

Buy, Sell, Trade!

Leaders



World Business Council for Sustainable Development



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Consejo Empresarial Español para el Desarrollo Sostenible

Trainer notes

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1. Background

The “Buy, Sell, Trade, (Partner and Advocate)!” game is a role-playing exercise that demonstrates the multiple benefits of preserving ecosystems for the services that they provide to different stakeholder groups. The game is designed to simulate the negotiation of ecosystem services “deals” and to provide insights into the many practical, political, economic, moral and accountability issues involved with the negotiation of such “deals”. More specifically, the game will highlight the existence of “trade-offs” in ecosystem management decision-making and emphasize the importance of internalizing ecosystem values that are commonly left out of the marketplace.

Every part of society, including business, government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other local stakeholders depends directly or indirectly on the sustainable management of ecosystems and the services they provide. For example, wetland ecosystems help purify water, provide recreation and buffer against natural disasters. Everyone would benefit in the long-term if there was a common understanding of both the value of these services, and the larger role that market mechanisms play as a complement to existing strategies for conserving ecosystems. In fact, market mechanisms can be more cost-effective than regulatory approaches. In some instances, market mechanisms are incorporated into laws and/or regulations.

This game is a result of a joint effort between the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as well as guidance and insights from Earthwatch Institute, World Resources Institute, Katoomba Group/Forest Trends, the US Business Council for Sustainable Development and Fundacion Entorno.

When you play the game, make sure it brings value to you:

- ✓ **Find** – create new situations that are relevant to you
 - e.g., add a natural disaster or an epidemic
- ✓ **Fit** – change what you like to make it fit your needs
 - e.g., add an ecosystem service or stakeholders (farmers, consumers...)
- ✓ **Fun** – keep it fun and encourage people to get into their roles
 - e.g., use props (hats, whistles...) to help people feel part of Lanka Province.

It is critical that the lead facilitator be comfortable and familiar with this material.

2. Game objectives

This game aims to:

- Introduce the *complexity of ecosystem services issues* facing business, government, civil society, NGOs and others, that also include social responsibility issues
- Engage all participants in a *discussion of the risks and opportunities* of buying, selling, trading, partnering, and/or advocating ecosystems services
- Demonstrate that there can be *winners and losers* in ecosystems services transactions and market mechanisms
- Encourage all participants to strive for developing “*win-win*”¹ *ecosystems service deals*.

Note that many stakeholders might not be familiar with ecosystem services or key publications like the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. This will create an environment for negotiations that is close to reality, where some players who have this understanding will be convincing others that ecosystem services can be the basis of deals, and other players will be skeptical of their value.

¹ “Win-win” means that all participants can profit from a situation in one way or the other.

3. What the game is and what it is not

The game is:

- ✓ A learning tool to stimulate discussion
- ✓ Based on *potential* market mechanisms around ecosystem services
- ✓ Designed to be customized, although it can be used as is
- ✓ For players of all ages and professions (a simplified version could be used by 12-year olds, a customized version could be used in a company to increase awareness around ecosystems).

The game is not:

- ✗ A business simulation
- ✗ A sophisticated process that explores specific solutions
- ✗ Built on exact data and situations
- ✗ Perfect and flawless.

4. Procedure

- The game should be played over 3-4 hours in order to create as much concentrated learning and excitement in each team as possible.
- There will be an overall facilitator who represents the national government, and who will convene the Town Hall meeting at the end of the game.
- Based on a maximum of 50 participants, ideally there will be 5 teams made up of up to 10 participants each + one facilitator in each group (optional). Players in each team can make their own roles if they like, but these should include one team spokesperson for the Town Hall meeting.
- Participants from different sectors of society (in “real life”) should be encouraged to try and split up among the different tables or groups.
- Each team will have a pack of “deal slips” to record the deals that have been made. These will be used during the Town Hall meeting, and need to be approved by the official certifier in the partnering team.

5. Game elements

- The game is designed as a multi-step process.
- For a 3-hour game, the game could occur as follows [the tentative time allotted is in brackets]
 - ✓ Safety introduction (fire exit, etc.) [5]
 - ✓ Overall facilitator or external expert gives a brief recap on what ecosystems are, and their value, as well as case studies if needed [10]
 - ✓ Overall facilitator (who represents Dr. Nate Tchure, National Minister for the Environment) gives presentation of the game, its objectives, setting the scene and the stakeholders. This includes showing a map of Lanka Province [10]

- ✓ Teams break out to familiarize themselves with the risks, opportunities, interests and consider others perspectives, then agree on a team strategy for collaboration, market activities, partnering and other types of activities [20]
- ✓ Consultation: Teams split up and meet potential partners and start thinking about deals that could be made [20]
- ✓ Internal strategizing: Teams regroup and agree on deals they want to pursue [20]
- ✓ Deal making at Meet at the Eco Marketplace: Each team representative goes back to the representative they talked to previously – if a potential deal exists – and they fill in a joint deal slip (note: they do not sign anything at this point) [20]
- ✓ Teams regroup and prepare for the meeting at Town Hall; this includes deciding who in the team will present the key deals that have been agreed, but not yet signed (total 5 minutes to present) [15]
- ✓ Multi-stakeholder dialogue at Town Hall begins; teams present the deals they made to the group; each team is given 5 minutes to read out the deals that have been agreed, which will then be discussed in plenary, and then signed in front of everyone; each team can reflect on whether they have achieved their objectives or not, and why [45]
- ✓ Final remarks and takeaways by overall facilitator [10]
- ✓ Participants fill out evaluation forms. [5]
- Extra elements if more time is available include:
 - ✓ An unexpected cyclone could be announced between two rounds
 - ✓ Participants provide general comments/feedback on the game.

6. Ground rules

- Two ears, one mouth – listen to each other more than you talk!
- You can ask whatever questions you like to other teams
- You are not obliged to answer any questions that others ask you, but don't lie
- Stick to the time limits
- Be as innovative as you can – you can add (realistic) elements to your teams' description
- Try to break away from traditional stereotypes of stakeholder groups
- Offsetting environmental impacts is permitted
- Lanka Provincial government owns the wetland area, but he/she can only lease it, not sell it
- No corruption and/or illegal activities are allowed

7. Handouts

Note that a generic PowerPoint pack and clean copies of the handouts below are available in addition to these trainer notes.

- Team Strategy Sheets: Individual stakeholder descriptions including the team objective (one per participant). These sheets will be distributed to each team to give them the basic information on who they are, what their objectives in the game are, how they might achieve these, and what constraints they are faced with. These will serve as the basis for elaborating team strategies.
- Map of stakeholders in Lanka Province (one per participant).
- 5 deal slips for each group to record their deals.
- Rough paper for internal notes on strategy development and ideas.
- Badges for each team member (“Lanka Provincial Government 1”, “Lanka Provincial Government 2”, “Lanka Provincial Government 3” and so on).
- *Optional:* Fake money (currency: LaK)
- *Optional:* Internal Memorandum from Lanka Province Government: New National Environmental Law on Wastewater Discharges for Lanka Provincial Government (copies only for Lanka Provincial Government team).

8. Setting the scene in Lanka Province

Lanka Province:

- Is a developing country
- Has an increasing, rural population
- Has poor and undernourished communities
- Has increasing economic development, with some international companies keen on benefiting from local labor and natural resources
- Is of high ecological value, in particular wetlands
- Has newly approved, stricter wastewater legislation.

The overall challenge for all inhabitants is to boost economic development, reduce poverty and undernourishment, while at the same time preserving ecosystem value.

9. Introducing the game players (teams)

The game participants will be divided into small stakeholder teams (max. 10 individuals from diverse organizations, i.e., business, young leaders, conservation organizations, government, other NGOs, media...). The teams are:

1. **Lanka Provincial Government** – the public administration of Lanka Province. Their main concern is the overall well-being of the inhabitants of the region and to maximize the economic return from local resources.
2. **Sweet Home Development Corporation** – international land developers that need to acquire land in the wetland in order to build a high-priced retirement community for Europeans and North Americans.

3. **Lanka Cement and Aggregates Company** – a local cement and aggregates company that operates a mining site and supplies building materials. Has been operating in Lanka Province for over 50 years. Their main concern is to maintain a license to operate in the face of stricter environmental regulations.
4. **WetlandAdvocates.org** – an international NGO whose primary mission is to lobby governments to protect, enhance and conserve healthy wetlands. Their main concern is the preservation of the Lanka wetland.
5. **Eco Tour** – a local tourism company offering eco-tours in Lanka Province. Tourists from around the world come on these tours to try and catch a glimpse of the extremely rare Lanka bird, the Gold-Bearded Hopper that only lives in and around the wetland.

In addition to the 5 teams above, **Dr. Nate Tchure**, National Minister for the Environment, is the lead facilitator. He/she sees that the situation in Lanka Province is unstable, due to such issues as increasing population, potential arrival of the development company and the use by many of the wetlands. He/she requests that all stakeholders exchange positions with each other and try and come up with collaborative actions. As national minister for the environment, he/she invites all stakeholders to a Town Hall meeting where a common position will try and be reached.

Deals should be prepared before the Town Hall Meeting, but not yet signed. Each deal should be signed during the Town Hall Meeting under the chairmanship of Dr. Nate Tchure, but this does not mean that everyone needs to agree to the deal – only the two parties signing the deal are in agreement. Also, note that this process does not mean that participants cannot lobby up until and during the Town Hall Meeting.

10. Presentation for lead facilitator

Lanka Province is located in a tropical developing country. The Province covers 1,500 km² and is inhabited by 15,000 people (circled in red on the map). To the South-East of Lanka, the Mainstream River flows through the Lanka Wetlands, a 200 km² large ecosystem.

Dr. Nate Tchure, National Minister for the Environment (lead facilitator of the game) has contacted the representatives of The **Lanka Provincial Government** because it faces major challenges including undernourishment of the local population, poverty and lack of jobs and benefits in the rural areas. The population is increasing, and the province is finding it hard to keep up with the ever-increasing demand for food, water, energy and healthcare. As Lanka Province suffers from a cruel lack of resources to fulfill its main functions, it is keen to attract new investments and business opportunities, while at the same time needs to consider and represent the voice of the rural population.

Formally, most of the land in Lanka Province is owned by the provincial government, who leases concessions on a case-by-case basis, but who is unable to sell the land.

The poor conditions in the province have continued for some time despite the presence of the **Lanka Cement and Aggregates Company**, which has brought some economic growth to the region. However, this source of income and jobs is currently jeopardized by new national environmental regulations on wastewater discharge that could force the

company to move its operations. The company operates adjacent to the Lanka Wetlands and owns a rehabilitated quarry bordering the wetlands. Potentially the wetland systems can treat the wastewater generated by the company. The primary mining site in which they operate is due to be used up in 5 years. The company is looking for additional reserves to mine and the demand for sand and gravel could be significantly increased by new development projects in the province.

Another key player in the region is **Sweet Home Development Corporation** who have identified a parcel of land (within the Lanka Wetlands) that is highly suitable for the construction of a luxury retirement home for wealthy Europeans and North Americans with all the associated amenities, i.e., shops, restaurants and a golf course. What luxury to be driven around an intact wetland bustling with biodiversity in your backyard! It is anticipated that the development company will need 5 km² of land to build the retirement community with all the additional amenities. The new retirement community and associated amenities is targeted for completion within 5 years.

Yet another company has also been operating in the area: **Eco Tour**. A rare and endangered bird, the Gold-Bearded Hopper, nests in the Lanka Wetlands, and needs a significant amount (195 km²) of intact wetland to breed properly. Tourists from around the world come on these tours to try and catch a glimpse of this extremely rare Lanka bird as it only lives in and around the wetland.

Relatively recently, Lanka Wetlands became a concern for an international conservation group: **WetlandAdvocates.org**, who has decided to push Lanka Province Government to make sure the wetlands are conserved forever. The NGO is however open to development as long as a no-net-loss policy is enforced.

*Note: One key stakeholder that is not at the table is the **rural population**. You may decide to adapt this game to include them as another team, or ask one stakeholder, e.g. the Provincial Government by default to also represent the needs of the rural population. The reason this important group was not included in this version of the game was purely for practical reasons to limit the number of players as well as ecosystem services included, and not because this group is not considered critical to decision-making in Lanka Province.*

11. Potential outcomes

Each team has several other stakeholders he or she can make a “deal” with, including partnerships, joint-ventures, pay-offs, providing services, agreements on common advocacy positions, or any other type of contract or transaction. There are no rules or limitations to the strategies and activities implemented by each team other than they have to work within the “scene” as set forth above. Each team is allocated an initial budget, which it can use to negotiate deals. In addition, each team must document on a “deal slip” each action/deal they implement with another team.

The deals are meant to help the teams make a case for active engagement in the multi-stakeholder process that will be convened at the end of the session in the Town Hall Meeting. The objective for each team is to show the authorities their “positive” role in shaping the social, economic and environmental landscape of Lanka Province.

Each team holds a “trump card” – which is a special piece of information that it needs to hold and can bring to the attention of one or more of the other teams. These “trump cards” are meant to help the teams fulfill their missions and stimulate deals.

There are no winners or losers in this game. While the team members are told that the objective of the game is to meet all of the objectives given on their team sheets, the real purpose is to facilitate a successful multi-stakeholder process of sound decision-making. However, two opposite outcomes could occur:

- The wetland is conserved (no net loss).
- The wetland is partially converted (net loss).

In essence, the game will serve as an opportunity to test trade-offs between different development scenarios in a given landscape.

There is no “preferred” or “right” answer to this game. The overall outcome of the game should be the discussions themselves, whereby participants have shared and learned from the other players in the room.

12.Disclaimer

This game was developed by the WBCSD and IUCN with advice, input and suggestions from Earthwatch Institute, World Resources Institute, Katoomba Group/Forest Trends, the US BCSD and Fundacion Entorno, as well as a number of WBCSD member companies.

It is a fictional game and any resemblance to organizations, companies or countries is purely coincidental.