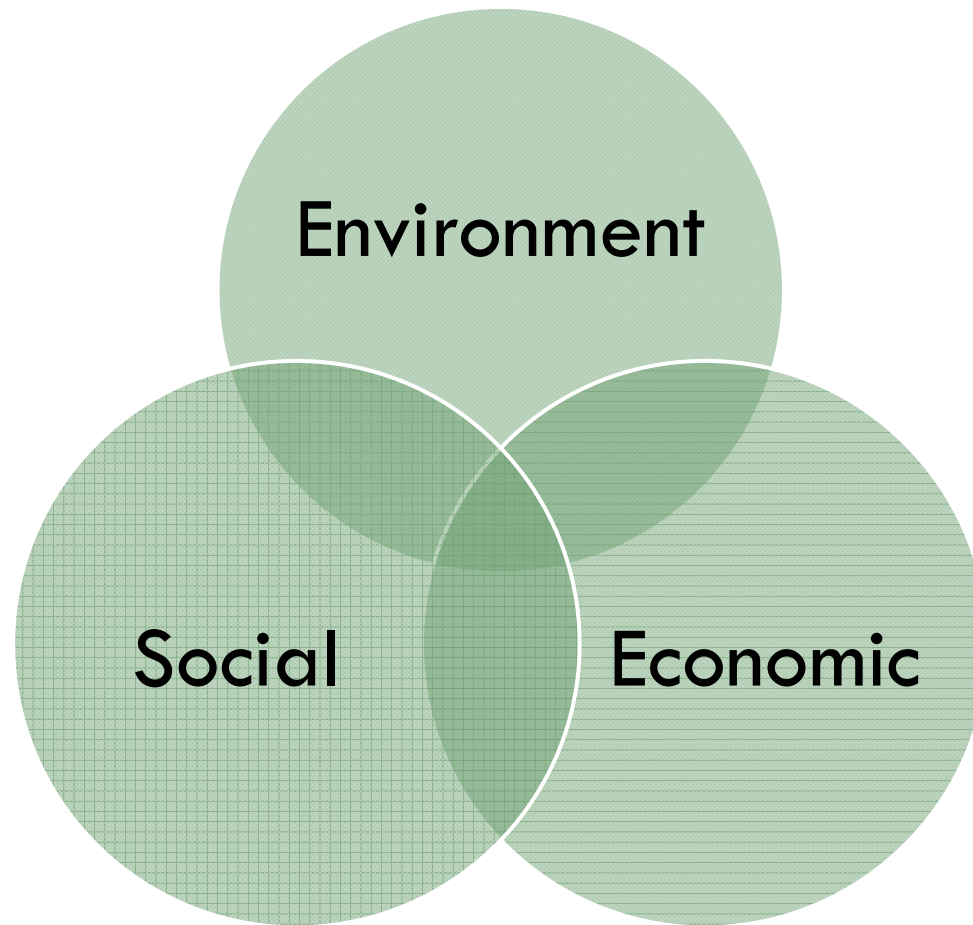




HOW TO PREPARE FOR A SUSTAINABILITY AUDIT.

Sustainability is defined as the ability to meet our needs without comprising the ability of the future generations to meet theirs.



Assumptions to set the scene.

- You have decided to take part in a sustainability scheme for:
 - ▣ Sustainable efficiency
 - ▣ Market/consumer pressure
 - ▣ Pressure from stakeholders
 - ▣ Influence of government
- You have been running your business for a while, and have most systems in place.
- You don't have huge amounts of cash available for changes and improvements
- You are committed to being sustainable

Ready.....



Read and research

- Make sure that you thoroughly understand what is required from the scheme/certification body and the basis of the assessment.
- Download all relevant documents:
 - The standards
 - The compliance criteria
 - Any guidance from the scheme including: how to comply, best practice, examples of what they require.



Choose your 'eco-warrior'

Sustainability Officer/Internal auditor

- Assign one person to lead the compliance process
- They should be:
 - From a high enough level of management to have the capacity to lead change
 - Have experience/passion for the assignment they have been given
 - Have clear roles and responsibilities defined

Engage top management

- The commitment of senior management ensures the commitment of the entire organisation, which in turn facilitates the implementation of successful change towards sustainability.



Planning and persuasion

- To ensure the commitment of your top management, you will need to present them with a clear plan; including a budget and a time line.
- You will need to make sure that funds are made available for the costs required to comply with the standards e.g. training, communication, committee meetings etc.

Give yourself time!



Steady.....



Determine your starting point

Carry out a preliminary review

(an initial analysis of the issues, impacts and performance related to the activities of your organisation).

This can be a general assessment or more specifically geared towards the scheme or certification you wish you attain.

Starting point contd.

This will help to:

- Determine if you can meet at least the minimum standards required
- Development policy
- Gain senior management commitment.
- Planning the overall strategy towards sustainability.
- Give you a measure against which changes in performances can be assessed.

Aspects that should be addressed by the initial review

- Legislation/regulations
- Management systems/practices/procedures
- Environmental impacts

Legislation/regulations

- Areas of potential litigation
- Current National and International legislation
- Potential future legislative requirements
- Taxes
- Standards of the scheme you are being audited against

Management

Systems/practices/procedures


- Staff skills//information
- HR policies and procedures
- Marketing and sales
- Financial management
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR)
- Current health and safety systems
- Contingency procedures for prevention/reporting/limiting accidents
- Performance on previous accidents/incidents
- Existing procurement policy/investment plans
- Communication system/internal and external

Environmental Impacts

- ❑ Energy management and use – fuel/heat/light/power
- ❑ Raw materials management – renewables/non renewables – natural resource depletion
- ❑ Emissions to air – volume/type/treatment
- ❑ Effluent to water – volume/type/treatment
- ❑ Noise pollution
- ❑ Waste avoidance/disposal of solid waste – mass/type/disposal route recycling/reuse.

Go!





Having established a framework to drive the change towards sustainability, and established where your organisation is on that road, it is now time to make the change, get audited and get certified!

Policies

- Make sure that all policies are written, filed correctly, and most importantly are communicated to everyone, posted on notice boards, understood (translated if need be), and followed.

Records

- Keep all records:
 - Communications
 - Minutes of meetings
 - Disciplinary and grievance procedures
 - Data collection e.g. water use, electricity use, measurements of waste disposed of/recycled,
 - Maintenances records e.g. electrical, refrigeration
 - Accident records
 - Spills records

Ask advice


- Don't be shy about asking advice:
- Contact the organisation who will be auditing you and confirm anything you are unsure of,
- Contact other similar organisations who may already be certified, and may be willing to help and share their experience.
- Try doing your own internal audit, to make sure that you are ready for an external auditor, and are compliant with the requirements of the certification you have chosen.

Your audit.



Remember:

- By committing to the audit you have essentially agreed that the auditor may go through all your records, files, and inspect your premises as needed.
- Any information that the auditor uses will be kept confidential
- The auditor reports to the certification body according to their findings, as a result you may achieve certification or be given pre-conditions
- Think of the auditor, not as an enemy but, as an outside pair of eyes that you are using to improve your organisation
- Do not ply your auditor with gifts, nor wine and dine them



**Sustainability does not stop
after the audit, it is a
progressive progress, so keep
it up and.....**

be better