Changing for good

An EAC guide to sustainable planning

every action counts

bassac
supporting people sustaining communities

Introduction

The Every Action Counts programme has been dedicated to helping community organisations to save energy, save resources, travel wisely, shop ethically and care for your local area.

We have produced several pieces of guidance, all of which have been aimed at providing practical information and ideas on how to make our organisations more sustainable by taking action on each of these themes. A key tool for helping any organisation, large or small, to make changes to the way it works and ensure that those changes stick, is to make an action plan. This way everyone knows what changes are being made, who is responsible for making sure they happen, when they can expect to be done and when they will be reviewed.

This guide builds on our other publications to give you a planning process that will enable you to put sustainable development into practice within the heart of your own organisation - not just as a one off review but as part on an ongoing process that becomes an everyday part of what you do. It provides guidance on what initial research to do, who to involve, how to assess what you are already doing and how to draw up the action plan itself. It also give ideas about how and when to communicate your plans to others, and what to cover in a review of your plan. Importantly, the guide makes suggestions about how to use your experiences to attract funders, partners and to lead the change locally so it is not just our organisations but our communities that become smarter and more sustainable.

We hope that 'Changing For Good' will encourage you to take on, adapt, expand and evolve the process of action planning for sustainable development in your own organisation, so that you can ensure that every action you take continues to count long into the future.

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Planning for sustainable success

Rising fuel prices causing misery for millions of vulnerable people in cold and damp homes, degenerating local areas with traffic pollution and lack of green space, rising costs of food and public transport, poor quality food in schools and hospitals: these are just a few ways that the environment directly affects the people that our sector supports. Injustice, lack of voice and inequality of experience are just some of the ways that vulnerable people experience them.

At the same time, many of our organisations are facing an uncertain future in the face of rising costs, hardship and shortages caused by the economic downturn. As a result, our daily struggle with a stressful job and challenging organisational mission, not to mention limited resources of money and willing help, is being challenged by new and worrying pressures.

Taking action is therefore urgent. In order to better the lives of those we support and make our organisations stronger, we all need to get smarter about sustainable development. Applying sustainable development to your organisation (leading to increased organisational sustainability) can help you to build on your organisation's value base and develop new and creative ways to save money, generate income and foster external interest.

What is sustainable development?

It is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (The Brundtland Report, 1987). Sustainability is often described as the goal, while sustainable development is the journey, achieved by balancing economic, social and environmental aspects.

By building sustainable development into your planning processes you can begin to make both short and longer term changes and improvements. Drawing on the five EAC themes – Save Energy, Travel Wisely, Shop Ethically, Save our Resources and Care for your Area – this guidance aims to help you create sustainable development action plans (SDAPs). It gives ideas on who to involve, how to prepare staff, volunteers and trustees for any changes, how to decide on the changes needed and how to implement them and make them stick in the longer term. It may also inspire you to pass the message on by collaborating with others to achieve common goals, leading the change in your area or by taking home some of the actions from work and trying them out with family, flatmates and friends – after all, cultivating people power and promoting collective action are critical in tackling these issues more widely.

Why does sustainable development action planning matter?

Whilst the third sector has been good at addressing the social and economic factors that impact on people's lives, we have generally failed to address the environmental ones. Yet all organisations, large and small, have an environmental impact and there is a lot that you can do to reduce this.

Taking action at a local level can make a difference and, at the same time, can bring together and empower individuals.

Your organisation's mission and values may be based on a passion for equality and human rights, anger at discrimination and injustice, a determination to tackle poverty or an aspiration to build stronger communities and better lives.

And yet it is the vulnerable groups in society that are most affected by climate change and unequal access to limited natural resources. As the Third Sector Declaration on Climate Change states, *"there is overwhelming evidence that the worst impacts of climate change constitute one of the greatest social, environmental and economic threats to society. Issues such as health, housing, transport, waste, food production and equality are completely linked with environmental conditions".*

What is the Third Sector Declaration on Climate Change?

The Declaration is a statement of intent from Third Sector organisations to tackle the issue of climate change by taking action in our organisations and in our communities.

Those that sign it believe that climate change will disproportionately affect the disadvantaged, poor and excluded and that the Third Sector has a central role in working with communities and government to promote sustainable development that delivers both environmental and social justice.

Sustainable development is also a major concern for central and local government and other funding bodies who are progressively under pressure to improve their environmental performance. Increasingly, funders are asking the organisations they support to demonstrate that they also care about sustainable development. So you need to be one step ahead and incorporate sustainable practice into your organisation now. Doing so will demonstrate to potential funders and partners that you are a forward-thinking organisation with good governance in place. It will demonstrate your commitment to helping the UK to meet its carbon emission targets and your understanding that 'doing your bit' is no longer optional - it is the right thing to do.

What targets has the government set?

The Government has set challenging targets for reducing the UK's carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 and these have been set in law by the Climate Change Act 2008.

What is a sustainable development action plan?

An SDAP is simply a framework for:

1. Identifying actions that you would like to take in order to develop your organisation in a sustainable way;
2. Planning the process you intend to go through when carrying out certain actions and naming the person with lead responsibility for it;
3. Recording your successes and deciding on future action.

How does it work?

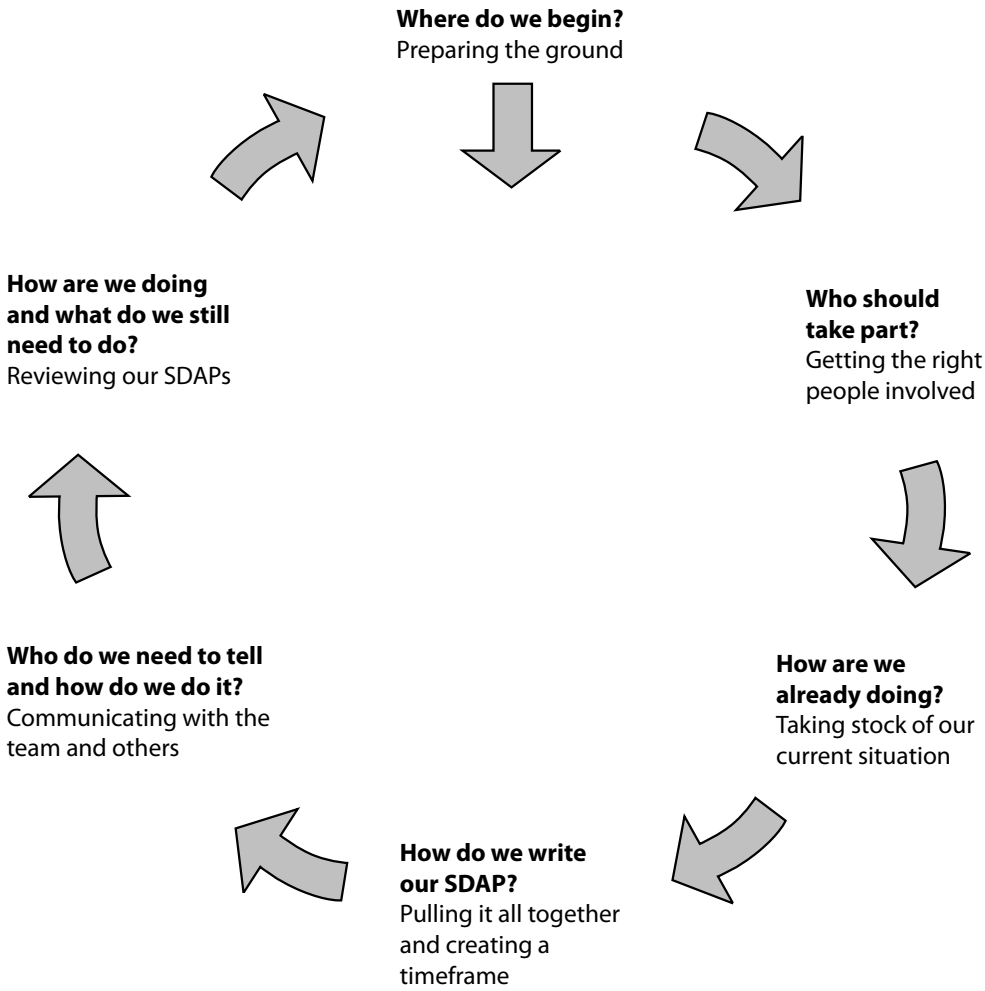
The process of sustainable development action planning is ongoing. You may already be part of the way through it, or you may be starting from scratch. Either way, you will need to review your actions on a regular basis to work out how you are doing and what you want to do next. The diagram below illustrates the various stages involved:

The important thing to remember when drawing up your SDAP is that you don't have to do everything at once! In fact, it is better to be realistic and plan your actions according to what you can do now, soon or later.

Is this guide for me?

This guide is aimed at those of you within small to medium sized community or voluntary organisations that plan to help your organisation develop more sustainably. You might be a trustee, an office manager, a volunteer, a centre manager/Chief Executive or any other member of the team that has an interest in this area.

The following chapters provide guidance and ideas on how to work through the various stages of sustainable development action planning and how you can set goals for now, sooner or later. At the end of each chapter there is an Action Plan Checklist to get you thinking about the kind of things you might like to include in your own action plans. These are incorporated into the sample SDAP which can be found at the end of Chapter 4.



Chapter 1

Where do we begin?

1. Do your research!

Before you get going, it is worth doing a little background research. It may be helpful for you to ask some of the following questions:

Do our trustees, managers or committee members support the idea of developing an SDAP?

Getting support from the top will make all the difference to how successful you are. Staff and/or volunteers are much more likely to help out if they see that it matters to your senior managers, committees and/or trustees. However, bear in mind that many people within your organisation will be struggling with stressful and pressured jobs or lives – you may be yourself - so try to be clear about what you want before you approach them. You could encourage your trustees, managers or committees to support you in some of the following ways:

Allocating a small budget for your activities

Providing opportunities for you to speak at various events/meetings

Backing up any messages you send to staff and volunteers

Helping you access information

Participating in your meetings

Remember, applying sustainable development to your organisation will promote its long term sustainability and is therefore important for good governance – so hopefully your senior managers, trustees or committee will be taking their responsibilities in this area seriously.

How can we tie our plan in with the mission and values of our organisation?

It will help to start thinking early on about how to link your reasons for developing a sustainable development action plan with the organisation's missions and values. In particular, how will taking environmental action help your organisation to fulfil its social and economic aims? If you are part of a non-environmental charity, here are some reasons for taking action:

More often than not, it is the poorest and most excluded in society that suffer most from the consequences of climate change. This includes fuel poverty, damp housing, traffic pollution, lack of green space and expensive food and public transport.

As part of your commitment to the Third Sector Declaration on Climate Change, you have an obligation to act as a leader in promoting and enabling behaviour change at all levels and to adopt public plans and appropriate strategies to reduce your carbon dioxide emissions (especially in energy use, transport, recycling, buying and in caring for your community).

The issue of climate change is urgent and taking action now is therefore vital. The Charity Commission and Charity Finance Directors Group have already produced guidance to charities on the importance of taking this seriously and taking action now.

Funders are increasingly asking for evidence of sustainable development in funding applications.

You care about your community and want to help improve the lives of people within it. It therefore makes sense to be smart about sustainable development and recognise the important impact that environmental factors have on the social and economic development of the areas in which you operate and the people and communities you support.

Would collaborating with others help us to better meet our goals?

The value of working with others in partnership can be huge. Partnerships can enable you to learn from others, share information, spread costs, increase resources or rally support – all of which are highly valuable when you are stretched for time and have limited resources available to you. And they don't have to be complicated! But partnerships can also help you to raise your voice and have a wider reach and impact – something that is vital in encouraging collective action.

Are there any other groups in your area that you might be able to collaborate with to achieve your goals?

Does your organisation belong to existing partnerships that might be interested in doing some further joint work around sustainable development?

Are there others in your building that you could link up with? Could this help you to approach your landlord?

Can you ask others for advice, information or to share their experiences with you?

What purpose might a partnership have? Do you want to apply for joint funding? Would you like to find new channels to communicate what you are doing externally? Do you need to draw on the experience of others?

What potential opportunities or hurdles might we need to consider?

Awareness from the start of the opportunities and hurdles you might face will be invaluable in enabling you to plan effectively. If you have thought of things before they happen, it will save you valuable time and resources.

Are there any issues you are already aware of that might create hurdles for your plans? For example attitudes, costs, resources.

Are there any staff, trustees or volunteers that you think might be opposed to you taking action in this area (perhaps because they fear it will take up their time) and, if so, how will you address this?

Are there any big events or busy times coming up for your organisation that involve certain (or all) staff and volunteers? If so, how can you take this into account when planning your project and asking others for help?

Do you have multiple sites? What opportunities and/or hurdles might this present you with?

What types of workers do you have? Are they volunteers, paid staff, interns? What impact will this have, if any, on people's availability and willingness to help?

Are there any events coming up that could provide you with an opportunity to get the message across to volunteers, staff or your users?

If you are tenants in your building, will your landlord support you? Who in your organisation has contact with your landlord and how easy might it be to discuss with them some of your ideas for improvement?

How can we use our knowledge and experiences to lead the change in our local area?

Getting agreement and taking action within your organisation is a great first step in the process of sustainable development. But there are many others who are failing to respond to the challenges we face. Perhaps they do not know where to begin, are already feeling pressured and do not feel they have enough resources or just don't take the issues seriously. Why not start thinking now about how you could lead the change locally? You may have more ideas about how to do this once you come to reviewing how you have done, but it will help to keep it in mind as you progress.

What are others doing locally to promote the values of sustainable development?

How could you use your experiences to encourage local authorities, local businesses, other partners and stakeholders in your community to take action where they are clearly failing to do so?

2. Dealing with resistance

You may find that everyone within your organisation is supportive of the values of sustainable development and gets behind your efforts to introduce and implement an SDAP. However, many people don't like change – new ways of doing things can be unsettling and people don't always believe in the changes being proposed. They may also feel that they don't have time to commit to your plans. So it will benefit you to think early on about how you might deal with resistance. In particular, you could ask yourself the following two questions:

a.) What is our organisational culture like?

Every organisation has their own culture or set of cultures and this inevitably has an impact on people's behaviour. Some of the elements that make up these cultures include:

- ❑ **The mission**: this is what the organisation is about, it's mission, vision and values
- ❑ **Control systems:** these are the processes that are in place to monitor what's going on, for example rules and reporting or individual empathy and enthusiasm
- ❑ **Organisational structures:** these include the reporting lines, hierarchies and the way that work flows through the organisation
- ❑ **Power structures:** these stem from who makes decisions, how widely power is spread and on what power is based
- ❑ **Symbols:** these include such elements as organisational logos and designs but also such symbols of power as large desks and exclusive access spaces
- ❑ **Rituals and routines:** these can be found in a number of areas including management and team meetings, supervision and board reports. They can mean that things may become more habitual than necessary
- ❑ **Stories and myths:** these are what we build up about people and events and they convey a message about what is valued in the organisation

It is worth bearing the organisational culture(s) in mind when you look at ways to begin engaging people and changing behaviour.

b.) How do people change their behaviour?

There are several techniques for encouraging behaviour change. If you would like to find out more, references for some of these can be found in Chapter 7. However in brief, they tend to involve the following process:

1. Acknowledging that current behaviour is unsustainable and deciding what change is needed;
2. Agreeing on a realistic approach and implementing changes;
3. Making the changes stick.

Whatever approach you choose to deal with resistance within your organisation, you will need to view it as an ongoing learning process – so don't be disheartened if it takes a bit of time for the changes to be adopted.

N.B. Remember to be clear about your reasons for promoting the changes and, in particular, how they relate to your organisation

Action Plan Checklist
Doing initial research

- ✔ Get the support of volunteers, trustees, staff and committees
- ✔ Find legitimate ways of linking your plan to your organisation's mission, vision and values
- ✔ Link up with other groups and/or events
- ✔ Start thinking about how to lead the change locally
- ✔ Work out where there might be resistance and how you will approach this

Chapter 2

Who should take part?

Ultimately, everyone has a part to play in helping your organisation move successfully through the process of sustainable development.

Apart from those within your organisation, you may want to involve the following people in your planning process:

- **Your Landlord**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, it is worth finding out how to make contact with your landlord. They may be able to help you with a range of areas such as setting up new recycling facilities or providing you with information on energy use in the building.

- **Other Tenants**

You may find it helpful to make contact with other tenants in your building to find out if they have similar concerns, or needs, from your landlord. Approaching the landlord as a group will give you much more sway when, for example, asking for recycling bins. However, it may be worth waiting to approach other tenants until you have taken stock of your own organisation's current practice and identified your areas for action (see Chapter 3).

Setting up a Green Team

Within your organisation you may find it useful to create a small Green Team consisting of fellow staff, volunteers, trustees or users, to help you take the process forward. Working in a group can help you in a number of ways, such as:

Getting a good variety of ideas from various roles within the organisation;

Gaining agreement and support on proposals for change

Receiving input from others who have a similar aim but perhaps a different perspective

Providing people who can promote the message within the organisation

Spreading the work and responsibility so that no one has to manage this alone, on top of already stressful and busy jobs

Enjoyment: working in a group is much more fun!

Who should be in our team?

The size of your Green Team will vary depending on the size of your organisation. If your organisation is small, you may only need two to four people, whereas if it is larger, you may want five or six. It may be helpful to encourage one of your trustees, committee members or managers to join the team and ask them to take responsibility for reporting back to their peers. You can use their support to help drive your activities. It could also be helpful to have the input of volunteers and/or service users.

The main requirement for any member of the green team is enthusiasm and good communication skills.

How often should we meet?

Depending on the size of your organisation and what you intend to do, your Green Team can meet up as regularly as you feel is appropriate. Once a month may be useful when you are just getting started on a project – to keep momentum going - however, if you are part of a very small organisation, you may find you can give brief updates at team meetings and only need to have a specific Green Team meeting every couple of months. The main thing you need to do is agree on a schedule that suits everyone.

Tip

Make sure that as a team you agree on a practical way of working. You should try not to schedule in too many meetings, although you could try having them a bit more frequently to begin with, just to get things off the ground. Get someone to produce the agenda, lead the meeting and ensure it finishes on time. This is important so that members of the team feel that progress is being made and their time is being valued. If necessary, you could allot a 15 minute slot at the start for general catching up so that you have a relaxed atmosphere (particularly if people are volunteering their time), but you should be strict on getting through the agenda after that.

Who does what?

You may not know exactly what you are all going to be doing when you first start out but it is fine to be open about this. You could use your first meeting to establish:

Support for the initiative from your managers, trustees or committees – if they are willing, you could even have someone there to introduce the project at your first meeting

Overall plans and timeline for action

What budget you have to invest in changes

Action Plan Checklist
Getting the Right People Involved

- ✔ Talk to your landlord (if you have one)
- ✔ Build partnerships and collaborate with others in your building
- ✔ Get together a Green Team
- ✔ Ask for support for and/or representation from management, trustees or committee members on your Green Team
- ✔ Assign key roles and responsibilities
- ✔ Agree how often you will meet
- ✔ Set a timeline for activity over the next 6 months and aim to review it then in terms of making a plan for the next year

Chapter 3

How are we already doing?

Before you start planning actions and setting goals, it is worth taking stock of what you already do at your organisation and using this process to identify the improvements you would like to make. You may already have a good idea about what could be done, but taking stock can help you to compile all this information in one place and also consider areas you may not have thought of.

What is 'taking stock'?

Taking stock is simply the process of looking at the various areas and activities of your organisation and identifying where you might be able to improve on things such as energy use or purchasing local or Fair Trade products. In other words it is an assessment of how sustainable your organisation is already.

The process of taking stock will also help you to be clear about where, how and why you are using energy and resources so that you have a base-line from which to set realistic goals.

Setting a base-line

The first step in finding out how you are already doing is to be as clear as possible about how much energy and how many resources you use. This may be difficult if you are sharing a building or an office or are paying a standard charge, so try to make sure you know what your organisation has control over before you begin. If your organisation pays the bills, go through the last year and work out how much you have spent on things like gas, electricity, water and paper. This will give you your 'base-line' or your current level of usage. A suggested target might be to reduce energy or paper use by 20% in your first year. With good planning and staff/volunteer/trustee support you may find this surprisingly easy!

Involving others

It may be easier to share out parts of the process of taking stock between different members of your Green Team, or you may be able to do it all on your own. Either way, it can be really helpful to hold a brainstorming session to get ideas and perspectives on what you could do. However you decide to approach the process, it is worth assigning one person to bring all the information together in a simple report.

When gathering your information, you should remember to explain to people what you are doing and to ask them for their feed back. Do they have their own ideas about what could be done to improve things? What do they think of the project as a whole? This information may be useful as part of your communications later on.

Think back to Chapter 1 and the ways that these issues link with your organisation's mission and vision. You will need to be clear about your reasons for why this is relevant, if you are going to convince others to become involved.

When carrying out your assessment, you should also remember that it is not so much about meeting a set standard as about identifying any (practical) opportunities to improve the sustainability of your organisation.

Try referring to some of the Every Action Counts publications such as *Your Community Building Counts* or *Changing the Way We Work*, for more ideas. There is also lots of useful information, including case studies, on the Every Action Counts website at www.everyactioncounts.org.uk.

Carrying out your assessment

The five Every Action Counts themes – Save Energy, Travel Wisely, Save our Resources, Shop Ethically, Care for your Area – provide a simple and thorough framework for helping you structure your approach to taking stock.

N.B. Remember to be realistic and identify your priorities. Don't worry if you don't have the time and resources to cover everything in one go. Make a note of what you have missed out and return to it later.

1. General

Policies– does your organisation have an environmental policy or statement?
Could you consider drafting one as part of your action plan?

How often do/will you review this?

2. Save Energy

Which of the following areas could your organisation make improvements in?

Building Insulation - double -glazing, draught excluders, loft insulation.

Energy Use – gas and electricity usage, regularity of meter readings, green energy suppliers.

Heating & cooling – water, heating systems, boiler/water tank insulation, temperature settings, silver foil behind radiators.

Lights – energy saving light bulbs, turning lights off.

Equipment – switching off monitors, printers and photocopiers, fitting timers.

Tip

Try reading your meter on a monthly basis. Once you have done this once it will be really easy to do again and will also mean that you can check you are getting billed correctly by your supplier. It will also help you to predict how much fuel you'll consume from month to month and will therefore help you to manage costs. Keep a simple monitoring sheet to record readings and calculate the last month's consumption.

Tip

Reducing your boiler/heating system's 'on' time by just two hours can save up to 10% of your energy bill – Carbon Trust

Travel Wisely

Does your organisation encourage sustainable forms of transport? Does if offer:

Incentives to travel by public transport

Cycle racks and/or showers

Bike loan schemes

Tip

Information on the Government Scheme to provide tax-free bikes can be found at: www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/cycling/cycletoworkschemeimplementat5732

Save our Resources

What measures does your organisation already have in place?

Water – waterless urinals, hippos in cisterns, dual flush, low flow taps

Use of resources & waste – recycling facilities, double sided printing, vegetable inks, recycled paper, mugs and glasses, composting

When checking for resources and waste always consider the following:

Eliminate	Can you accomplish the same function without having to buy a new item?
Reduce	If you have to make a purchase can you reduce the amount you use?
Reuse	Can you reuse an item once it has fulfilled its original purpose?
Recycle	If you must dispose of it, can it be recycled?
Dispose	If it can't be recycled, make sure it is been disposed of in a safe (and legal) manner.

Shop Ethically

Could your organisation make some of the following choices around purchasing?

Fair Trade tea & coffee

Local or organic produce

Options with less packaging

Cleaning products made from plant based products rather than harsh chemicals

Care for your Area

What is the area around your building/office like? How could you care for it better?

What needs improving? For example, broken pavements, graffiti, broken street lamps and broken benches.

Are there are any recycling banks within walking distance?

Are there any places or racks to park bicycles?

Are there any parks or 'spare' ground for gardening?

Are there planning proposals in place?

Is there commitment from the local council to tackling litter/dumping?

Tip

Changing from conventional taps to spray taps can save up to 50% of your water use

Action Plan Checklist
Taking stock

- ✔ Set base-lines and goals
- ✔ Agree on who will help with the process of taking stock and assign one person to collate all the information
- ✔ Use the five EAC themes to help you structure the process and tackle as many areas as you can. If you can't get information on one area for a while, carry on and address other areas in the meantime
- ✔ When gathering information from people remember to tell people what you are doing and ask them their opinion
- ✔ While carrying out the process of taking stock, consider how you might record or monitor this information in the future to make it easier to collect
- ✔ Use the information you collect to help you decide what actions you want to take now, soon or later.

Chapter 4

How do we write our sustainable development action plan?

Creating an SDAP will help you to identify and agree on what your goals are and, importantly, will also help you to prioritise them.

Remember, an SDAP is a working document and is not set in stone. So if you decide that a planned action is going to take longer than you thought, don't be afraid to change its level of priority on your list. You need to strike a balance between challenging yourselves (and your team) with some suggested improvements and keeping things realistic and therefore manageable for anyone helping to carry them out.

Take a bit of time to think about the following things when writing your SDAP:

Prioritise actions for now, soon or later – so that you keep your plan realistic and manageable;

Use the five EAC themes to help you structure the actions in your plan.

Allocate people to take care of each action – it may be that a few people work on one particular activity;

Agree your plan with your managers, trustees or committees, to ensure they support it;

Be specific about the actions you have agreed to take – to avoid any confusion between the people tasked with carrying them out. This will also help you when agreeing your plan with your trustees, managers and committees;

Include a section on the benefits of the action listed – so that as well as a record of your actions you also have a record of the benefits you have achieved and are aiming for. Remember to consider economic and social benefits as well as environmental ones. This will help to keep you focused on why you are aiming for a particular action and will help you to communicate this to everyone;

Consider including a cost section next to the one on benefits. This could include costs to time and other resources, as well as purely monetary costs. Having this section next to the one on benefits will help you to make informed and balanced decisions about the actions you choose to take;

Add communication ideas into your action plan as well as more practical actions;

Agree to review the action plan regularly so that it can be amended and updated as needed;

Discuss challenges and barriers to action and suggest solutions;

Be open about work-loads and bear in mind busy periods such as events or fundraising activity;

Keep your landlord involved, if you have one, when developing your plan;

Find out more information if you need to – after all, you can't be expected to know everything! Don't be afraid to add this to your plan if necessary.

N.B. Remember to consider ways of tying your plan in with the vision and values of the organisation

Resources for Action Planning

To liven up the action planning process, you could use the Every Action Counts Decider Game. This can be downloaded from the Every Action Counts website at www.everyactioncounts.org.uk

The following table gives an example of what your completed action plan might look like. You may wish to use the table as it is, or use it to help you draw up your own. There may be some areas that you feel are not relevant to your organisation or are too time consuming for now, so you may decide to leave them for later. Likewise, you may wish to add new sections, such as a column outlining the cost(s) of each action.

Sustainable Development Action Plan - Date reviewed – 1st March 2009					
Action	Benefit	How	Time scale	By When	Who
Preparing the ground					
Write down reasons for developing an action plan	Being clear in our own mind will help us communicate this better to others and keep us focused	Look at the organisation's mission, vision and values. Note down areas where there are links with sustainable development. Think about the wider social, economic and environmental circumstances that our organisation works in.	Now	Mar 5th	Sunni
Get support of trustees, staff and volunteers	It will be easier to carry out actions with support and will encourage everyone to own the changes	Talk to everyone and let them know what we are doing and why. Find out where resistance lies.	Now	Mar 10th	Jon & Irina
Research collaboration opportunities	May provide financial and/or social support for our efforts as well as information	Talk to existing partners, liaise with others in our building, find out what others have done in this area.	Now	Mar 15th	Alice
Begin dealing with resistance	Makes it easier to make actions stick in the long term	Decide on our approach and work through it. Agree on critical points and areas for immediate action.	Now	Mar 25th	Irina
Getting the right people involved					
Talk to other organisations in the building	May be easier to achieve aims if we collaborate with others. Try to gain their support for what we are doing	Make a note of groups in our building/area that may be interested in working together. How could they help us meet our aims? What do we need from them or they from us?	Now	Mar 15th	Jo
Talk to landlord	May provide help and support for our efforts	Draw up list of things to talk to landlord about and arrange a meeting. For example, recycling bins, lighting, dual flush toilets.	Soon	Apr 10th	Sunni
Set up a Green Team and agree on roles/meetings and activities	Spreads responsibility and makes the process more fun!	Send an email or memo to all staff/volunteers/users asking who would like to be involved. Pick names out of a hat. Ask a trustee/committee member to be involved.	Now	Mar 5th	Jon
Working out how we are already doing					
Taking stock	Helps us to see what we are already doing and to identify what we want to do next	Establish base-lines and use the five EAC themes to help identify and structure priorities for action.	Soon	Apr 3rd	Green team
Saving Energy					
*Get staff /volunteers to switch off lights in meeting rooms when not in use	Reduce energy wastage. Save cost of electricity bills. Re-invest money saved into social projects.	Small notes next to light switches and reminder at next team meeting. Reminder to board as well.	Soon	Apr 25th	Jo
*Draught-proof windows & doors	Reduce heat/energy loss. Save cost of Heating bills. re-invest money saved into social projects.	Purchase from DIY store ASAP. (Check on Energy Savings Trust website for best products)	Soon	Apr 15th	Jon
*Find out how much gas and electricity we use	Tells us how much we use and what it costs. Help us set targets	Jo to ask Leroy for bills and find out where meter is.	Soon	Apr 5th	Alice
*Find out if we can switch to a Green Tariff	Support renewable energy sources i.e. wind, wave and solar power. Help to combat fuel poverty, damage to the environment and poor health	Ask managers / trustees / committee, to consider. Find out prices in the mean time.	Later	Jun 15th	Jim

Save our Resources					
*Switch paper to recycled	Saves on energy, water & supports market for recycled products	Jon to talk to Leroy about paper supply.	Soon	Apr 15th	Jon
*Start recycling	Reduce the amount of waste in landfill. Increase the quality of life for people living near landfills.	Ask managers/trustees/committee to consider. Find local facilities. Find out cost for people to collect recycling.	Soon	Apr 15th	Sunni
Travel Wisely					
*Provide safe space to store bicycles	Encourages people to cycle if they want to. Reduce cost for people travelling to work. Increase fitness and health.	Research space and get permissions.	Soon	Apr 25th	Irina
Shop Ethically					
*Start buying fair trade tea and coffee	Supports communities around the world and encourage fair wages and prices	Research options and prices. Discuss budget with finance managers, trustees and/or committees.	Soon	Apr 25th	Jo
Care for our area					
*Plant empty flower pots from basement and place outside the front entrance	Make our building more welcoming and encourage bio-diversity in our area.	Find out what is in season and what will survive well with minimum maintenance. Organise delivery of plants.	Soon	Apr 15th	Jim

*** To be completed after you have taken stock of what you are already doing and decided what you would like to do.**

Communicating					
Run a Green Quiz at team meeting	Raise awareness within organisation. Build team spirit.	Send out by email and advertise on notice board. Announce result when back in the office.	Soon	Apr 30th	Mustafa
Take photos of individuals and create a poster with key messages made personal	Raise awareness within organisation and foster a sense of shared purpose	Ask people to let us know what they pledge. Take photos and prepare poster.	Soon	Apr 30th	Alice and Mustafa

Reviewing					
Identify what worked and what we would like to do next	Lets us celebrate our successes, keeps momentum going and helps to maintain focus	Arrange meeting and ask the following questions: What has gone well and what not so well? Where can we improve next time? What areas do we want to focus on next? Was our partnership successful? Do we need information/advice from others on where to go next?	Later	Jun 30th	Green Team
Decide how we will record the information next time	Helps us to refine the process so that we can do even better in the future!	Ask ourselves: What did we like about the way we collected our information? Was it easy to understand? Would it have been more useful to collect it in a different way?	Later	Jun 30th	Green Team
Decide on ways to keep communicating	Helps us to make changes stick by making them part of the culture of our organisation	Build relationships, continue to evaluate, continue to spread the messages and encourage new behaviours. Hold more events, lunches, quizzes etc.	Later	Jun 30th	Green Team & all staff
Identify ways that we can lead the change locally	Promotes sustainable development externally and helps to campaign about fuel poverty, healthy lifestyles, public transport and food.	Build relationships externally, use opportunities to tell people what we have done and offer to share our experiences.	Later	Jun 30th	All staff

As you implement your SDAP you should try to keep updating it and make sure you constantly review it so it is always realistic and achievable. If you hit barriers in addressing one of your actions, you shouldn't be concerned about re-prioritising it or even putting it on hold until it is more practical to do. It is better to have a realistic but active action plan rather than one that has unrealistically high aims and therefore never leaves the shelf.

Chapter 5

Who do we need to tell and how do we do it?

Remember to keep sharing your SDAP with other staff, volunteers, users and trustees to raise support for what you are doing – but also to share what you have already achieved! If you have a Green Team, this will be easier to do. If you don't, you could try to give a quarterly update to the people within your organisation – just to keep them in the picture and communicate that things are happening, even it if is one step at a time.

Communication, Communication, Communication!

Communication is the key to implementing your SDAP – you should try to get everyone involved if you can. Think about the key actions you would like people to do and divide them into:

- What the action is
- How you intend to achieve the action
- Why you want to carry out the action – why do you think it is important?

This will be really helpful when you are trying to communicate your purpose to others.

Key people

There may be particular groups of people that you want to keep informed about your progress and you may need to adapt your communication approach and style depending on who they are. Each person and group of people will have particular pressures on their time and ability to commit, so it is worth showing consideration for this when deciding on your approach:.

Trustees/Committee members

As volunteers, trustees will not have lots of time to get directly involved in your activities. However, they should be keeping their eye on your progress from both a financial and governance point of view. You may therefore want to write a short briefing that can be included with their board papers or email updates. If you have a representative from the board on your Green Team, ask them to take responsibility for feeding back on progress.

Staff

Ideally, you want all staff to actively participate in the changes. However, in order for them to do this, they will need to feel part of the changes and to understand the reasons behind them. Consultation and communication are therefore really important. For example, how will you make sure that you let people know what has been discussed at Green Team meetings? How can you ensure that people are able to feed their ideas into this process?

Volunteers

Your main workforce may consist largely of volunteers and they will therefore be a key stakeholder in any changes that you make. Try including a session on sustainable development in your volunteer team meetings. Is there a volunteer that would like to join the Green Team?

Users

The people that use your service may be able to offer valuable insights into the changes that you are proposing, particularly if those changes will have a direct impact on them. Could you hold a five or ten minute slot at the end of a user meeting to discuss the changes and get feedback? As above, is there a user that would like to be on your Green Team?

Funders

Take as many opportunities as you can to communicate your sustainable development activities in your fundraising. Many funders are now building sustainable development requirements into their applications and it will show that you are a forward thinking organisation. Could you do a bit of research to find out the kind of things that funders look for in this area? If you are especially keen to raise money, it might help you to prioritise the items in your SDAP according to funding requirements.

Local community

Take your experiences and successes and use them to help you lead the change in your local community. If others see you doing things they may be encouraged to do something themselves, however small. Could you have an 'open house' one afternoon and invite local people to come and see what you have been doing? Perhaps they could be encouraged to bring their own experiences and successes with them to share with others. Could you provide a suggestion box as a way of gathering fresh ideas for your activities?

Communication hints and tips

There are lots of fun and informal ways to communicate your activities and successes. Here are some tips to help get you started. They might also give you ideas about how to promote the message externally.

● Talk about it!

You are your best communication tool. Many of your actions are actually just habit and you don't really think about them on a conscious level. It is only when discussion focuses on these actions that you are made aware of them.

Once you are thinking about them and talking about them, you are more likely to put effort into changing them.

● Tell stories

People tend to remember stories much better than facts. We note beginnings and endings and listen out for the climax or punch line. If you want to encourage the people within your organisation to agree to a certain idea you might find that sharing examples of what another organisation has done will get them inspired (Try the Every Action Counts publication *Heroes* for stimulating success stories). And you shouldn't forget to tell your own story too when the time comes.

● Give the facts…but make it personal!

Displaying factual information about the impact that certain behaviours are having on the environment gives people knowledge and engages them in the debate about why they need to make changes. However, you need to keep it light and fun - a few key pieces of information on posters and other engaging visual displays are more likely to have a good effect than a long article about climate change.

● Make it visual and make it visible

Visual materials carry a lot of impact. Use pictures and graphics and larger-than-life displays and appeal to people's sense of humour wherever possible. All of these elements make information memorable. Be as innovative as you can and use as much variety as possible: think about how to put your messages across using posters, stickers, sculptures, displays, quizzes, competitions, putting on events and organising stunts. Could you take photos of individuals and make them into a poster with a key message made personal?

● Give rewards and recognition

Provide incentives for behaviour change when you can. You can do this by carrying out spot checks and rewarding people who have been conserving energy or resources.

For example, one way to get everyone to think about switching their computers off at the end of the day could be to stay a little later one evening and leave a chocolate by each desk where someone has switched off their computer. The next morning will be abuzz with people wondering why some of them got chocolates and some didn't. You can tell them the reason later (by email perhaps) but the purpose of the exercise is that people will remember it and they will hopefully then remember to switch off too!

You could also run quizzes and competitions. Find a way to praise those who have been taking part – telling the rest of the organisation about any improvement is empowering for everyone involved. Free save-a-flushes or energy saving light bulbs are good rewards for people to take home – or packets of seeds for people to plant at home (or next to their desk!). Could you provide an annual award for the person doing the most to reduce their impact on the environment?

● Reinforce key messages

Habits are hard to break. It will take time for behaviours to change so try to be patient and persevere. You will probably need to tell people once, tell them a second time and then repeat your message. Try to remember to reinforce your key messages using a variety of communication techniques (talking, posters, displays) and refresh the message with different graphics and visuals every so often. Breaking habits means embedding new behaviour too, so don't forget to think about your approach to dealing with resistance.

● Consider your audience

You may wish to communicate with different groups of people at your organisation, so take into consideration how their needs may vary. Remember that some people may have disabilities that need to be taken into consideration as well. Could you include your successes in your annual report and AGM? Could you tell your visitors and/or suppliers? How about mentioning it on all your publications or as an extra in funding applications?

● Tie in to other communications

There may be other communications going out to staff, volunteers, trustees or users that you can tie in with. Try to keep an eye on when and what these might be as you could potentially tag your message on to them too. Equally, you may be sending communications externally so why not use your successes to do a bit of self-promotion? Can you use them to help you recruit more funders, volunteers, staff or trustees?

● Feed back on progress

As mentioned above, you should always try to feed back on progress. Even small achievements are worth sharing as they motivate others to get involved and make everything seem a bit easier. People hear a lot of doom and gloom about sustainable development and hearing about even small successes will really inspire them. And remember, it will also keep you (and your Green Team, if you have one) motivated too!

● Ask others for help and advice

It would be unrealistic to expect you to know all the answers. Don't be afraid to approach others to find out what they are doing. It's a great opportunity to get fresh ideas, but also to share experiences… and frustrations! Perhaps you know of another local organisation with a good reputation in this area. Why not pick up the phone and speak to someone there? Likewise, there will be certain aspects of sustainable development that demand specialist knowledge. It will save you time and energy to talk to someone that has this already rather than trying to absorb it all yourself!

Action Plan Checklist
Communication

- ✔ Identify key people/stakeholders both within and outside the organisation
- ✔ Decide on methods of communication, i.e. notice board, quiz, green lunch
- ✔ Identify ways of showing leadership in this area in the local community – how can you spread knowledge, understanding and ideas?
- ✔ Promote your activities to funders and other local groups
- ✔ Celebrate successes and keep reinforcing the main messages

Chapter 6

How are we doing and what do we still need to do?

Once you have drawn up your SDAP, and begun completing your actions, you will want to work out how you are doing. In particular you will want to identify where you have been successful and where you need to rethink your approach or take further action.

It will also help to be clear about the following:

- Who is going to be responsible for feeding back about successes and improvements?
- How are you going to ensure that lessons are learnt and taken seriously?

If you have worked with a team to implement your SDAP, set a date where everyone can come together to review progress. You could try asking some of the following questions:

1. What has gone well and why?
2. What hasn't gone so well and what are the reasons for this?
3. Did we manage to stick to our budget, or even save money?
4. Were our reasons for taking action convincing to people? Do we need to rethink the links with the organisation's mission and values?
5. Did we receive feedback from colleagues about our chosen actions and how we carried them out? If so, was this positive or constructive?
6. What lessons have we learnt and how could we improve for future SDAPs?
7. Would we make changes to the planning process?
8. Are there things that we would/wouldn't do again?
9. Did we meet resistance? If so, how did we manage this and did we feel our approach worked?
10. What might our top priorities be for next time?

Think back to Chapter 2 and your approach to dealing with resistance. Integrating sustainable development into your organisation is a long term, ongoing process. You can't expect to change the culture of your organisation immediately - it might take some time but it will be worth it in the end!

As well as working on your specific SDAP, always keep in mind ways that you may be able to build sustainable development into the policy and practice of your organisation. For example:

- Are there policy documents or induction guides where sustainable development (and what people can do) can be mentioned?
- Are there ways of improving your local environment that volunteers and staff could get involved in?
- Think about how you might continue to publicise what you have done externally as well as internally. Funders, donors, volunteers, users, trustees and partners may all be interested to hear what your organisation has done to improve its sustainability.
- Think again about how you can lead the change by sharing your knowledge and experience. Could you form an environmental club with other community groups in your area or facilitate one with member organisations?

Finally, plan to take stock regularly so that you are always working towards a specific set of goals. You could repeat parts of the process if you feel that you need to ensure you are still on track.

And remember, as well as working towards your next goal, you shouldn't forget to communicate and celebrate your successes to as many people as you can!

Action Plan Checklist
Reviewing

- ✔ Remember the importance of making the changes stick by dealing with resistance and repeating messages. Discuss how your approach is working and identify areas that need consolidating
- ✔ Think about how to share your successes externally – how can you lead the change locally? How can you promote your actions to funders?
- ✔ Identify what you want to do next and build these things into your renewed action plan

Chapter 7

Where can I find out more?

If you are unsure about what to focus on, you could try referring to some of the Every Action Counts publications such as *Your Community Building Counts* or *Changing the Way We Work*, both of which are available on the EAC website (see below). The website also has loads of useful resources and plenty of case studies and examples of ways to take action.

Publications

Changing the way we work: An Every Action Counts guide to greening your office (2008)
www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/guides

Climate Change and Resource Scarcity: A discussion paper for non-environmental civil society groups (2008)
http://democracy.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/files/Climate_Change_and_Resource_Scarcity_Paper%20(2).pdf

Every Action Counts…for our event (2009)
www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/guides

Every Action Counts…for our people management (2009)
www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/guides

Encouraging Walking, Cycling and Public Transport (Every Action Counts, 2008)
www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/upload_folder/factsheets/EncouragingWalkingCyclingandPublicTransport.pdf

Environmental Management Systems (Every Action Counts, 2008)
www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/upload_folder/factsheets/EnvironmentalManagementSystems.pdf

Going Green, Charities and Environmental Responsibility (Charity Commission, 2008)
www.charitycommission.gov.uk

Heroes: Inspirational stories from the Every Action Counts programme (Every Action Counts, 2009)
www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/guides

PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations) 3rd Edition (Charities Evaluation Services, 2008)
www.ces-vol.org.uk/index.cfm?pg=339

Promoting and Supporting Fair Trade (Every Action Counts, 2008)
www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/upload_folder/factsheets/PromotingAndSupportingFairTrade.pdf

Sustainability in Practice: measuring and reporting (Charity Finance Directors Group, forthcoming, 2009)
www.cfdg.org.uk

Tackling climate change, reducing poverty: The first report of the Roundtable on Climate Change and Poverty in the UK (nef, with contributions from members of the Roundtable on Climate Change and Poverty in the UK, 2009)
www.bassac.org.uk/dms/list/139

The Good Guide to Employment: Managing and developing people in voluntary and community organisations (NCVO, 2008)
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?id=1474
(for details on how to order your copy)

The new politics of climate change: why we are failing and how we will succeed (Green Alliance, 2008)
www.green-alliance.org.uk/grea_p.aspx?id=3400

Your community building counts: Helping community buildings lead the way to a better future (2008)
www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/en/fe/page.asp?n1=230&n2=281

Tools

For organisational/behaviour change models and techniques, try the following:
Management Help
http://managementhelp.org/org_chng/org_chng.htm
Entarga
www.entarga.com/orgchange/resources.htm
NCVO
www.strategy-impact.org.uk/page.asp?id=1502

If you need help with posters you could try the Carbon Trust or Envirowise websites where you can download free posters and signs:
www.envirowise.gov.uk/posters
www.carbontrust.co.uk/energy/startsaving/posterfacts.htm

If you want information, help or advice about how to work together, try the Collaboration Benefits programme at:
www.bassac.org.uk/collaboration

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This publication is part of the Every Action Counts programme which is funded by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. March 2009

This publication was printed by 354 Print – an ISO1 4001 certified environmentally responsible printers and produced on recycled paper containing 80% post consumer waste with soya based ink using 100% renewable energy. Design by Graphic Evidence www.graphic-evidence.co.uk.

Production coordination by Jo Pearce. Cover images by James Darling.

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