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# **Sustainable Small Business Planning Template**

*"The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it"*

*Robert Swann*

This template is intended to provide suggestions on how you can start or further your sustainability journey as a small business. The idea is for you to discuss this with your staff and to choose the targets and actions that are practical/doable in your industry and in your circumstances. We cannot all be perfect green champions, but we can all do something better!

Insert your company name where appropriate and select the targets that you can implement or add your own. It may be that you operate in a water-stressed area and so actions that save water will be more important to you and your staff. A journey starts with a single step and this plan needs to make sense to everyone for it to be successfully implemented.

### **Sustainability Policy**

{Name of company} is committed to the continual improvement of its sustainability journey, including complying with all relevant environmental legislation and best practices. By identifying and managing environmental impacts and reducing or offsetting same, {Name of company} will enhance our local community, help ensure sustainability and reduce operating costs.

{Name of company} defines environmental impacts as the direct impacts we have on the environment through carbon emissions, natural resource use and waste generation, and the indirect impacts that occur through our supply chain and partnerships.

We are committed to acting in a way that does not harm people, animals, or the environment.

Key environmental objectives for {Name of company} include:

{Select}

* to reduce energy consumption and adopt sustainable alternatives, where practical
* to use water more efficiently
* to reduce waste
* to reduce the environmental impacts of travel
* to reduce the environmental impacts of purchasing
* to offset emissions that can’t be reduced
* to increase stakeholder environmental awareness and drive behaviour change
* to seek innovative solutions
* to use environmentally friendly products in our operations
* to increase the offering of sustainable alternatives in our product line and delivery options
* to greening our local environment
* other (add your specific objectives)

We/I commit to uphold {Name of company}’s approach to sustainability through the actions outlined in the attached plan (attach action plan).

Organisation:

Name:

Signed: Date:

**SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

Use this template to plan out actions to improve environmental performance. Example actions are provided. These are not exhaustive, nor intended to be prescriptive. They are merely suggestions. We encourage you to brainstorm with your staff about what actions and targets to take.

## **Energy efficiency (Sustainable Goal 7)**

*Don’t act fuelish! (Anonymous)*

**Objective:** Use energy more efficiently and increase the use of sustainable energy alternatives

**Target:** {Insert target in terms of consumption or move to alternatives}

Example key performance indicators:

* Electricity consumption: kWh/person (or m2)
* Gas consumption: MJ/person (or m2)
* Generator fuel consumption: diesel/biodiesel L/person (or m2)

### Examples:

1. Switch off equipment and lights when not in use
2. Choose energy-efficient labeled products when purchasing or leasing new equipment (anything that uses less energy!)
3. Minimise temperature fluctuations via good draught seals, insulation and keeping doors closed
4. Alternatively, switch off the AC and open windows, where practical
5. Switch to solar or biomass boilers

| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Frequency** | **Results – comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Check if lights, appliances and equipment are turned off when not in use |  |  |  |
| Identify opportunities for improvement and provide appropriate signage/education to employees |  |  |  |
| Install automatic switch–off functionality for lights, appliances and equipment |  |  |  |
| Check thermostats, draughts seals and insulation |  |  |  |
| Identify opportunities for improvement (for example, upgrading seals and insulation) and provide appropriate signage and education to employees |  |  |  |
| Check the energy rating of existing appliances and equipment |  |  |  |
| Choose energy-efficient products |  |  |  |
| Investigate solar power opportunities for your business |  |  |  |
| Convert to LED lights |  |  |  |
| Other {Insert specific actions for your business} |  |  |  |

## **Water efficiency (Sustainable Goals 6 and 14)**

*Thousands Have Lived Without Love, Not One Without Water. – W.H.Auden*

**Objective:** Use water more efficiently

**Target:** {Insert target}

Example key performance indicators:

* Water consumption: kL/person (or m2)
* Water quality samples

### Examples:

1. Check for leaking taps or equipment
2. Provide drinking fountains and refillable bottles
3. Choose water-efficient appliances, equipment and fixtures
4. Install a rainwater tank and greywater collection system
5. Make sure chemicals and oil are responsibly disposed of and not just poured down drains
6. Replace toxic products with eco-friendly alternatives
7. Use environmentally friendly cleaning products
8. Ditch the plastic and polystyrene and ensure drains are well maintained and kept clear

| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Frequency** | **Results – comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Check taps, equipment or appliances for leaks |  |  |  |
| Start monitoring water use |  |  |  |
| Fix any leaking taps, equipment or appliances |  |  |  |
| Replace old and inefficient equipment with water-efficient options over time |  |  |  |
| Provide water fountains/jugs for employees and customers with reusable cups |  |  |  |
| Let employees and customers know they can BYO a bottle (or provide refillable bottles) and fill up at your business |  |  |  |
| Invest in energy and water efficiency apps |  |  |  |
| Identify if any chemicals and oils are used during your operations |  |  |  |
| Educate stakeholders on how to responsibly deal with chemicals and oils |  |  |  |
| Ensure appropriate disposal systems/processes are in place |  |  |  |
| Use environmentally friendly cleaning products |  |  |  |
| Replace toxic products e.g. fertiliser and insecticides with eco-friendly alternatives |  |  |  |

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## **Waste reduction (Sustainable Goals 11, 12, and 15)**

*“Waste is a design flaw.” – Kate Kreba*

**Objective:** To reduce the amount of waste produced and increase the quantity of waste reused and recycled

**Target:** {Insert target}

Example key performance indicators:

* Kg of landfill/person (or m2)
* Kg of comingled recycling/person
* Kg paper and cardboard recycling/person

### Examples:

1. Provide recycling (e.g. mixed, IT, paper) and organic (compostable) waste collection bins
2. Avoid single-use waste as much as possible. If you can’t reuse it, refuse it
   1. Straws
   2. Plastic water bottles
   3. Plastic bags, plastic or polystyrene containers, cutlery
   4. Plastic or non-recycled packaging
   5. Single-use merchandise/giveaways
3. Educate and reward customers and employees for bringing their reusable cups, bags and bottles with discounts or opportunities to enter competitions via social media
4. Educate and encourage stakeholders to reuse, upcycle or recycle
5. Add extra costs to single-use items to encourage the adoption of reusable items. For example, make coffees/alcoholic beverages 50 cents extra in takeaway cups or offer a carbon offset button
6. Partner with an organisation that collects leftover food, old IT equipment, furniture etc. to donate these items to people in need
7. Go paperless – reduce, reuse, recycle and go digital

| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Frequency** | **Results – comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Involve stakeholders in identifying what waste is generated and where in your business |  |  |  |
| Identify recycling options |  |  |  |
| Place appropriate bins and provide education to stakeholders |  |  |  |
| Identify single-use waste items |  |  |  |
| Investigate and adopt alternatives |  |  |  |
| Educate stakeholders on alternatives and incentivise BYO refillables |  |  |  |
| Identify opportunities to encourage reusable items |  |  |  |
| Research potential partners in the market to work with both from a recycling and an on-donation perspective |  |  |  |
| Teach stakeholders that nothing is thrown away, it is thrown *to* something – usually landfills and waterways adding to pollution and our carbon footprint |  |  |  |
| Assess paper use and wastage and where it can be eliminated or recycled |  |  |  |
| Set up eco-brick stations for ‘soft plastic’ that isn’t recyclable e.g. cling film |  |  |  |
| Invest in digital solutions |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |

## **Travel (Sustainable Goals 12,13 and 9)**

*Big journeys begin with small steps…*

**Objective:** To reduce the environmental impact of travel (A typical passenger vehicle emits about 4.6 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year.)

**Target:** Insert target

Example key performance indicators:

Example key performance indicators include:

* Reduce the number of single-passenger trips by…… %
* Percentage/number of attendees who take public transport
* Replacing in-person meetings with online by …. %

### Examples:

1. Encourage carpooling/assist employees with transport to and from work
2. Use public transport or incentivise walk/bicycle access, where practical
3. Drive hybrid or electric vehicles
4. Buy carbon offsets for travel

| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Frequency** | **Results – comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Promote walking and cycling, where practical |  |  |  |
| Identify incentives to encourage your stakeholders to walk, ride or catch public transport. Lead by example! |  |  |  |
| Assess greener options |  |  |  |
| Clarify the necessity of travel (cost v benefit) |  |  |  |
| Purchase carbon offsets for travel when available |  |  |  |
| Stay in environmentally friendly or carbon-neutral accommodations when out of town |  |  |  |
| Build carbon offsetting options into your delivery prices |  |  |  |
| Educate employees and customers on which carbon-offsetting projects you support and why |  |  |  |

## **Supply Chain (Sustainable Goals 5, 8, 11, 12, 13)**

*The future will be green, or not at all – Jonathon Porritt*

**Objective:** To reduce the environmental impacts of products purchased

**Target:** {Insert target}

Example key performance indicators:

Example key performance indicators include:

* % products that are recycled, recyclable or reusable
* % products locally made and/or fair trade
* % products with a sustainable certification

### Examples:

1. Purchase items that are made from recycled materials, are recyclable or reusable, or have a guarantee they are made to last
2. Purchase locally made products (low carbon miles)
3. Avoid products with excessive packaging or buy in bulk (for example, swap single-serve packaged products with loose or bulk packaged items)
4. Purchase products with an environmental or social certification
5. Hire/lease, rather than buying
6. Buy natural or organic
7. Lead by example and have fair trade and gender equality policies
8. Insist that your main suppliers have sustainable policies and fair trade, gender-equal practices

| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Frequency** | **Results – comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Identify product needs and quantify % recycled, reusable or with a guarantee to last |  |  |  |
| Set minimum standards for purchasing and a cost differential allowance (e.g. be prepared to pay more for a sustainable alternative) |  |  |  |
| Educate customers as to why you purchase the sustainable alternatives and incentivise them to do the same e.g. include a ‘green button’ to allow the customer to carbon offset\* |  |  |  |
| Identify local alternatives |  |  |  |
| Set minimum standards for purchasing with regard to sustainability |  |  |  |
| Identify environmental and social certifications you would like to support |  |  |  |
| Identify opportunities to replace buying with leasing |  |  |  |
| Require key suppliers to adhere to sustainable policies and practices |  |  |  |
| Develop policies and procedures for sustainability, fair trade and gender equality |  |  |  |

#### **Food for thought:**

#### \*MIT Researchers found that providing a button that says ‘same-day delivery is equivalent to killing 300 trees’ compared with one that says ‘if you wait three to four days, then it’s equivalent to killing 10 trees, but don’t worry, we’re going to plant 15,’ significantly influenced customers’ behaviour.

#### <https://www.techtarget.com/searcherp/feature/10-strategies-for-more-sustainable-last-mile-delivery>

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