

STEPPING STONES TO SUSTAINABILITY

Build a sustainability agenda
across your charity in 5 steps



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Corporation

Introduction

Sustainability is increasingly high on people's agenda and has become a buzz word in business circles. Measurable performance and tangible outcomes are becoming the standard, and the charity sector is expected to keep up.

Our *Stepping stones to sustainability* series will walk you through practical services that we can offer to help you make efficient and effective changes, and ultimately build more impact into your organisation.



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Charities have a different starting point to businesses, which many would perceive as meaning that they are by their very nature “sustainable”.

All charities must have a charitable purpose which must be for the public benefit and this drives activities, strategy and decision making and, in the case of charitable companies, the trustees must act in a way to promote the success of the charity in achieving its purposes.

But what does “sustainability” in the charity sector really mean in practice, and how do you make your charity more sustainable in a meaningful way through the way you operate?

Contact us to find out how we can help you.



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Stepping stones to sustainability

Build a sustainability agenda across your charity in 5 steps

#1 Governance

#2 People

#3 Environment

#4 Community

#5 Donors and beneficiaries

#5 STEPS

#1

GOVERNANCE

Look at the make-up of your board. Do you need support to broaden this to make it more diverse, and reflective of your community, beneficiaries and your stakeholders?

How do you currently invest any surplus funds, and does your investment strategy have a sustainability or ESG focus?

Do you focus solely on financial returns, or perhaps you divest portfolios from perceived 'harmful' assets such as carbon intensive assets? Consider going further by having an investment strategy which aligns with your charitable purposes.

#2

PEOPLE

Start by reviewing your contracts, policies and procedures for your staff and volunteers. Bates Wells can give you contracts, handbooks and support around performance management to make this fair to all parties.

Are you embedding EDI throughout your internal procedures? Do you need help to get started on this?

Consider what are you doing about social mobility and inclusion amongst your staff, volunteers and board.

#3

ENVIRONMENT

We can help you to reduce your carbon emissions through your operations and build strategy into your supply chain agreements.

Another key factor is supporting your employees to make more sustainable choices. This can be done through education and information as well as employee perks or benefits for taking the more environmentally friendly option, e.g. extra journey days for travelling sustainably, a sustainable pension offering, or cashback for switching to a green energy supplier.

Consider greening your fundraising contracts – can you put provisions in place in your fundraising contracts to require your partners to meet your social and environmental aspirations? Can you require your fundraisers to travel using more sustainable methods?

#4

COMMUNITY

This step is about the communities and beneficiaries you serve. How are you measuring access to your services with an EDI lens, and how are you reporting on this?

What focus have you put on your suppliers? Are they acting in line with your values? Supply chains are an increasingly regulated area and by ensuring you do due diligence and chose suppliers who align with your charitable purposes, you will not only reduce any reputational risk but increase your charities overall impact and sustainable operations.

Could your charity do something about social inclusion and building better communities?

#5

DONORS & BENEFICIARIES

Have you got policies and procedures in place to make sure that your donors and beneficiaries are treated fairly, and in line with EDI principles?

We recommend you think long-term and ensure you get regular feedback on your services.

[Click here to read the rest of the guides in our *Stepping stones to sustainability* series, with practical steps on how to add green clauses to your employment contracts, reduce your environmental impact through real estate, improve your supply chain, and more.](#)



Making a profit is core to all businesses but our goal is to combine this with a real social purpose. Our values are pivotal to us, they shape our decisions and the way we live and work.

We focus on positive social impact as much as we focus on being a successful law firm. Our top tier legal advice is coupled with a real desire to drive change and we were the first UK law firm to achieve B Corp certification, awarded to businesses that balance purpose and profit.

Today, our clients are diverse – from corporate household names, to public bodies, to start-ups. We're also the firm of choice for thousands of charities and social enterprises. We continue to lead the market we helped to shape.

Bates Wells challenges what is possible in legal expertise delivery.

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