

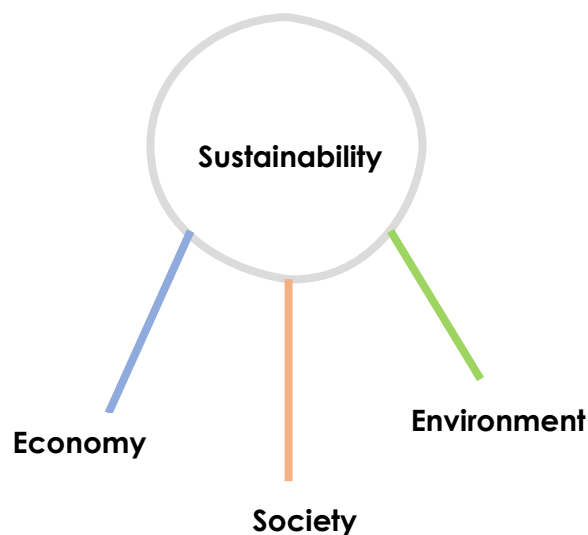
Commercial Interiors UK Sustainability Strategy

15 September 2021

CIUK Sustainability Strategy

CIUK is committed to helping members with their sustainability journeys. This guideline document is here to help your organisation create a sustainability strategy that is aligned to your business strategy. Sustainability shouldn't be an add on but should be integrated within your normal business practice.

There are three pillars of sustainability – Economic, Social, Environmental – all three need to be in balance for truly sustainable growth:



To ensure this is aligned with the wider global goals, we suggest you consider incorporating both the UN Global Compact and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to help frame your strategy.

The UN SDGs were created in 2015 to be adopted by all United Nations Members to replace the Millennium Development Goals. The 17 goals set out targets for both developed and developing countries to work towards together, covering a multitude of issues. They are specifically for countries to achieve; however, it is clear the growing impact that corporations have and so we must play a part in achieving these goals.

The UN Global Compact's slogan 'Making Global Goals Local Business' clearly summarises how their aim is to drive business action to support the SDGs. The compact is split into 10 principles within 4 categories: Human Rights, Labour, Anti-corruption and the Environment. These should make up the baseline standard for all industries.

Whilst the UN Global Compact is directly attributable to Corporate businesses and they support the UN SDGs, companies can go further beyond this with their sustainability efforts to help countries reach their goals. Companies should consider choosing a select few goals from the SDGs that are directly in line with their company actions where they can make most impact.

THE TEN PRINCIPLES

of the United Nations Global Compact



HUMAN RIGHTS

LABOUR

ENVIRONMENT

ANTI-CORRUPTION

- 1 Support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.
- 2 Not be complicit in human rights abuses.
- 3 Uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
- 4 Support the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.
- 5 Support the effective abolition of child labour.
- 6 Support the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
- 7 Support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.
- 8 Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.
- 9 Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.
- 10 Work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.



Source: UNGC

The value of sharing principles

Aligned with FISP (Furniture Industry Sustainability Programme) see: <https://www.fispfurniture.com>, we have defined topics within each of these 3 categories for you to focus on within your sustainability strategy:

| Economy | Society | Environment |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policies - Anti-corruption - Labour standards - Human rights - Supply chains - Certifications - Competitiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community relations and charity work - Health and wellbeing - Workforce development and training - Employment and opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy - Waste - Packaging - Transport - Timber/material procurement - End-of-life provision |

Economic aspect

- 3 core subjects from UN Global Compact
- Companies should have proof on how they actively drive these principles within their company. If this was a norm within the industry, hopefully supply chains would follow to abolish acts against the 10 principles.
- Future proofing economic growth through certifications, competitiveness etc.

Societal aspect

- Building on UN Global Compact 3 core subjects, how does your organisation go further than the basics?
- Workforce development and training
 - Training opportunities – internal and external
 - Personal development reviews
- Employment and opportunities
 - Employee engagement (such as regular progress surveys)
 - Student engagement (e.g. placements, apprenticeships)
 - Diversity and inclusion
 - Minimum vs Living wage
 - Flexible working
- Health and wellbeing of employees
 - Physical health
 - Mental health
 - Financial health
- Community relations and charity work
 - Local community outreach
 - Volunteer days
 - Fundraising and donations (e.g. matched funding, payroll giving)

How to put the environmental principle into practice – here are some ideas for focus areas.

Energy

- Energy provision
- Energy efficiency
- Carbon offsetting
- Net zero pledge

Waste

- Landfill vs EfW
- Recycling
- Reusing/Upcycling

Packaging

- Reusable packaging
- Recycled plastic packaging
- Takeback scheme for packaging
- Zero plastic packaging
- Packaging efficiency

Transport

- Electric vehicles
- Delivery optimisation
- Route planning
- Transport monitoring – reduce wasted CO₂
- Timber/material procurement
- FSC/PEFC
- Recycled materials
- Reduce harmful chemicals - REACH compliant
- VOCs

End-of-life provision

- Design for disassembly - product design
- Recyclability of products
- Take back scheme

Sustainability: Getting Started

Once you have pulled together your strategy, it's time to determine how you will deliver this, and most importantly, how you embed Sustainability across the organisation, rather than have it sit as a stand-alone function.

This guidance is designed to help you think about the key elements that are often overlooked when you are getting started but will help to ensure Sustainability is set up for long-term success.

Buy-in from the top

Up until now, Sustainability hasn't always been part of 'business as usual', but that needs to change, so that Sustainability is part of the fabric of the organisation.

Without buy-in from the leadership team, it will be a struggle for Sustainability to be given the credibility and prominence it requires across the business.

Support your business case for Sustainability with some of the following:

- The latest market research that highlights how customer buying attitudes are shifting towards responsible brands and products.
- Upcoming legislation / regulations that you will need to be compliant with.
- Feedback from clients who have requested Sustainability policies / information.

Statistics and data can be great to support your business case but won't be enough alone. Paint the picture of what your business will look like with Sustainability driven throughout, with lower costs, increased efficiency, innovation and more at the core.

Know where to start

You have identified ways to address and improve your social and environmental performance and may feel overwhelmed knowing where to start. A materiality analysis is an effective tool to establish where you should focus your efforts.

Depending on the size of your organisation, the analysis doesn't have to be too onerous or complex. Start by identifying the most relevant issues that affect your business.

Make sure you consider these from the perspective of your internal and external stakeholders. You may not deem a particular issue hugely relevant, but if it is the number one topic that your employees or customers care about, it is wise to prioritise it to maintain their trust and respect.

You may be drawn to the big, transformational projects first, but balance these with some of the 'quick wins', as an effective way to engage your employees. Swapping plastic bottles for reusable water bottles in the office, for example, may seem trivial, but it is a relatable, visible and easy way help your employees think about their environmental impact, on a personal level. This will lead on to them consciously thinking about environmental impacts within their job role, which will help Sustainability gain momentum.

Recruit your Champions

Start by engaging with employees who show an interest or passion for Sustainability and make these individuals your 'Champions'. Your Champions will help to share Sustainability messaging in a positive light, creating a ripple effect through the organisation.

Get your people on board

Sustainability is not the sole responsibility of one individual in the company and should be shared throughout the organisation so that everyone takes responsibility in some way.

Setting up a Sustainability Committee can be an effective way to get senior stakeholders together to be accountable for setting targets and driving implementation, as well as helping them to see the breadth and depth of Sustainability across the organisation.

There will inevitably be employees who are cynical of Sustainability and reluctant to see it as a priority. For these individuals, think about what they are motivated by, what is their job role and therefore motivators, and how can you make Sustainability more attractive to them? I.e. how will Sustainability make their job easier, save them time, decrease costs etc.?

Communication is key

Unfortunately, a blanket 'one size fits all' approach to Sustainability communication will not work, and therefore consider how you position your messaging, depending on the audience.

For both internal and external communications, create easy to digest messages that the audience can relate to, and clearly see the value Sustainability has created/can create.

Certifications & Accreditations

There are several credible certifications / accreditations that you can use as external validation for your Sustainability performance. It's worth bearing in mind many of these will require someone in the business dedicated to meeting these, which can involve a huge amount of work. Here is just a selection of respected bodies that you could consider but in particular if you follow this strategy you will be in a good place to apply for FISP accreditation:



Measure your impact

Spend time establishing the 'baseline' for your social and environmental impacts (i.e. where are you now?). Then create indicators / metrics so that you can measure your impact against the initial baseline.

Connect with others

Speaking with others working in Sustainability can be a free and easy way to help you broaden your understanding, develop new ideas and reach other organisations that can support your strategy.

If you have a question or require advice, reach out to the CIUK team who can help to put you in touch with a fellow member who may be able to support you.

Corporate Reporting and Awards:

As a result of all your actions, you should be in a suitable position to go for the FISP Certification to get recognition for your sustainability efforts.

You may be able to begin setting targets and monitoring against these, enabling you to produce a corporate sustainability report.

You may also be eligible to put your company forward for a sustainability award based on your actions.

CIUK Sustainability Resources

Books

[Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the way we make things by Michael Braungart & William McDonough](#)

[There is no Planet B: A Handbook for the Make or Break years by Mike Berners-Lee](#)

[Let My People Go Surfing: The Education of a Reluctant Businessman by Yvon Chouinard](#)

Organisations

Furniture Industry Sustainability Programme, <https://www.fispfurniture.com>

Heart of the City (London based companies only), <https://theheartofthecity.com>

Institute of Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability (ICRS), <https://icrs.info>

Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA), <https://www.iema.net>

Ellen MacArthur Foundation, <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org>

Supply Chain Sustainability School, <https://www.supplychainschool.co.uk>

UN Global Compact, <https://www.unglobalcompact.org>

Ambitious Corporate Climate Action – Science Based Targets, <https://sciencebasedtargets.org>