Sustainability Learning Guide: Embedding Sustainability

About this guide

This guide has been developed to assist council sustainability practitioners who are managing sustainability projects to embed and integrate sustainability in their council. The information collected in this guide has come from project managers who have received funding from the NSW Environmental Trust under its Urban Sustainability Program. For more information, visit lgnsw.org.au under "Ecologically Sustainable Development".

Why produce a guide?

Sustainability projects are much more likely to succeed if they are supported internally and link to key corporate priorities and strategic plans. Sustainability projects also have the potential to become a key driver for embedding sustainability internally e.g. can affect changes to policies and operating procedures. The following guide will assist those managing a sustainability project to identify opportunities and ensure the outcomes live on beyond the life of the project.

10 key areas where you can embed sustainability internally through your project:

1. Policy
2. Operations
3. Assets
4. Governance
5. Training
6. Reporting
7. Community Engagement
8. Sustainable Events
9. Procurement
10. Recognition

Key Area:	How can I embed sustainability?	Council examples
1. Policy	Do your council's policies support sustainability? Use your project as a driver to update key policies to ensure sustainability is integrated e.g. Update DCP/Planning Guides to include provisions for sustainability.	As part of a sports field management project, Penrith City Council is developing Best Practise Guidelines for the Use of Recycled Organics to be formally adopted by council. As part of a food security project, Wollongong City Council is developing a community gardens policy to support their establishment.
2. Operations	Update operating procedures to incorporate sustainability.	Work method statements can be reviewed for sustainability statements.
3. Assets	Ensure any assets you create are as sustainable as possible. Maintenance costs should have a budget allocation.	Sustainable Choice has template tendering documents to assist with future purchases.
4. Governance	Do you have the internal structure in place to support sustainability?	The cross departmental sustainability team.
5. Training	Ensure all council stakeholders are aware of your project. It may be important to train on the ground staff. Include general sustainability training or induction as part of your project.	As part of Council's Ropes Creek Project, Penrith City Council offers traineeships to members of Aboriginal community. Once established this traineeship could be offered as part of other council programs.
6. Reporting	Do you have cross-council sustainability reporting? Can you improve reporting systems to ensure your project and ones to follow are adequate.	Ryde City Council has developed their own Sustainability Score Card which assesses projects using a QBL criteria.
7. Community Engagement	Develop or update council's existing community engagement strategy. Use your project to pilot a new community engagement technique which can be formally adopted by council as an approved approach.	Warringah Council used the deliberative democracy process to facilitate climate change action. Council will continue to use process in the Talk of the Town consultation.
8. Sustainable Events	Develop or update existing council sustainable events policy. Involve other council stakeholders in planning your sustainable events to transfer knowledge.	LGNSW has developed a Sustainable Events Policy that seeks to embed sustainability principles into each event. Shoalhaven City Council also has a Sustainable Events Policy and various tools to assist in implementation.
9. Procurement	Integrate sustainability purchasing into existing purchasing policy.	Leichhardt Council use a green team to drive sustainable purchasing policy. Sustainable purchasing is a part of induction training and included in tender documents.
10. Recognition	Consider a regular recognition event for green ideas or innovation. Celebrate your project's successes and regularly communicate to senior management the outcomes of your project.	Canada Bay Council runs a green ideas initiative. The best green ideas are implemented and recognised in a special morning tea.