

Chief Sustainability Officer Transition Lab

THE CSO ROLE

The Chief Sustainability Officer role has emerged in response to increasing demands for more sustainable and purpose-driven organizations from government, regulators, customers, shareholders, and the general public. This role is evolving rapidly to meet that demand, but it remains ambiguous and inconsistently defined.

We created the Chief Sustainability Officer Transition Lab specifically to help newly appointed CSOs, including those with prior CXO experience, make efficient and effective transitions to the constantly changing role of the CSO.

THE LAB

Our Labs are in-person or virtual experiences based on our extensive research on CXO transitions. The agenda of each Lab focuses on the **three most important resources** CSOs should manage during times of significant change:



TIME: Crushing new demands will be made of your time, which you must treat as your most valuable asset. What are your priorities, where do you want to spend your time, and how will you enforce that?



TALENT: Great talent not only makes you look good, but also helps you make the most of your time. Often a new executive's biggest regret is not moving fast enough on talent changes and opportunities.



RELATIONSHIPS: Executives who didn't take time to cultivate critical relationships later found those people became stumbling blocks. And many times, they underestimated just how many critical stakeholders they have. Who are your most important stakeholders, and how will you communicate with them?

Contact the [Chief Sustainability Officer Program mailbox](#) or visit our [website](#) to learn more.

The Lab Delivery Excellence Team has developed a standard Lab experience, in which transitioning CSOs can explore:

- **Transition experiences:** Discuss critical moments and organizational context
- **Hopes, fears, and legacies:** Define a “north star” and consider the CEO’s agenda
- **Priorities:** Use Deloitte’s Four Faces of the CSO framework to identify priorities and classify the urgency and importance of each
- **Communication strategies:** Develop language to communicate strategic priorities to stakeholders
- **Confidence:** Assess the preparedness of the sustainability organization to execute top priorities and identify ways to increase confidence in outcomes
- **Talent:** Examine capabilities and bandwidth of direct reports, as well as the scope and efficacy of reporting relationships
- **Relationships:** Focus on the strengths of key relationships and influence strategies needed to achieve priorities
- **180-day plan:** Create action plans with specific milestones

Note, the Deloitte Greenhouse team also offers Sustainability labs that are customized to meet your client’s needs – reach out to the [CSO Program Mailbox](#) to learn more about Sustainability Greenhouse Lab offerings.



Chief Sustainability Officer Four Faces Framework

CATALYST

Drive systemic sustainable change by persuading, inspiring, and convincing others to act on strategic opportunities, and **build momentum** across the organization and sector

Sample Priorities of a Catalyst:

- *Develop strong partnerships across internal business functions to build a common vision that drives sustainability transformation*
- *Transform cultural, leadership, and management practices to increase sustainability within the organization*
- *Engage in activities that demonstrate leading practices, raise the organization's profile, and inspire others to act*

STRATEGIST

Lead the alignment and integration of sustainability within the overall strategy of the organization, and **articulate a coherent and consistent set of priorities**

Sample Priorities of a Strategist:

- *Identify sustainability risks, opportunities, and leading practices, and integrate into the organization's overall strategy*
- *Design future-proof strategies to create value from purpose, leverage technology advancements, and deliver a competitive advantage*
- *Build consensus among disparate perspectives within the organization to craft a compelling sustainability narrative*

STEWARD

Oversee the governance of sustainability, and ensure **policies, procedures, and controls** are effectively integrated and enforced within the organization

Sample Priorities of a Steward:

- *Establish governance processes to ensure compliance and enable the organization to meet its sustainability goals*
- *Monitor evolving reporting requirements and manage the organization's public disclosures on sustainability*
- *Identify potential conflicts across the organization related to sustainability initiatives and bring to a resolution*

OPERATOR

Balance the talent, capabilities, processes, and technologies needed to fulfill the sustainability vision and goals of the organization

Sample Priorities of an Operator:

- *Orchestrate collaboration across business functions and refine business processes and norms to enable sustainability transformation*
- *Identify and utilize funding options available for the organization's sustainability projects, initiatives, and programs*
- *Manage external contractors/suppliers to enable new ways of working that support the organization's sustainability values and goals*