



SME STANDARDS:
sustainability



INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth issue of SME Standards: Sustainability, a voluntary Sustainability Standard for auditable third-party inspection, setting out the requirements to be met by organisations.

The Standard has been developed for use by Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary organisations.

SME Certification Centre provides interpretations of SME Standards: Sustainability, guidance on how to implement the requirements and document templates. Full details are at www.smecertificationcentre.co.uk

SME Standards: Sustainability is reviewed and revised periodically, in response to changing conditions, other relevant Standards and feedback from interested parties.

SUSTAINABILITY

Being more sustainable is something every organisation can work towards.

It is about operating profitably while taking responsibility for decisions that impact on the environment and society.

Organisations that work unsustainably and neglect their environmental and social responsibility are likely to lose out to competitors as their customers, employees, partners and funders choose to work with companies that care about our planet and the wellbeing of the people on it.



ABOUT THE STANDARD

The Standard offers two options:



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COMMITTED

SME Standards: Sustainability (Committed) is a basic step towards making improvements in sustainability. It is suitable for small organisations that want to show intent before working towards a fully-fledged management system (Certified). This is recognised as a simple commitment only.



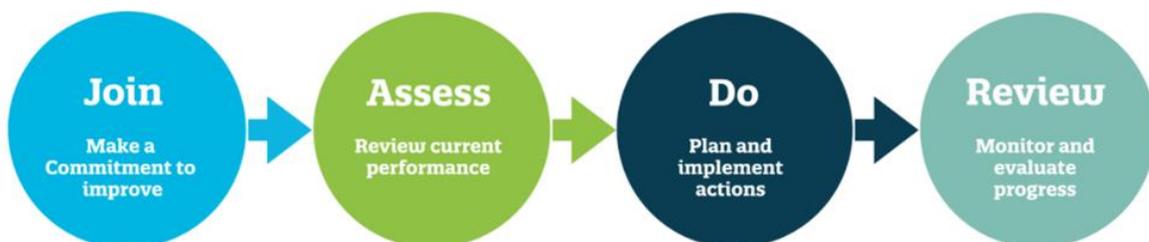
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CERTIFIED

SME Standards: Sustainability (Certified), is based on the core subjects and issues addressed in ISO 26000. It provides a framework for embedding Sustainability into an organisation's decision making and daily operations, through the development of a simple Sustainability Management System. The Management System is intended for certification purposes, as demonstration of conformity with the requirements of this Standard.

SME Standards: Sustainability (Certified) is made up of 4 sections; Join and Commit, Assess, Do, Review. Each section focusses on the essential aspects of operating an effective Sustainability Management System.



CORE THEMES

All organisations working to SME Standards: Sustainability are expected to address each of the themes below.



Environmental Action

Ensuring the organisation's day-to-day operations are environmentally responsible such as reducing resource use, carbon emissions and minimising waste.



Community Involvement

Having a positive impact on society by supporting local and global communities to be better places.



Ethical Trading

Creating a positive working environment and treating customers and suppliers ethically and with integrity.



Continual improvement

Ensuring that the organisation is always striving to identify and make changes that result in better outcomes.

STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

Option 1: Committed

1. COMMITMENT STATEMENT

The organisation commits to taking action for sustainability.

- a. The organisation shall produce a Commitment Statement that lists planned improvement actions under each of the core themes; Environmental Action, Community Involvement and Ethical Trading.
- b. A Senior Manager shall authorise and date the Commitment Statement.
- c. The Statement shall be updated annually.

2. ANNUAL REPORT

The organisation reports improvements made in sustainability annually (not required for first assessment).

- a. The organisation shall produce an Annual Report that describes progress made against each of the actions in the Commitment Statement.
- b. The Report shall include the name of the person who completed it and the date completed.

Option 2: Certified

1. JOIN

The organisation commits to the development and implementation of a Sustainability Management System.

1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

- a. A Senior Manager shall make a commitment to the development of a Sustainability Management system, on behalf of the organisation.
- b. The Senior Manager's commitment shall be documented and include:
 - Being a leader for the Sustainability Management System
 - Supporting the Sustainability Champion and other staff who contribute to the Sustainability Management System
 - Ensuring adequate resources are available for the Sustainability Management System to operate effectively
 - Being accountable for the effectiveness of the Sustainability Management System
 - Approving core Sustainability Management System documentation
 - Participating in an Annual Review of the Sustainability Management System
- c. The organisation shall assign the role of Sustainability Champion to an appropriate member of staff.
- d. The Sustainability Champion's responsibilities shall be documented and include:
 - Developing and implementing the Sustainability Management System
 - Ensuring all Sustainability Management System documentation is up to date
 - Coordinating improvement activities
 - Collating and analysing monitoring data
 - Communicating responsibilities to all staff
 - Undertaking an Annual Review of the Sustainability Management System
- e. Roles and responsibilities of other relevant staff within the Sustainability Management system shall be clearly defined.

1.2 Sustainability Policy

- a. The organisation shall develop and communicate a documented Sustainability Policy that is appropriate to the nature and scale of the organisation.

- b. The Policy shall:
 - Contain a short description of the organisation's products and/or services
 - Contain a commitment to:
 - Setting annual Sustainability objectives
 - Environmental Action
 - Community Involvement
 - Ethical Trading
 - Continual improvement
 - Include the date the Policy was approved, version number and be signed by a Senior Manager
 - Be communicated to staff and other stakeholders
 - Be reviewed annually and revised if necessary

2. ASSESS

An Initial Sustainability Review shall be undertaken to review the organisation's interactions with its workforce, environment, community and marketplace and identify risks and opportunities.

2.1 Initial Sustainability Review

- a. A documented Initial Sustainability Review shall be undertaken.

- b. The Review shall consider and record:
 - The name of the person who completed the Review
 - The date the Review was completed
 - The scope of the Review
 - An assessment of the organisation's current operations, identification of existing good practice and potential opportunities for improvement, for each of these three core themes:
 - Environmental Action
 - Community Involvement
 - Ethical Trading

- c. If there are significant changes to the organisation's activities, location, products or services, the Initial Sustainability Review shall be updated to review the impact and opportunities of the change.

3. DO

The organisation shall develop and implement realistic plans to address Sustainability and increase staff engagement and understanding of the Sustainability Management System.

3.1 Action Plan

- a. The organisation shall develop a documented Action Plan that includes:
 - Objectives to address each of the following themes:
 - Environmental Action
 - Community Involvement
 - Ethical Trading
 - Associated planned activities for each objective
 - How progress will be measured
 - Allocation of responsibilities
 - Target dates for completion
 - The date the Action Plan was issued and a version number
- b. The Sustainability Champion shall co-ordinate the implementation of identified Actions.
- c. The Action Plan shall be reviewed at least annually and new actions added when appropriate, to demonstrate continual improvement of the organisation's Sustainability performance.

3.2 Communication Plan

- a. The organisation shall develop and deliver a documented Communication Plan to ensure all relevant persons receive an appropriate level of information and/or training for their role and are engaged in the delivery of the Sustainability Management System.
- b. The Communication Plan shall include:
 - Identification of information and/or training needs
 - Allocation of responsibility for delivery
 - Identification of communication channels
 - Target dates for completion
 - The date the Communication Plan was issued and a version number
- c. The Sustainability Champion shall co-ordinate or allocate responsibility for implementation of the Communication Plan.

4. REVIEW

The organisation shall monitor progress against the objectives in the Action Plan and ensure that the whole Sustainability Management System is reviewed at least annually, to evaluate performance and update documents as necessary.

4.1 Monitoring

- a. The organisation shall record relevant data to measure progress against the objectives in the Action Plan e.g. kg of waste recycled, kWh of energy use, hours of volunteering.
- b. Data shall be collated and reviewed annually.

4.2 Annual Review

- a. The organisation shall undertake and document an Annual Review that records:
 - Any significant changes to the organisation since the Initial Sustainability Review/last Annual Review and the impact on the Sustainability Management System
 - Review of the Sustainability Policy
 - Progress against the objectives in the Action Plan
 - Effectiveness of the Communication Plan
 - Analysis of Monitoring data
 - Identification of actions for the year ahead, to be added to the Action Plan
- b. The documented Annual Review shall be signed and dated by Senior Management.

SME CERTIFICATION CENTRE

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