

Sustainable Foundations

Helping kiwi builders run a sustainable and profitable business

Inside:

State of the New Zealand building industry

Implications of the new Building Act for
your business

New opportunities for leadership in the
building industry

Basics of sustainable business planning

Essential resources and links



This FREE *Easy Guide* provides an introductory step-by-step approach to running a more sustainable and profitable business. Inside you will find sustainability planning tips to begin, continue and/or enhance your journey towards sustainability. Skilled builders and building contractors who understand sustainable business practices are in demand and will continue to gain competitive advantage in the future.

For those wanting more in-depth guidance, the accompanying CD at the back of this *Easy Guide* provides comprehensive check sheets and additional supporting information for implementing each of the steps outlined. You can also download this information from the following website:

www.branz.co.nz/sustainablefoundations

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Your business, your livelihood

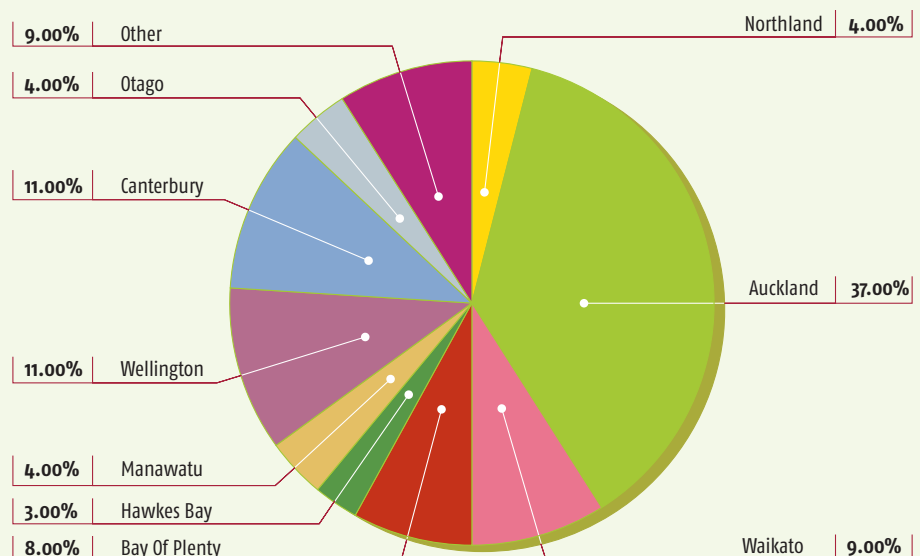
Builders and building contractors are essential players in the building and construction industry, which currently employs just under 168,000 people. The industry also indirectly employs thousands more people in support roles in manufacturing, material supplies, waste management and transport services.

As significant employers, most of the residential and commercial structures in New Zealand are built by companies like yours. You also know that the Building Act has recently been changed. As a result, traditional construction systems are being, and will continue to be, replaced with new systems, methods and products to reflect the principles of sustainable development. There is a shortage of skilled workers who have the knowledge base to work with the new requirements. It is important for all of us working in the industry to begin to engage in this area.

This *Easy Guide* will get you started on what you need to know and how to put any new systems into practice. It is aimed at building businesses with 15-20+ staff and/or who undertake significant project work. If your business size varies from that, this *Easy Guide* will still help your organisation to understand sustainable development and what it takes to incorporate it into good business practice.



Regional location of building construction enterprises (2001)



Introducing sustainability

The New Zealand Building Act 2004 introduces a concept not covered by the previous Act – ‘sustainable development’. This has been added as one of the purposes of the Act: “buildings are designed, constructed and able to be used in ways that promote sustainable development”.

Obviously, the key aspect for builders and building contractors is in building construction. This is a big task, especially as many people don’t yet understand what this will mean in practice. The Act effectively defines sustainable development in the principles it sets out. These are the:

- need to ensure maintenance requirements of housing are reasonable and that owners are aware of these
- need to minimise any harmful effects on human health resulting from building products or design
- importance of recognising any special traditional/cultural aspects of building use
- costs of a building (including maintenance) over its life
- efficient use of energy, and energy conservation, and the use of renewable sources of energy in buildings
- material conservation and sustainable use of materials
- efficient use of water and the need for water conservation
- reduction of waste during construction.

The key question is “how can you build buildings that put these principles into practice”? The revisions planned for the Building Code are unlikely to be implemented before 2007, and even then will only be at a level to eliminate worst practice. However, in the meantime progressive building industry leaders can begin preparing their businesses to take these principles into account – in other words, getting ahead of the game. Those who take serious steps towards sustainable business practices now will have the competitive advantage when the Code clauses come into effect.

Another potential ramification of sustainable development is already widespread elsewhere in the world: to obtain government construction contracts, businesses are more commonly being required to submit sustainability reports outlining social, environmental and economic activities. This is likely to be introduced here in New Zealand as the concept

of sustainability continues to evolve in line with best business practice. As many construction jobs come from government-funded sources, it is helpful to keep this in mind.

It’s not just complying with regulations either – increasingly customers are asking for businesses that are more sustainable and that have more sustainable building practices, e.g. less waste, energy-efficient homes etc. Building companies need to be able to respond to this customer demand.

GLOBALLY

Buildings consume:

- 40% of the world’s raw resources (this equates to 3 billion tons)
- 16% of the world’s fresh water
- up to 40% of the world’s energy
- 55% of the timber harvest

Buildings produce:

- 40% of solid waste going to landfills
- 40% of harmful air emissions
- 35% of the world’s CO₂ emissions

Your customers are asking for it!

General interest in sustainability has grown considerably in recent years. A study done by the Moxie Design Strategy and TNS Research showed that 26% of the survey respondents are part of a market segment known as LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability). This group of individuals is characterised by their attentiveness to human rights, environmental awareness, personal development and sustainable development. Worldwide, this segment of the marketplace is on the increase, with LOHAS in the US market representing 32.3% of the adult population. As the interest in sustainability spreads, it is likely that New Zealanders will follow the global trend.

Business leadership

Organisations such as the Sustainable Business Network (SBN) and the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development (NZBCSD) have guided many companies in their sustainability journeys and boast considerable membership numbers.

An SBN survey, in cooperation with the University of Waikato Business School, found that roughly 50% of New Zealand firms surveyed consider the impact of their processes on the environment. Among large firms, 35% have measurable targets for reducing waste output, energy consumption and water usage. 72% of large firms indicated reputation and brand were major motivators to implement environmental and socially-related activities.

The business community overall seems to be warming to the idea of cutting energy costs and waste, considering the environment in business decisions, and realising the social implications of products and services. However, the most surprising discovery from the survey was that only about one in 10 firms surveyed produced a public report on their policies and progress. A major marketing and public relations advantage is being ignored almost entirely by New Zealand businesses.

The building industry, in particular, has suffered from credibility and quality issues in recent years. Sustainability planning and reporting could assist in restoring public perception of the industry by outlining the consciousness, transparency and responsibility of building companies.

More drivers for change

Aside from the new Building Act implications, many Councils are developing their own initiatives to improve business performance and create sustainable built environments. From Christchurch City's *Zero Waste Initiative* to Waitakere City's *Sustainable Home Guidelines* and the Auckland Region's *Sustainable Cities Programme*, it is becoming clear that sustainable development is influencing how our buildings and built environments are being created.

News flash

The New Zealand Green Building Council came into existence in 2005 and will have a commercially viable building rating tool (for commercial and residential buildings) available from mid-2006. This is likely to transform the industry as it has done in other countries.

A building rating tool is a way of evaluating the environmental design or operational performance of a building. Internationally, there is a wide range of building rating tools being used in the marketplace. In New Zealand there is one rating tool currently in operation – the BRANZ 'Green Home Scheme'. This scheme is voluntary and is applied to new houses. House designs are rated based on their attention to the following issues:

- household energy efficiency
- sustainable materials choice
- water economy
- site position
- indoor air quality
- fire safety
- design excellence.

To find out more about the Green Home Scheme visit www.branz.co.nz

Inspiration – case studies

Within the building industry, many companies have found ways to reduce their negative impacts while increasing productivity. Several companies undertaking significant changes have agreed to share their experiences:



Based in Auckland, Arhaus is a young design and build company specialising in the design and build of healthy

energy and water efficient homes. Their market is people who aspire to a superior performing home in terms of energy consumption, interior comfort and low toxicity. While sustainable practice is a way of life for Arhaus, good documentation and measurement of sustainable practices on site will be improved. Arhaus will soon be a member of Certified Builders.



Over the last five years, Generation Developments Limited has grown from a two-man band building 30 houses per year, to a team of 35 building

around 200 residential houses per year in the wider Bay of Plenty and Waikato. Now with a winning combination of product and service, they intend to continue in their quest for excellence and sustainability within the building industry. With their head office located in Tauranga, Generation will be pursuing sustainable business practices both in their office operations as well as on their job sites. Generation is a Master Builders member.



Natural Element Homes was formed in September 2005

and specialises in the design and construction of passive solar energy-effective homes. Solar hot water, insulated concrete slabs for thermal mass, extended eaves for sun protection, double glazing and extra thick batts are standard in all their homes. Natural Element is also in the process of patenting a unique consultation and design process to further set them apart in the building industry. Their on-staff architect has previously used the the Natural Step Framework to increase the sustainability of his practice (see page 14 for more information on the Natural Step Framework). The company will be improving their office functions, vehicle use and site practices. Natural Element Homes use Certified Builders for all their building projects.

More information about these companies and their operations can be found at www.branz.co.nz/sustainablefoundations. The efforts and leadership of our case study companies are featured on the Sustainable Foundations website, as well as periodic articles in BRANZ's *BUILD Magazine* and other industry-related materials. Interested in having your company participation featured as a case study? Contact Rachel Hargreaves: rachelhargreaves@branz.co.nz

Think that your customers don't care about sustainability? Think again! The Moxie/TNS study found that:

- LOHAS consumers will buy products and services from companies with values like their own
- they are willing to pay up to 20% more for sustainably sourced products or services
- they are marketing savvy and will tend to buy products endorsed by word of mouth and by personally researching a product, rather than relying on traditional advertising and promotion.

To appeal to this market segment, leaders and innovators in many industries have already begun integrating sustainable practices into their core business model.

Getting started

Before beginning this programme, we need to define how the word ‘environment’ is used in the context of sustainability. There is the unfortunate misconception on the part of some people that this word references hippies, brown rice, granola, green and all things Mother Gaia Earth. This is not the case. The word is used here to specifically discuss natural resource-related matters (i.e. timber usage, waste output, energy consumption etc).

In a broader sense, it relates to your business operations in the larger context of society (that is, the ‘business environment’). This programme focuses on creating balance between financial and environmental areas. One of our case study companies, Generation Developments, has already come to understand this. William Carter, the Operations Manager has this to say: “Sustainability isn’t just a ‘nice’ thing to do. It ensures the ongoing viability of your business providing significant benefits. It should be looked at as a pragmatic business decision rather than just a movement towards being ‘green’. The three key aspects of sustainability as we see it are financial, social and environmental. Each is vital and must be balanced for a truly sustainable business.”

To help your company run a more sustainable and profitable business, there are three interrelated methods you can use:

1. **An environmental policy**
2. **An Environmental Management System (EMS)**
3. **A reporting framework**

An environmental policy is a document detailing your business commitment to environmental management: in other words, what you are going to do and how you are going to do it. But it’s not just about protecting the environment. It also demonstrates to your customers that you are being proactive in embracing sustainable development, running a good business, and are concerned about environmental impacts and providing benefits to the community where you work.

An EMS is a set of processes put in place in your business with the aim of improving performance. It implements the environmental policy and works to achieve your social,

environmental and, of course, economic goals. An EMS is an ongoing process; one that can be revisited and refined to continually build on your success as a business. Businesses in many industries have found that as they implement this process, they also find ways of saving and even making money.

A reporting framework is a method for evaluating and reporting on your progress against a set of targets. Once you have become more competitive and flexible, you will want to let others know what you achieved. This framework gives you cold, hard proof—the evidence of a job well done. Potential customers will be attracted by your responsible business practices, industry will gain from your leadership, government will stay off your case, and the media will want to tell your story.

It is not absolutely necessary to have all three methods in place to be a sustainable business, especially not straight away. You can have an environmental policy without an EMS and vice versa (although it helps to have both). You can decide to report on your progress or not, but the positive publicity and enhanced reputation can be worth it. You can be sustainable with none of these tools, but it will not be easy to demonstrate it to your customers.

No matter what your goals are— to improve, innovate, or lead the industry— this guide offers something for you.

A step-by-step process

The remainder of this *Easy Guide* takes you through the 12 steps required to implement each of these three methods:

- **Steps 1 to 4**
show you how to prepare an environmental policy
- **Steps 5 to 8**
show you how to implement an EMS
- **Steps 9 to 12**
show you how to prepare a sustainability report.

For more detailed guidance, check out the accompanying CD at the back of this booklet. This provides comprehensive check sheets and additional background information for each step. The information can also be downloaded from www.branz.co.nz/sustainablefoundations.



Developing an environmental policy

Step 1

Start thinking about sustainable development as it relates to your business. Define what it means for you and your business.

From earlier in this *Easy Guide* we know that builders and building contractors are tasked with constructing buildings in ways that promote sustainable development. Or, put another way, they are responsible for ‘sustainable construction’. What does this mean? One definition is:

“The use of design and construction methods and materials that are resource efficient and that will not compromise the health of the environment or the associated health of the building occupants, builders, the general public or future generations.” (www.corusconstruction.com)

If this definition strikes a chord with you, you could base your environmental policy around this. If it doesn't, draft one that better reflects your business' goals and aspirations. It is highly likely that you will need to adjust your definition as you go through the process, as your ideas may change over time, more people will get involved, and your understanding of the impacts your business has on the environment will improve. Change is OK – an environmental policy is a ‘living’ document; one that can be regularly revisited to ensure that it continues to meet your needs.



Your environmental policy must have total support from all staff for its successful development and implementation.

An environmental policy is a ‘live document’: it can and should change through time.

Step 1

Think



Step 2

Get everyone involved



Step 3

Assess current status



Step 4

Write



Get senior management and staff onboard. Where possible, also enlist the help of suppliers, contractors and customers

The time and effort needed to be spent on this step obviously depends on the size of your business. ‘Senior management’ may be just you! For bigger businesses (50+ staff), this step may take a bit longer – but it is really important. Ideas include:

- encourage feedback from all your staff about sustainability issues; find out what they think, where their own interests and values lie, their thoughts and ideas on what the business could accomplish. Provide a mechanism for feedback, e.g. staff suggestion box
- empower staff to be key innovators in the process
- illustrate the benefits and cost savings
- learn from other builders or contractors who have an environmental policy
- have toolbox talks for when issues are due to come up in the construction process (this can be formal or simply over morning tea)
- provide incentives and recognition (staff rewards, enter business award competitions etc).

After you have staff efforts underway, remember that suppliers and contractors are also important to bring onboard. While they may not be directly employed by your business they are extensions of it. By involving your suppliers and contractors as you make decisions, you can gain their assistance and expertise, while also encouraging them to incorporate sustainability into their own businesses. Likewise, understanding your customers’ expectations can help better steer your business practices.



Benefits and cost savings

By adopting an environmental policy, your business can benefit and save money through:

- **industry awards:** proactive sustainable businesses can earn awards that bolster company credibility and industry ranking
- **leadership opportunities:** by integrating sustainability into your core business, you move to the forefront of building industry innovation
- **reduced energy use:** this provides direct monetary savings to your bottom line
- **reduced waste:** saves on waste bills as well as the purchase of new materials
- **reduced emissions:** many businesses benefit through return on assets, sales and equity through reduced emissions
- **better staff conditions:** retain quality staff and encourage employee innovation
- **gain market share:** customers see value in doing business with progressive, quality companies

Assess each site you are working on and your business operations (to show areas where improvements and savings can be made)

For each site, identify:

- the location of any activities which may impact on neighbours (especially noise or visual impacts or pollution)
- the location of all emissions (to air and water)
- the location of storage of hazardous materials (are you prepared for spills and fire?)
- storage areas (supplies, waste, materials, vehicles)
- waste from the building site
- areas of special 'environmental sensitivity' (are you close to wetlands, lakes, rivers, forests, reserves etc?)
- soil management and sediment control
- delivery and removal processes of materials on-site (how are vehicles used?)
- potential impacts to the health and safety of workers.

For you business operations, identify your:

- energy and office supplies consumption
- waste (paper, building waste, packaging etc)
- water management
- transport (vehicle use and fuel consumption)
- employee benefit and reward schemes
- community involvement
- responsible procurement policy.

Step 3 ultimately decides the scope of your environmental policy. It determines what your main issues are and how they will be handled. Reviewing your current performance will help you identify significant impacts and identify what is most important to change.

Tip: Walk around each site to see what happens on a day-to-day basis with 'fresh eyes' – where are the impacts? For example, are there lights on that don't need to be? How is the rubbish sorted? What is going down the drain?

Tip: Look at your energy, water and waste bills to find out how much you are consuming and wasting.

What are the rates, the suppliers or sources – can it be done with greater cost savings? Can construction waste be sold to other industries as raw material?



Write the policy

As a rough guide, your policy should state:

- who your company is, what it does, where it operates, and what it thinks its main impacts are
- what your business is trying to achieve (your objectives)
- the scope of the policy (what site and/or operations your policy will apply to)
- how your business is going to achieve your objectives (this is your environmental management system – see page 12).

In addition, make sure your environmental policy:

- is relevant, realistic, achievable (yet challenging) for your business
- has a commitment to the prevention of pollution and waste
- meets legal requirements (especially the Building Act 2004 and Resource Management Act 1991)
- is communicated to all stakeholders: staff, clients, contractors, suppliers, community, investors
- is written in a way that raises awareness, encourages participation and requires training for employees in environmental matters.



Tips for writing your policy:

- keep it concise (one page of A4 is usually sufficient)
- keep it simple (use concise, plain language, avoid jargon)
- describe the nature of the business in a short paragraph
- set a deadline for publication
- decide who does what (writing the drafts, who reviews it, final sign-off)
- if applicable, you'll need the signature of the CEO, senior management, the owner and/or director (get commitment early)

Include a commitment to:

- comply with legislation
- pollution prevention
- continual improvement
- transparent and open communication.

Sample environmental policy

Protecting our shared environment is of fundamental importance to Company X, as it is to our employees, customers, and other stakeholders. To support this common goal, we will:

- comply with applicable local and national environmental regulations
- continually improve the environmental performance of our products and processes
- protect the health and safety of our employees and the surrounding human communities and ecosystems
- use natural resources, including raw materials, energy, and water, as efficiently as possible.

We will work to achieve these commitments by:

- requiring environmental awareness training of all our employees and more specific environmental training where appropriate
- evaluating products and processes from the point of view of chemical risk, dedicating ourselves to finding better alternatives based on preventing pollution in the first place
- considering the risks of our raw materials and products at all stages of our product's life, placing priority on risks present during our production process and during our customers' use of our products
- working collaboratively with our customers, suppliers and the surrounding community on environmental issues.

We will make every effort to ensure that environmental performance is an integral part of Company X's performance and of the performance of all of our employees. To this end, we will measure and periodically report on our progress in realising these commitments.

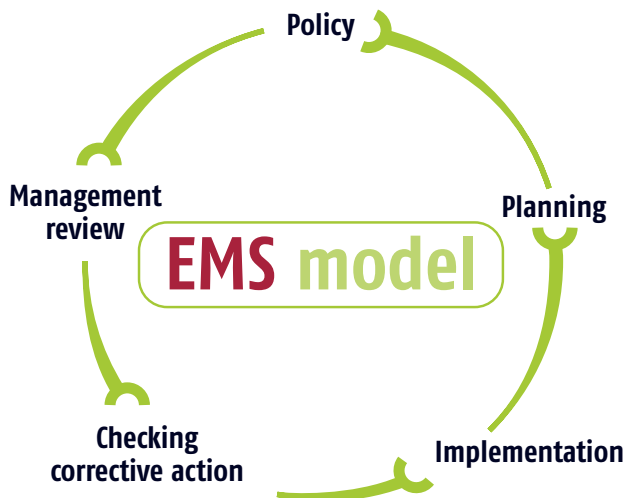
Signed: _____
Manager or Company Owner

Where to next?

Developing an environmental management system

An EMS provides a structured approach to implementing your environmental policy.

An EMS follows a Plan-Do-Check-Review cycle. The diagram shows the process of first developing an environmental policy (which you will have done following Steps 1-4 above), planning the EMS and then implementing it. The process also includes checking the system and acting on it (Steps 5-8). The model is continuous because an EMS is a process of continual improvement in which an organisation is constantly reviewing and revising the system.



Develop your own EMS

To develop your own EMS, use your environmental policy to develop an **Environmental Plan**.

Putting in place an EMS is one method for helping you achieve the objectives and targets that you set out in your environmental policy.

A **Environmental Plan** sets out how the business will tackle its environmental impacts – identifies aspects and impacts, actions taken to minimise impacts, how it complies with legislation and how it will continually improve.

Step 5 Plan



Step 6 Do



Step 7 Check



Step 8 Review



Step 5

Plan

- nominate an individual or team to take on the role of developing the plan
- take each of your objectives or targets as listed in your environmental policy and develop actions or a set of actions to meet these
- assess the cost of each action. Remember that doing nothing also has costs associated with it (rising fuel costs, government fines, landfill disposal fees, replacing faulty materials, to name a few)
- prioritise which of the actions you will do first and timetable the others.



Step 6

Do

- carry out the actions you have identified
- train your staff appropriately and continually seek their feedback
- communicate, quantify your measurements and document what is being done
- carry out the day-to-day business operations in line with the goals of the environmental policy and plan.



Step 7

Check

- measure and monitor the activities of the business about the environmental impacts you identified in your policy
- correct problems and resolve issues as they occur
- audit the system so that it is functioning properly.



Step 8

Review

- review the system to ensure it's working properly
- understand where your company is succeeding and identify areas that still need improvement
- add new and improved goals, targets and objectives in line with your business activities.



An EMS can be a powerful tool for your building business to both improve your environmental performance and enhance your business efficiency. An EMS is not intended to be prescriptive or onerous; rather it requires you to take an active role in examining your business practices, and then determining how your impacts should best be managed relative to your business activities. **If you also have a quality system, then one of the best shortcuts is to align your EMS with it – often they cover the same aspects of the business.**

If assistance is needed to develop an EMS and a reporting framework (next section), guidelines from the following methods might help:

- Cleaner Production
- Enviro-Mark™ NZ
- ISO 14001
- The Natural Step
- The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)
- AA1000.

Cleaner Production is a method of reducing environmental impacts from processes, products and services by using better management strategies, methods and tools. For ideas see:

www.ccc.govt.nz/TargetZero or www.rebri.org.nz



Enviro-mark™ NZ is an internet-based five step certification programme based on health, safety and environmental management for organisations of all sizes. Developed by Landcare Research, you can find out how to use the programme at:

www.landcareresearch.co.nz

ISO 14001 is the international standard for EMSs. It sets out the requirements and specifications for certification which must be met by a company in order to comply with the standard. For more information see:

www.iso.org/iso/en/iso9000-14000/understand/inbrief.html



The Natural Step is a framework that provides a set of ideas and methods for moving toward sustainability. To see if The Natural Step is for you, check out:

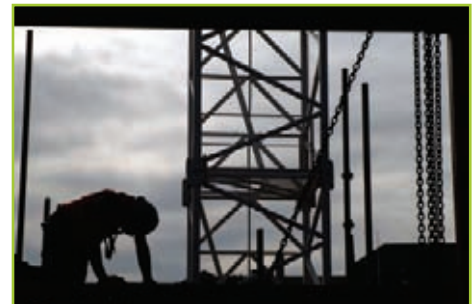
www.tns.org.nz

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) was established in late 1997 with the mission of developing globally applicable guidelines for reporting on economic, environmental and social performance for any business. The GRI Guidelines can be found at:

www.globalreporting.org

AA1000 is a framework begun in 1999 by AccountAbility, a UK-based institute of social and ethical accountability. It was developed to assist organisations in the integration of their stakeholder engagement processes into daily activities. Worldwide, it has been used by public bodies, non-profit organisations and businesses. More information is available at:

www.accountability.org.uk/aa1000/default.asp



Last but not least

Telling your story!

Now that you've written your business's policy and put processes in place to make it happen – what's next? It's time to formally evaluate and report on the performance of your building business. There is a growing requirement for companies to report on their environmental and social performance as well as their financial results, even for small to medium-sized businesses.

Many of the EMS templates can also be used as reporting frameworks, especially the Global Reporting Initiative. Two other commonly used templates include:

- **Triple Bottom Line Reporting (TBLR)**

TBLR is a method that allows companies to assess their performance against three bottom lines: environmental, social and economic. A basic TBL Report contains:

- manager's or owner's statement
- your vision, purpose and core values
- a description of your company
- the key areas in which you want to make a difference and why.

For detailed information on how to prepare a TBL Report, see the following online guide:

www.sustainable.org.nz/attachments/triplebottomline-final.pdf

- **Sustainable Development Reporting (SDR)**

Created by the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development, SDR is a reporting tool that:

- provides a clear picture of your company's values and principles
- provides a transparent picture of how your business is performing in its economic, social and environmental dimensions
- details how your company is managing its commitment to improvement.

For detailed information on how to prepare a Sustainable Development Report, see the following online guide:

www.nzbcscd.org.nz/sdr

Sustainability Reporting details economic, social and environmental performance of an organisation

Step 9

Decide



Step 10

Gather data



Step 11

Verify



Step 12

Write and publish



Common to each template are the following steps:

Step 9

Decide

First, you need to decide that you are going to prepare a sustainability report. Decide what kind of report would be most useful to your company and its stakeholders (whether combined with your financial statements or not). Then again, if your business reports on economic data quarterly and your environmental or social programs are a year-long process, perhaps an end-of-year inclusion is more appropriate.

Once you have decided what you are reporting on, then you need to identify your audience for the report. Are you primarily doing it to show shareholders and employees the progress of the business? Will your reports be shared to the industry and the wider public? Keep these audiences in mind to help you focus the scope of the report and the length; it does not need to be a novel!



Step 10

Gather data

Once these decisions are made, you need to gather the data you require and prepare this information in a form that is useful. Having a good measurement system is a key element of reporting.

Sometimes numbers aren't appropriate. You can gather social-related information by specifically discussing employee benefit programs and morale, business sponsorship for a local youth rugby team, or donations to the construction of a community centre.



Step 11

Verify results

Once all the data is gathered and in the right form, you'll need to double check that it is correct. Usually this means an independent party will need to audit your results, but depending on the size of your business, it may not be necessary.



Write and publish your report

And finally, you can go ahead and write and publish your report. Don't feel obliged to aim too high to start with – even a modest sustainability report is a great achievement. If your business discovered in the process that it still has a long way to go, the good news is that you are already on the road. You have identified changes that need to be made, and you can report on them as they are accomplished. By doing so, your business demonstrates its commitment to the process of change, of doing quality business. Ultimately it is that commitment that is more important than quick and easy achievements.

If you want, your report can be shared through a website for public access, in quarterly or annual shareholder updates, to potential clients, and also through media outlets. Likewise, these reports can also help you compete for awards and recognition that can enhance your business reputation.



Tip: Avoiding 'Greenwash'

A recent government report noted that: “There is a growing awareness among the public about the ‘greenwashing’ that many organisations use to shape their environmental image. This may undermine the effectiveness of some public relations skills, while contributing to a fundamental lack of trust in big business and government to be open and honest about sustainability”. (Ref: *See Change: Learning and education for sustainability. Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 2004.*)

As you begin reporting your progress, make sure to:

- give information (measurements) of where your business is starting from
- lay the groundwork of where your business intends to go
- provide measurements to back-up your progress over time
- avoid over-use of ambiguous language such as “environmentally-friendly”
- include specific examples of employee or community programs and their benefits
- keep your processes transparent and include independent reviews/audits where possible
- avoid using cliché environmental or community-related images (i.e. crystal clear streams, happy children playing in a field etc.).

Putting it all together

Developing an environmental policy


Step 1
Think




Step 2
Get everyone involved



Step 3
Assess




Step 4
Write



Developing an environmental management system

Step 5
Plan



Step 6
Do



Step 7
Check




Step 8
Review



Telling your story


Step 9
Decide




Step 10
Gather data



Step 11
Verify



Step 12
Write and publish



Sustainability in a nutshell

- Start thinking what sustainability means for you
- Find ways to include sustainability as part of your core business
- Set your goals
- Gather the information
- Choose the changes YOU want to make
- Put processes in place to enable you to make changes
- Make the changes
- Review the results
- Report
- Re-assess your goals and continue improving



Essential resources and links

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants:

www.ausnz.accaglobal.com

BRANZ Easy Guide to Being a Climate Friendly Kiwi:

www.branz.co.nz/branzltd/publications/pdfs/ClimateFriendo4.pdf

BRANZ Ltd:

www.branz.co.nz/main.php?page=Sustainable%20Construction

Business Care:

www.businesscare.org.nz

Christchurch City Council's Target Zero Sustainability Navigator:

www.ccc.govt.nz/TargetZero/Navigator2004.pdf

EECA's Emprove – Energy Management Is Smart Business:

www.emprove.org.nz/index.aspx

Ministry for the Environment:

www.mfe.govt.nz

Ministry for the Environment's Guide to Implementing Recycling Systems:

www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/sus-dev/recycling-jano4/recycling-jano4.pdf

Ministry for the Environment's 'Simply Sustainable' resources:

www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/sustainable-industry/tools-services/concepts.php

New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development:

www.nzbcscd.org.nz

New Zealand Green Building Council:

www.nzgbc.org.nz

NZBCSD Guide to Energy Efficiency:

www.nzbcscd.org.nz/energyefficiency

NZBCSD Guide to Sustainable Supply Chain:

www.nzbcscd.org.nz/supplychain

Resource Efficiency in the Building and Related Industries:

www.rebri.org.nz

Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand:

www.rsnz.org/sustainable

Sustainable Business Network (including the Sustainable Buildings Cluster):

www.sustainable.org.nz

University of Waikato Sustainability Research:

wms-soros.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/NR/exeres/CDC547DC-6E4F-485A-9A90-EBC1B8DCB165.htm

Sustainable Foundations Toolkit



This *Easy Guide* provides the basics for helping you get started on your 'sustainability journey'.

For more detailed information, please refer to the CD toolkit prepared as a companion to this *Easy Guide*.

The toolkit has step-by-step check sheets, templates and other guidance materials to show you in more detail how to implement the steps illustrated here.

Additional information will available on our website: www.branz.co.nz/sustainablefoundations

Sustainable Foundations

This **FREE Easy Guide** provides an introductory step-by-step approach to running a more sustainable and profitable business. Inside you will find sustainability planning tips to begin, continue and/or enhance your journey towards sustainability. Skilled builders and building contractors who understand sustainable business practices are in demand and will continue to gain competitive advantage in the future.

www.branz.co.nz/sustainablefoundations



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