The recording is used only to describe the case. Recordings are not made public. After processing and approval of the case study, the recordings will be erased.
- Duration:** The interview lasts approximately 60 minutes.
- Testing:** If necessary, conduct a test interview before the actual interview if you have never previously conducted an interview. This allows you to master the content of the questions and the timing of the interview in advance.
- Questions:** Before you begin the interview, check whether there are any questions or issues that need further clarification.
- Interview:** The interview is structured according to the seven parts converted into questions. Following this structure is important in order to be able to compare cases with each other. During an interview, not necessarily every question is dealt with equally in terms of time or depth.
- Procedure:** Read this interview protocol carefully and work according to its structure at all times. Do not initiate your own procedure! This is important in order to obtain comparable results.
- Result:** The result of the processed answers is a readable and accurate case study of a particular NBM initiative. The case description is not just literally

typing out what the respondent has said. It is a careful use of the answers to come to a complete and comprehensive story.

- Contact:** Initiatives have often been the subject of a promotional video (posted on their own website or on Youtube). It is convenient to also include a link to that video at the end of the case study and to include the website, email if available, contact name, or phone number of the creator of the initiative at the end of the case study. Note: these data should all be publically available and found on the initiative's website.
- Internal editors:** Together, student(s) and teacher(s) conduct the (internal) editing of the case study. Is it complete? Are all questions addressed in a balanced manner? Are there some clear conclusions? Is the case study a concise and readable story? This internal editing is important to achieve the best possible result in cooperation with each other. Only after finishing this editorial part can approval be sought from the respondent.
- Consent:** The case description of an initiative based on the interview and the (internal) editing is sent to the respondent for approval. The respondent provides their consent by email. Without written approval, the case study is not valid. It is this authorized case study that will be published after a possible (final) round of editing.
- Objection:** Should the respondent have any objections to a possible publication, please indicate this clearly. It goes without saying that, in such an event, a case should not be submitted for publication.
- Publication:** After editing by the student(s) and the teacher and approval by the respondent, the case study can be submitted for publication on [www.duurzaamnieuws.nl/nieuwe-business-modellen](http://www.duurzaamnieuws.nl/nieuwe-business-modellen) (and / or) [www.nieuwebusinessmodellen.nl](http://www.nieuwebusinessmodellen.nl). Instructions will be provided on how to submit these cases. The (final) editor decides which contributions will be published due to the availability of editorial space. On an annual basis, there is room for approximately 50 contributions.
- Editors:** All cases submitted for publication will be edited, if necessary. As part of readability and uniformity, the (final) editor has the right to edit a proposed case study.
- Contact:** If there are any questions from the respondent about the project National Database NBMs, the interview, or how the case description will be handled, the respondent can initially always contact the responsible student(s) [please provide an email address at the confirmation of the

interview or the end of it] and/or with the teacher in question [idem, please provide an email address].

*Always make sure to work neatly and carefully. Be respectful towards your respondent - both in the time before the interviews and also during the interview. Honor your agreements. Do not give any data to third parties! Always obtain (written) permission, otherwise, your case is not usable.*

## BACKGROUND MATERIAL

In the book "New Business Models; Working Together on Value Creation "(2014), it is described how a new business model can be designed according to the Cloverleaf Business Model Canvas. This model consists of five components: principles, design, value proposition, community, and value realization.

It is assumed that, in the end, everything is about the realization of the value proposition. This is achieved by using the other four building blocks in the model. It does not matter with which of the five building blocks you start as long as the building blocks are processed in an aligned and interrelated way.

The 'road' to achieve a NBM takes place in three phases:

1. Developing a basic plan - The idea
2. Working on developing a prototype - The pilot
3. The further development into a running project - The project

The questions in the interview protocol are based on the Cloverleaf Business Model Canvas. After a short, general introduction (which can also be completed on the basis of the data provided in the registration of an initiative in the National Database New Business Models - see: [www.nieuwebusinessmodellen.nl](http://www.nieuwebusinessmodellen.nl)), the five elements of the model will subsequently be discussed. The case study will be completed with the formulation of a conclusion. The aim of this questionnaire as a whole is to go deeper into a specific initiative to determine if and to what extent it can be described as a New Business Model. The detailed result provides a readable, concise case study, three to four A-4 pages (about 1.500 words) in length. This case study is always presented to the respondent for approval. After processing any comments, the case can be submitted for publication to the above websites. Editors decide which cases will be published.

## **INTERVIEW STRUCTURE**

### **AT THE START**

1. PROPOSALS. Interviewer(s) introduce themselves(s): education, course, etc. Can the interview be recorded? After this, the interviewee thanks the respondent for their time.

2. BACKGROUND: Previous research in the Netherlands in the spring of 2011, 2012, and 2013 resulted in a variety of reports and working documents. This was further elaborated in the book "New Business Models". It was published (by the Publisher Academic Service in The Hague) in November 2014. Now, the next step is the development of the National Database NBMs.

3. PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW. Briefly explain what the purpose of the interview is the building of a national database of new business models and researching interesting cases that could eventually be published.

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- Based on the data from the registration of the NBM database via [www.Nieuwebusinessmodellen.nl](http://www.Nieuwebusinessmodellen.nl), a brief impression of the NBM can be constructed here based on things such as starting date, short description, status, etc. This short description can be characterized as a fact sheet. Create this fact sheet prior to the interview and make sure you take the fact sheet with you to the interview so you can hand it over to the respondent.
- Please fill out this impression before the interview and, if needed, read it out loud and provide a copy to the respondent. Ask the respondent to check if the facts are still up to date and relevant.
- Thank the respondent for participating in this interview. His/her collaboration helps us to gain new knowledge about his/her new business model, and he/she contributes to the development and expansion of the National Database New Business Models. This knowledge can be shared and serves as inspiration for people and parties currently still in the idea phase.
- Explain that the interview is being recorded (as you indicated before, however, it is always better to repeat this), and the recording is used only for constructing the case description. After approval by the respondent of this case description, the recording of the interview will be deleted.
- Expect that the interview will take about an hour.

#### **2. PRINCIPLES**

- Were there a few principles which were important to you when you conceived and developed your NBM, for instance, doing things together or thinking of obtaining profits consisting of more than financial gains?
- What are those principles? Can you name them?

- What role do they play in your initiative?
- How and to what extent have multiple, shared, and collective value creation<sup>2</sup> been important for designing, building, and developing your NBM?

### 3. DESIGN

- How long have you been working on the development of this new business model?
- Why did you begin developing this model? What motivated you/which idea drove you? Has this always been present or did it arise from a certain situation?
- Can you explain the essence of the idea/design of your NBM?
- Which parties are involved in the development of the NBM?
- How far along do you think the business model is in its development – is it just starting out, is it in the middle, or is it ready and matured? If it is still in the planning or pilot phase, when do you think it will be ready to move into the project phase?
- Maybe your business model is already fully functional. If that is the case, how long has it been successfully functioning? What are the initial operating experiences?
- In an NBM, various types of transactions of goods and services can take place. What types of transactions are possible in your NBM? Which of these forms may be present in your NBM?<sup>3</sup>
- Which means of transaction are used? Is (only) money involved, or are there other means such as alternate currencies, services, goods, time, knowledge, or something else?
- Are assumptions correct that access and (functional) use are more convenient and more durable than ownership of all possible goods (cars, washing machines, etc.)?

### 4. VALUE PROPOSITION

*Please note that this is perhaps the most important part of the interview. Respondents find it difficult to adequately define the value proposition of their NBM. This is not surprising because it is indeed a difficult matter. Therefore, take the time you need for this section.*

- What do you offer (which may be a product or a service)? This is also called the value proposition. Please indicate this in the form of a one-liner.

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<sup>2</sup> In the book "New Business Models", three principles are identified: Multiple value: Transactions simultaneously create social, economic and ecological values; Shared value creation: sources and results are shared, as well as the costs and benefits; and Collective value creation: activities are jointly conceived and executed.

<sup>3</sup> Transaction forms are ways in which the value exchange is organized. Research shows that there are still five types that can be distinguished, namely exchange, borrow, save, share, and create.

- What is your drive? Why did you choose this offer/service (passion, frustration, ‘food on the table’, or any other reason)?
- What distinguishes your NBM from other (similar) initiatives or competing products/services? Can you list the ‘competition’?
- Can the NBM be scaled up, or can it be copied? Why do you think this is? Does this apply to the NBM as a whole or only certain elements of it?
- Can you briefly describe your NBM (in just a limited number of phrases) on the basis of the following four characteristics: need, promise, proof, experience?
- Does your NBM contribute to a potential (social) change or transition? If so, which change or transition, and why is that important to you?

## 5. **COMMUNITY**

- Who do you consider to be part of the community of the NBM?<sup>4</sup>
- How did you form this community? How did you manage to make participants enthusiastic for your project? How do you share your plan with interested people? What can others learn from this?
- Have agreements been made with the participants within the community about different roles and contributions? How binding or non-binding are these agreements?
- What is the nature of the relationships between the various members of the community? Are they informal in nature, or is everything formalized in arrangements and rules?
- Which means of communication are used when communicating with the different (types of) participants within the community? Does this happen mostly offline or online?
- What is the role of the community in creating the value proposition?
- What sort of changes has the community of your NBM already experienced? In which areas have these changes taken place? Have new members joined or dropped out? Have changes occurred in the relationships, roles, or agreements in between the members of the community? Has the founder possibly left, and was his or her place taken by someone else?

## 6. **VALUE REALIZATION**

- Which (overall) values are created by your NBM?
- How does your NBM generate multiple value(s) creation? What ecological, social, and economic values are reflected in your NBM?
- To what extent does it make a difference for you to create value in euros, or are you driven to create multiple and different values (for example, in addition to money, even more safety in the neighborhood)?

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<sup>4</sup> There may be a community of participants in various ‘layers’. Think of active participants and financial contributors but also participants who contribute in a more modest way to the community. Try to let the respondent name all stakeholders of its NBM.



- Can these values be added together - so a little bit of money, but also a bit of energy and some health points (this could be dubbed "stacking of values")?
- Are these values positive, or are there negative values generated? How do you take these negative values into account when accessing the results of your NBM?
- What indirect values are generated, and how could you take them into account in assessing the outcomes?

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

- Try to assess, based on the answers given, (preferably together) whether the initiative is a genuine NBM and, if so, why. Please indicate this in a one-liner/two sentences.
- What can people learn from your NBM? What is the key message?
- What kind of social improvement, impact, etc. is created by this NBM? To whom does it apply, and how many people are effected (provide numbers, if possible)?
- Are there things you would have done differently with the knowledge of hindsight when founding and deploying your NBM?
- What is the future of this NBM – is this a viable model and scalable and, if so, why, or do you foresee a shorter lifetime for the NMB?
- Can you describe how you keep updating your business model so it remains viable?

## COMPLETION AND FOLLOW-UP

This is the end of the interview. Are there, in your opinion, any topics that have not been addressed, has something not been talked about, or do you want to add something?

May we contact you if things are not clear when analyzing the interview and when constructing the case study?

Within a week, we will send you a case study of three or four pages (approximately 1.500 words) of this interview by e-mail or checking and approval. This is the description of your NBM based on the answers provided during the interview. If you agree with the case study's content, we would like to receive a statement of this (confirmation) by e-mail. Feedback and comments are always welcome and will be handled with care.

NBMS that are the most captivating, thought provoking, impact-generating, or most original have the chance to be published on the website 'Duurzaamnieuws.nl'. Do you consent with the possibility that your NBM could be selected for this? If you have any objections, we will, of course, respect that. When enough interesting case studies are collected, they will be printed in a book.

We might contact you in the future to assess how you and your NBM are doing. The aim of this is to keep the description of the NBMS up to date. Do you, in principle, agree with this?

Thank you for the interview and your time.

*The NBM Research Team*

### *Endnotes*

1 Under a new business model, we understand an initiative organized by a collective of people and/or institutions and/or companies creating multiple value and in which all parties share the realized value.

2 In the book "New Business Models" three principles are identified: Multiple value creation: transactions simultaneously create social, economic and ecological values; Shared value creation: sources and results are shared as well as the costs and benefits; and Collective value: activities are jointly conceived and executed.

3 Transaction Forms are ways in which the value exchange is organized. Research shows that there are still five types that can be distinguished, namely exchange, borrow, save, share, and create.

4 There may be a community of participants in various 'layers' of involvement. Think of active participants and financial contributors but also participants who contribute in a more modest way to the community. Try to let the respondent name all the stakeholders of its NBM, if possible.