



Developing an Environmental or Sustainability Policy

Put simply, an environmental or sustainability policy is a statement outlining your business' environmental strategy and the driving force behind your objectives. It should include time-related targets and a measurable management programme, which should result in effective implementation.

Although your organisation's environmental or sustainability policy should be formed by your senior team, it is certainly worth including all staff at the ideas stage too. After all, your staff are stakeholders in the organisation, including them may prove motivational, turning your policy into positive action.

There is not an agreed set layout on how you should write an environmental or sustainability policy. The key is to have a policy that is both easy to understand and that clearly states your business aims and objectives, similar to a mission statement. It needn't be longer than a single page. An example is given below.

An effective environmental or sustainability policy allows your senior team to communicate its aims and objectives to employees, shareholders, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. All goals should be measurable, realistic and have accountable actions with deadlines.

Your policy should outline:

- Your business' mission and information about its operations.
- A commitment to continually improve and monitor environmental performance.
- A commitment to managing your environmental impacts.
- Your compliance with relevant environmental legislation.
- Your expectations from suppliers and sub-contractors.
- A commitment to employee awareness and training.



Environmental/Sustainability Policy example

Next Review: DD/MM/ YY
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Mission statement

[Organisation] recognises that it has a responsibility to the environment beyond legal and regulatory requirements. We are committed to reducing our environmental impact and continually improving our environmental performance as an integral part of our business strategy and operating methods, with regular review points. We will encourage customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders to do the same.

Responsibility

[Name and Title] is responsible for ensuring that the environmental policy is implemented. However, all employees have a responsibility in their area to ensure that the aims and objectives of the policy are met.

Policy aims

We endeavour to:

- Comply with and exceed all relevant regulatory requirements.
- Continually improve and monitor environmental performance.
- Continually improve and reduce environmental impacts.
- Incorporate environmental factors into business decisions.
- Increase employee awareness and training.

Paper

- We will minimise the use of paper in the office.
- We will reduce packaging as much as possible.
- We will seek to buy recycled and recyclable paper products.
- We will reuse and recycle all paper where possible.

Energy and water

- We will seek to reduce the amount of energy used as much as possible.
- Lights and electrical equipment will be switched off when not in use.
- Heating will be adjusted with energy consumption in mind.
- The energy consumption and efficiency of new products will be taken into account when purchasing.

Office supplies

- We will evaluate if the need can be met in another way.
- We will evaluate if renting/sharing is an option before purchasing equipment.
- We will evaluate the environmental impact of any new products we intend to purchase.
- We will favour more environmentally friendly and efficient products wherever possible.
- We will reuse and recycle everything we are able to.

Transportation

- We will reduce the need to travel, restricting to necessity trips only.
- We will promote the use of travel alternatives such as e-mail or video/phone conferencing.
- We will make additional efforts to accommodate the needs of those using public transport or bicycles.
- We will favour 'green' vehicles and maintain them rigorously to ensure ongoing efficiency.



Maintenance and cleaning

- Cleaning materials used will be as environmentally friendly as possible.
- Materials used in office refurbishment will be as environmentally friendly as possible.
- We will only use licensed and appropriate organisations to dispose of waste.

Monitoring and improvement

- We will comply with and exceed all relevant regulatory requirements.
- We will continually improve and monitor environmental performance.
- We will continually improve and reduce environmental impacts.
- We will incorporate environmental factors into business decisions.
- We will increase employee awareness through training.
- We will review this policy and any related business issues at our monthly management meetings.

Culture

- We will involve staff in the implementation of this policy, for greater commitment and improved performance.
- We will update this policy at least once annually in consultation with staff and other stakeholders where necessary.
- We will provide staff with relevant environmental training.
- We will work with suppliers, contractors, and sub-contractors to improve their environmental performance.
- We will use local labour and materials where available to reduce CO2 and help the community.

Signed

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Position

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Date

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