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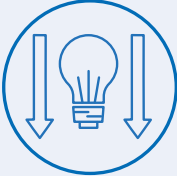
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# **4 Steps** to Documenting Your **Sustainability Plan**

# Understanding the Purpose of a Sustainability Plan

A sustainability plan documents a company's environmental goals and steps to achieve them. This makes it easier to track progress and environmental impact, as well as comply with current and future regulations. Creating and following this plan can result in several benefits, including:



**Reducing energy usage:**  
Companies can use a sustainability plan to help reduce their carbon footprint. Actions such as replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources and implementing energy-efficient upgrades can lower your energy usage.



**Improved public health:**  
Implementing efficiency measures, such as improvements to ventilation or air filtration systems, can help conserve resources, improve air quality and benefit public health and safety.



**Attracting sustainability-focused consumers and investors:**  
Many consumers and investors want to support businesses that are committed to corporate sustainability. By developing an actionable plan, you demonstrate that commitment to those stakeholders and positively impact your long-term goals.

» Sustainability is a top priority for many businesses today. Consumers and stakeholders increasingly expect companies to prioritize sustainability efforts, such as implementing energy efficiency upgrades or replacing fossil fuels with emissions-free energy sources. Creating a sustainability plan can help your company determine your environmental goals and identify steps to achieve those objectives.

## Developing Your Sustainability Plan in Four Steps

Turning sustainability priorities into measurable progress starts with building a plan with actions that are clearly defined, measured and maintained. By following these four steps, you can take a practical approach to creating a sustainability plan designed to support long term progress.

### 1 Understand what drives change

Identifying the right path for your business starts by understanding different types of sustainability efforts and how they drive change. For example, to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, it's important to understand the three classifications, or scopes, of emissions:

- » **Scope 1 emissions** are direct emissions from sources such as on-site generation and natural gas use.
- » **Scope 2 emissions** are indirect emissions associated with the generation of electricity consumed.
- » **Scope 3 emissions** include indirect sources such as company travel or supply chain management.

Understanding where your emissions are highest can help you identify which reduction strategies may have the greatest impact. You can also look into alternative energy sources to determine which options best support your energy strategy.

There are several ways to supplement fossil fuels with more sustainable energy options, such as:

- » **Renewable energy**, which comes from sources that don't get used up during the production of power. This includes solar, hydro and wind power.
- » **Emissions-free energy**, which is generated without producing carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gas emissions. This includes most renewable energy sources, as well as nuclear<sup>1</sup>.

There are many approaches you can take to help reduce your carbon footprint. Knowing your options and how they can work together can create a solid foundation for building an effective sustainability plan.



## 2 Assess potential areas of improvement

With an understanding of what drives change, the next step is identifying focus areas by examining current emissions, regulatory requirements and overall business goals.

Analytic tools can help you analyze energy usage, consumption fluctuations and current emissions. Constellation customers have access to the **Constellation Navigator Carbon Accounting Platform**, which allows you to establish a baseline carbon footprint, identify potential carbon-reduction actions and prioritize your efforts.

You should also compare your sustainability performance against current mandates and standards. At a minimum, you should ensure compliance with any existing regulations.

In addition to regulatory considerations, evaluate large-scale environmental issues, such as climate change, depletion of natural resources, pollution and energy supply constraints. Understanding these challenges can help you evaluate if your business contributes to each issue and how you can improve.

Finally, your investors, business leaders and employees can offer valuable perspective on which sustainability initiatives are most important. You can leverage their feedback to determine where you may want to focus your efforts.

## 3 Create your plan

After identifying the right goals for your business, document baseline measurements for your emissions and energy usage. Tools like the **Constellation Navigator Utility Bill Management platform** and **Sustainability Advisory Services** can help streamline your business's utility data, reporting and analysis.

Next, outline how you plan to achieve your goals. This may involve a combination of efforts, such as:

- » Updating company policies to align with your sustainability goals.
- » Implementing energy efficiency upgrades, such as LED lighting, HVAC updates or building automation, to reduce energy use.
- » Supplementing or replacing fossil fuels with renewable and/or emissions-free energy sources, such as hydro, wind, solar or geothermal.
- » Purchasing renewable energy certificates (RECs) or carbon offsets to reduce your greenhouse gas impact.

For each initiative, define specific goals, establish a timeline for implementing the changes and forecast your expected results. As you implement your plan, measure your progress along the way by starting with clear baseline data, which allows you to track improvements and quantify results. With an understanding of where you started, you can effectively calculate how far you've come.

## 4 Communicate your progress

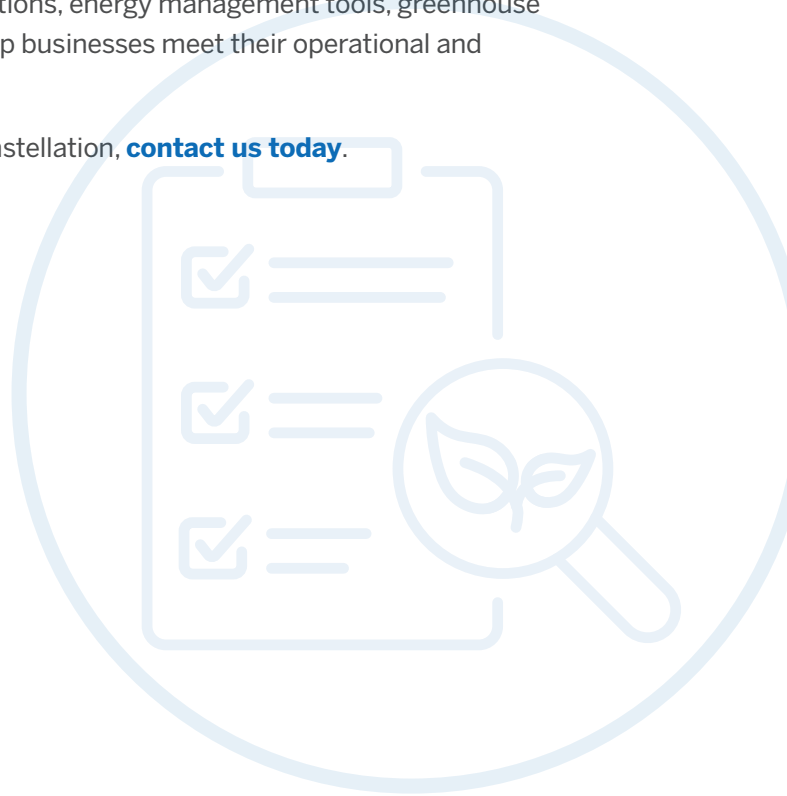
Regularly communicate the progress you've made toward your sustainability goals through sustainability reports, press releases, website updates or social media. Clear communication helps investors and other stakeholders understand how sustainability fits into your business priorities. Be sure to thoroughly document efficiency improvements, such as upgrades to lighting or HVAC systems, so you can ensure transparency and substantiate any public-facing claims.

### Advancing Your Sustainability Plan

Creating an effective sustainability plan requires your company to understand the most impactful drivers of change, assess your operations for areas of improvement, document clear goals and a plan of action, and regularly measure and communicate your progress.

As a leading supplier of energy solutions that help customers manage their energy use, improve efficiency and align their consumption with emissions-free and renewable energy, we can support you at any stage of the process. We offer a full suite of products and services, including energy efficiency solutions, on- and off-site clean energy and storage options, energy management tools, greenhouse gas monitoring and reporting and other services to help businesses meet their operational and sustainability goals.

To start documenting your sustainability plan with Constellation, **contact us today.**



<sup>1</sup>Source: <https://climate.mit.edu/explainers/renewable-energy>

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