



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.cymru.gov.uk



Y SIARTER SUSTAINABLE
DATBLYGU DEVELOPMENT
CYNALIADWY CHARTER

Steps to sustainability

Making sustainability your central organising principle



Mae'r Siarter Datblygu Cynaliadwy yn fenter gan Lywodraeth Cymru a weinyddir gan Cynnal Cymru – Sustain Wales.

The Sustainable Development Charter is a Welsh Government initiative administered by Cynnal Cymru – Sustain Wales.



Making sustainability your central organising principle

Making sustainable development the central organising principle refers to the way that organisations should make decisions and implement policies and programmes. It is only by adopting sustainable development as their central organising principle that organisations will be able to ensure that their decisions will help Wales become a sustainable nation.

The challenge now for organisations in Wales is to make sustainable development their central organising principle.

This document sets out advice and guidance, based on three key steps and supporting principles to help your organisation get started:

STEP 1: Understanding what it looks like

This describes what an organisation looks like once it has embedded sustainable development as its central organising principle

STEP 2: Understanding how to get there

This describes 10 key processes that can be followed to help embed sustainable development as the central organising principle

STEP 3: Adopting common principles for decision-making

This describes 2 core principles, and 6 supporting principles, that will support the embedding of sustainable development into all decision making.



STEP 1: Understanding what it looks like

It is important to understand and be clear about what your organisation would look like if it had embedded sustainable development as its central organising principle. Eight key issues that will help organisations identify the key areas and issues they need to consider are set out in the box below:

Clarity of purpose: organisations are very clear about their role, responsibilities and commitments in relation to sustainable development, can describe their role and functions in relation to sustainable development, and have publicly committed to this, often through a published policy statement;

Leadership for sustainable development: leaders demonstrate an understanding of, commitment to, and a drive for sustainable development, both within their organisations, and externally with their customers and stakeholders. Leaders are proud of their organisation's commitment to sustainable development, and use this to inspire and encourage others by:

- Embedding sustainable development: considerations into all decision making, including financial decision making processes;
- Low footprint organisation: maximising energy conservation and energy efficiency; minimising resource use and waste; reducing greenhouse gas emissions across all their activities, especially transport; and using locally, sustainably produced food, and using recognised environmental management systems;
- Reorganisation and restructuring programmes: any reorganisation and restructuring programmes have sustainable development as the central organising principle, and focus on delivering sustainable development outcomes;
- Skills and learning: programmes developing skills on the “how” of sustainable development, together with active learning networks, are likely to be core elements of embedding sustainable development within organisations;
- Reporting: reporting transparently on activities and outcomes within a sustainable development context, in a way that is informed by clear measures of progress that help show the difference being made on the ground;
- Be the best: strive to be an exemplar organisation, to lead and inspire your sector and others to learn from your experiences.



STEP 2: Understanding how to get there

Forum for the Future research examined the characteristics of leading edge sustainable development organisations and found 10 key processes that help organisations make sustainable development their central organising principle. These are:

1. Interpret sustainable development for your organisation - develop a clear and useable interpretation of sustainable development, based on your organisation's principles and values. This will provide a strong narrative as well as guide decision-making across the organisation.
2. Develop a clear business case - explore and set out the business case for sustainable development, defined by the principles and values of the organisation, that steers decision-making across the organisation.
3. Embed sustainable development principles - ensure that the sustainable development principles are embedded in the organisation's decision-making framework, and in the processes and procedures that implement these decisions, including financial processes and procedures.
4. Support teams to develop new solutions - support teams across the organisation as they embed sustainable development into processes and procedures, and allow them to rethink and develop practical solutions to the challenges that this presents.
5. Create learning networks - create networks throughout the organisation to offer support and share learning, and identify and share best practice, supporting the connections between the development of policy and its delivery.
6. Build up capacity - develop training processes that enable learning, build capacity and promote confidence in sustainable development across the organisation.
7. Be innovative - create innovative projects that harness internal enthusiasm, engage with the public and demonstrate true commitment to sustainable development.
8. Engage with stakeholders - across the organisation, develop clear understanding and skills in how to engage stakeholders and the wider community in relation to sustainable development, moving beyond consultation.
9. Feedback your experiences - ensure that the experiences from the delivery of policies and programmes are actively fed back into policy-making.
10. Share your experiences - actively share experiences of developing a culture of sustainability with other organisations, including building up a community of practice to learn from mutual experiences.



STEP 3: Adopting common principles for decision making

The way that decisions about policies, programmes and projects are made is central to embedding sustainable development as the central organising principle. The three central elements to decision-making that will help promote sustainable development are:

Long-termism: ensuring that all decisions promote the long-term wellbeing of people and communities, and do not promote short-term fixes that will lock us into unsustainable patterns and lifestyles

Integration: ensuring that all decisions take full account of and, where possible, fully integrate the various social, economic and environmental outcomes sought.

Involvement: engaging with and involving the people and communities affected by these decisions, so that working in partnership for sustainable development becomes part of the way we work.

Supporting principles

It is always best to consider and address issues early on. These supporting principles might give you a little extra guidance when addressing specific issues and help you ensure that you are making a sound decision.

Low Footprint - all key policies should be clear on how they would reduce Wales' ecological footprint to move towards a sustainable Wales, showing how they will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and helping move towards a zero-waste society.

Full costs and benefits - financial procedures should identify and take account of the full range of costs and benefits, including those over the long-term, those not measured in monetary terms (such as environmental costs and benefits), and those costs that are global as well as local. Whole system thinking, and whole life accounting, are also key approaches that should be used. Taking account of risks - especially to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of communities - and uncertainties associated with action and inaction should also be part of the decision-making process.

Evidence base – you should take an evidenced-based approach to decision-making where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage. Do not use lack of scientific certainty as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to promote sustainable development.

Polluter pays - social and environmental costs of development should fall on those who impose them.

Local Solutions – solve problems, especially in managing waste and pollution, locally rather than passing them onto other places or to future generations.



Y SIARTER SUSTAINABLE
DATBLYGU DEVELOPMENT
CYNALIADWY CHARTER

Reflecting distinctiveness - approaches to sustainable development should reflect and respond to the particular needs and issues of communities, and the differing economic, social and environmental circumstances in different parts of Wales.



Siarter Datblygu Cynaliadwy
Adeiladau Cambrian
Sgwâr Mount Stuart
Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF10 5FL
02920 192021
shwmae@siarter-dc.net
www.siarter-dc.net

Sustainable Development Charter
Cambrian Buildings
Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF10 5FL
02920 192021
hello@sd-charter.net
www.sd-charter.net



Mae'r Siarter Datblygu Cynaliadwy yn fenter gan Lywodraeth Cymru a weinyddir gan Cynnal Cymru – Sustain Wales.

The Sustainable Development Charter is a Welsh Government initiative administered by Cynnal Cymru – Sustain Wales.