SFEC
SUSTAINABLE
futures for enterprise centres

Toolkit PART V
Action plan

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Toolkit and Action plan

One of the main goals of the SFEC project is to develop a Toolkit and Action plan to facilitate Enterprise centres to start and/or follow up the sustainable movement within their business. The Toolkit contains different kinds of resources and tools as in a real Toolkit.

In short the Toolkit and Action Plan contains the following parts:

Part I : Step-by-Step Guide to Sustainable Development

Part II : Sustainable Framework WEA-model to Sustainable Development

Part III : WEA-model Baseline measurement questionnaire

Part IV : Inspiration Guide WEA-model

Part V : Action Plan Guide

This report contains the Action plan Guide. In the first section of the guide we will provide you with some general guidelines and in the second section we will introduce an example format for your Action plan.

Sustainability and the SDGs

Sustainable development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is from Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report:

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Sustainability is the foundation for today's leading global framework for international cooperation—the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals were adopted by all UN member states in 2015, with 169 targets to reach by 2030. The goals and target are universal, meaning they apply to all countries around the world. Reaching the goals requires action on all fronts—governments, businesses, civil society, and people everywhere all have a role to play. Further information can be found at the UN https://sdgs.un.org/goals

The EU made a positive and constructive contribution to the development of the 2030 Agenda. They are committed to implement the SDGs in all their policies and encourage EU countries in doing the same. Further information: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/sustainable-development-goals_en This is also incorporated in new growth strategy of the EU the European Green Deal aiming at a climate-neutral EU by 2050.

Within the SFEC-project the consortium made the choice to focus on the following goals, because they are important for Enterprise centres:

1. Sustainable Infrastructure/Buildings – SDG11 Sustainable cities and Communities and SDG13 Climate action.
2. Energy and Resource Efficiency – SDG7 Affordable and clean energy and SDG12 Responsible consumption and production.
3. Sustainable Eco-systems and Collective Action – SDG4 Quality Education, SDG12 Responsible consumption and production and SDG17 Partnership for the Goals.
4. Digital Technology for Sustainable Enterprise Centres – SDG8 Decent work and Economic Growth and SDG13 Climate action.
5. Sustainable Futures for Enterprise Centres – SDG9 -Industrial innovation and infrastructure and SDG17

Action plan Introduction

In Part I of this Toolkit we have introduced a Step-by-Step Guide to Sustainable development.
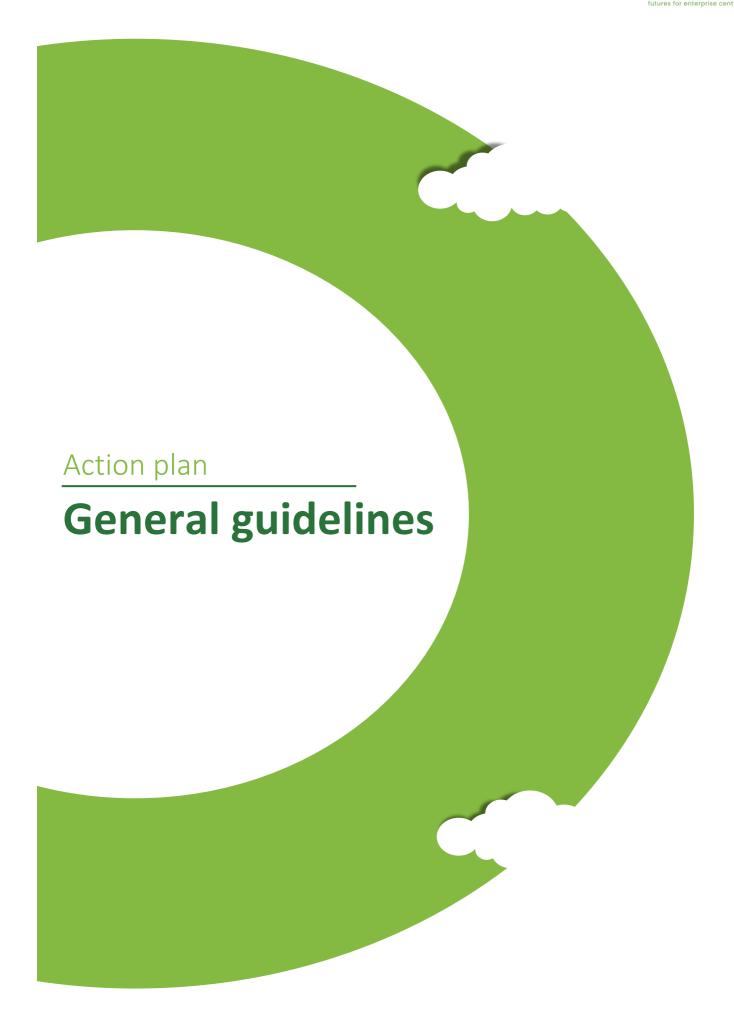The Step-by-Step Guide (or Roadmap) describes the four steps (A to D) and a Preparation phase.
— Start-up: Preparation phase
— Step A: Awareness & Vision
— Step B: Baseline Analysis
— Step C: Creative Solutions
— Step D: Decide on Priorities

Developing an Action plan is part of the final Step D in which you decide on priorities and define the actions your organisation is willing to take to develop into a sustainable business.

Why an Action plan?

A well-structured action plan will drive your sustainability project forward and ensure support from all levels of the organisation. Before you can start taking meaningful actions to make your business more sustainable, it's important to have the paperwork in place so that you can be confident that the steps you take are always leading you in the right direction.

A solid plan will help you to get support for your actions and will ensure that your project or movement will continue to be supported, making sustainability part of your company. In other words, it will help to ensure that the efforts you make towards sustainability are also sustainable!

Action plan

General guidelines

Get Smart

A sustainability action plan details the work that different members in your organisation will need to take in order to achieve the goals. The best plans delve into the specific tasks required, with actions that are:

— **S**pecific
— **M**easurable
— **A**chievable
— **R**elevant
— **T**ime limited

Here's an example of how to make an action to increase recycling rates SMART:
— Make the action **specific**, for example "Remove individual landfill bins at desks and replace them with recycling bins".
— Ensure that the results of the action are **measurable.** In this example, a quick walk around will be able to determine if all rubbish bins have been replaced.
— Agree with the person that the action has been assigned to that the timescale is **achievable.** Consider if there will be any delays that you will need to bear in mind, for example, will you have to buy new bins? How long will they take to be delivered? Will you need to let staff know why you're making this change in advance? How much notice will they need?
— Refer back to your sustainability goals. Does this action help you to reduce one of your main environmental impacts? In this case, the action is definitely **relevant** to reducing waste tonnage.
— Set a completion date so that the action is **time limited** and doesn't drag on longer than initially agreed.
— Make each action accountable!

Your programme will be most successful if each action is clearly assigned to a person (or working group) who has responsibility for its completion within the timeframe and budget.
The best way to achieve this accountability is to involve the relevant party in agreeing the timeframe and budget of the action to begin with. If they have been part of the initial decision making, it is much harder for them to shirk responsibility at a later stage!

Consider your greatest impacts

Refer back to the main environmental and social impacts that you highlighted in your sustainability vision and goals. Your initial priority actions should be focused on reducing these impacts and you should keep checking back to make sure that they continue to be prioritised throughout the programme.

Get ideas from staff

During step C of the Step-by-Step guide we suggested to organise a brainstorm and/or interviews to ask your staff for their sustainability improvement ideas. Using these ideas will really help to secure your project's success. You can also use the concrete ideas in the **Inspiration Guide in Part IV** of the Toolkit.

Asking your staff will make them feel more involved in the changes that need to be made. You will also find that many of the best ideas can come from the people who do their particular tasks on a daily basis.

Ownership of actions

Make sure that every action you have defined in your plan is assigned to someone involved in the project. Make sure that the owner of a specific action is committed to this action and is willing to take initiatives to realise the action. Also make clear that he/she is responsible for it within a certain time limit and also obligated to report about the progress.

Consider the costs

While it's important to focus your efforts on the actions that have the greatest environmental or social benefits, it is also important to consider the costs (both financial and time-based) involved in the actions, in order to further prioritise them. You can then work on the low hanging fruit first and build up to the actions that require a greater commitment, giving your sustainability project time to develop.

The quick wins will give encouragement to the staff members who are involved in the programme by seeing the results of their actions. They will also be valuable to win over senior management and/or shareholders who will want to see the positive impacts of their investment in the sustainability program. This will help gain approval for initiatives that might take longer to complete, or that might require a greater financial investment.

Consider the benefits

Beside the costs, it is also valuable to consider the benefits of these costs. For example Installing recycling bins is a company investment, but you should also consider the payback amount during the upcoming years because you waste amount will decline and therefore also your waste costs.

When thinking about benefits, most of the time we refer to economic benefits but it is also important to think about the environmental and social benefits of you action plan. There might be benefits that are more difficult to measure like benefits regarding your health or inclusion. Don't forget to add these social and environmental benefits to in your plan.

A clear starting point

Before you start focusing on actions to reduce your company's environmental and social impacts, the first actions should be to establish the baseline data. You can collect these data by using the Baseline measurement questionnaire that we introduced in Part III of the Toolkit.

For example, in order to say that you want to reduce waste by 20%, you will need to know from where, so that you can be certain when that 20% reduction has taken place. Initial actions may be audits of spend, procedures and consumption, etc. so that there is benchmark data to allow everyone to know where they are starting from.

Break it down

If an action of your plan is too broad, such as "Reduce waste tonnage", then you need to take a step back and consider what smaller actions are required in order to help you to reach this outcome. You may create separate sub-actions for each of the parts and/or subjects within the WEA-model to Sustainable Development as we have

introduced in **Part II** of the Toolkit.

In this example, create separate sub-actions for each of the operations that contribute towards the company's waste tonnage:
— **Food and Office:** set up a procedure to collect, weigh and report the waste over the course of 1 week
— **Food and Office:** Get waste and recycling tonnages for previous year from your waste contractor.
— **Purchase**: Put a paper recycling bin next to all photocopiers and printers
— **Purchase**: Install recycling bins in the canteen.
— **Marketing/Professional development:** Create educational posters to show what can go into each bin and with information about the benefits of recycling

What will success look like?

As you draw up each action, consider how you will measure the impact that it has, and how you will judge whether it was a success that can be marked as completed. What metrics will you use to track the progress towards completion of each step?

Consider the risk

To achieve success also means that you have to consider the possible risks. Think of the potential issues that could negatively impact your initiative or project. Draw up a risk analysis as part of your action plan and define measures to lower these risks.
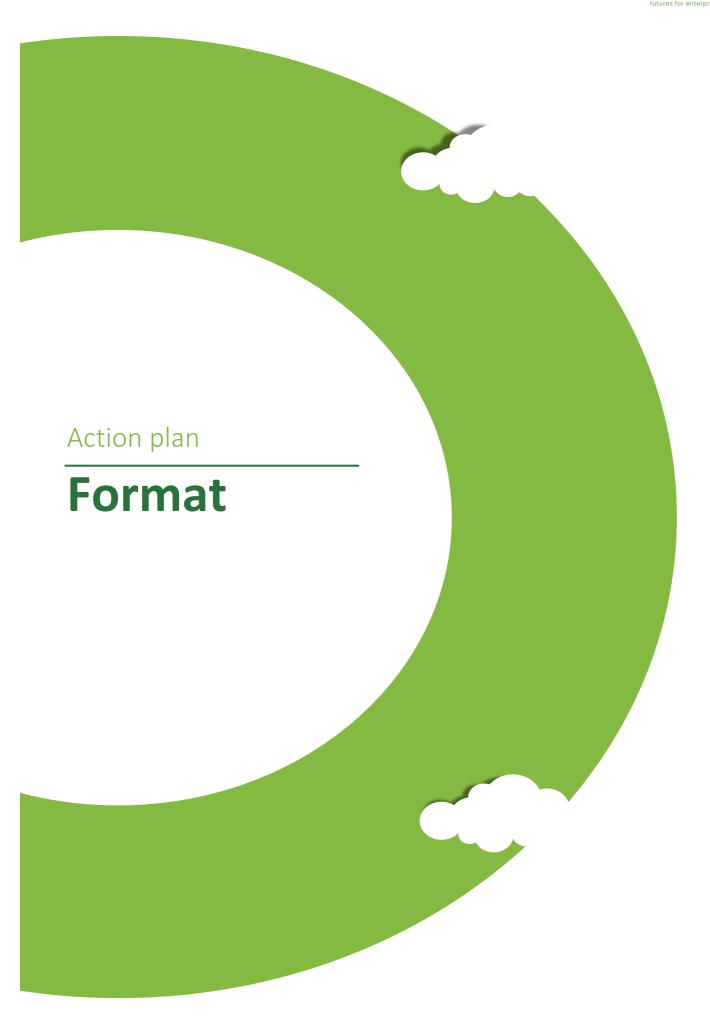
A risk analysis contains the following:
— The **risk**
— The **likelihood** of the risk: low, medium, high
— The **severity** of the risk: low, medium or high
— The **measures** to be taken to lower the likelihood and severity

A work in progress

Your action plan is a living document that will grow and evolve as your sustainability project progresses. Some actions will become higher priority than initially planned, and others will drop down the list, or come off it entirely. The important thing is to start with a positive, methodological approach and to keep the plan as clear and concise as possible so that anyone joining the project or who has a role to play in it can easily understand what is entailed. Making sure that your actions are SMART and fully accountable will keep improvements progressing at the agreed rate. It will ensure that no important actions drop off due to inactivity or a lack of responsibility.

Celebrate your success

Sustainability should not be something negative or a punishment for your staff. To preserve commitment and involvement of your staff and tenants celebrate your results and the impact that you have achieved together. Communicate about the impact and celebrate it with some kind of reward.

Action plan

Format

Introduction

The section contains an example format that can be used to write your Action plan. The text between the brackets and

[Title of your action plan]

General	
Company name	
Date	
Version	
Author(s)	

Vision & Strategy
[write down your vision and strategy]

Impact
[write down the impact you are aiming at]

Ownership
[write down the project organisation: who will participate and what will be there role and responsibilities]

Goals first year	Actions	Assigned to	Due date

Goals 3 years	Actions	Assigned to	Due date

Risks	Likelihood low/medium/high	Severity low/medium/high	Measures

Economic benefits	Benefits (€ / £)	Costs (€ / £)	Total (€ / £)
[cost item]			

Environmental benefits	Benefits
[item]	

Social benefits	Benefits
[item]	

Quality Assurance
[write down your approach and measures to assure the quality of your project]

Communication
[write down your approach and measures to involve you employees and project partners]

Budget	Year 1 (€ / £)	Year 2/3 (€ / £)	Total (€ / £)
[cost item]	12		

Budget	Year 1 (€ / £)	Year 2/3 (€ / £)	Total (€ / £)