**Instructions for Using the**

**Plan for Sustainability Template**

In today’s rapidly changing world, sustainability is not just a buzzword; it’s a crucial component of any successful business strategy. A well-crafted sustainability plan helps your business minimize its environmental impact, enhance its social responsibility, and improve its economic performance. The [Plan for Sustainability Template](https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/sustainability/plan-for-sustainability/plan-for-sustainability-template.docx) is designed to guide you in creating a comprehensive sustainability plan tailored to your business's unique needs.

**About The Template**

The template provides a structured approach to developing a sustainability plan that aligns with your specific goals, industry standards, and operational practices. It offers a foundation that you can customize to reflect the unique characteristics of your business. You have the flexibility to either use the language provided or modify it to better suit your organization’s voice and objectives.

**Getting Started**

* **Customization:** Begin by reviewing the [template](https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/sustainability/plan-for-sustainability/plan-for-sustainability-template.docx) and identifying areas where you can insert details specific to your business. Adapt the content to match your sustainability goals and operational practices. Language that is italicized in [*brackets*] contains instructions or prompts for you to customize.
* **Action Items:** In Section 6, you will find a list of sustainable actions to consider for your business. Evaluate these actions, remove those that are not applicable, and expand on those you wish to implement. For each selected action, refer to the separate document titled “[Plan for Sustainability Action Worksheets](https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/sustainability/plan-for-sustainability/plan-for-sustainability-action-worksheets.docx).” This document contains worksheets with sample language for each action item, which you can copy into your plan’s Action Worksheet Appendix.
* **Resources:** For additional guidance and support, please refer to the resources available on the [Plan for Sustainability](https://dep.nj.gov/sustainability/steps-to-sustainability/plan-for-sustainability) webpage. These resources offer further insights into performing audits and measuring sustainable actions.

By utilizing this template, you're taking a significant step towards building a more sustainable future for your business and community. We encourage you to embrace this opportunity to make a positive impact and drive meaningful change. We look forward to seeing the innovative solutions and strategies your business will develop and implement.

**Plan for Sustainability Template Sections**

**1. General Information**

* **Business Narrative:** Start by filling out the General Information section with your business's name, location, opening date, number of employees, industry, and products or services offered. This provides context for your sustainability efforts.

**2. Personnel Information**

* **Management and Green Team:** Populate the Management Team and Green Team sections with the names, titles, and contact information of key personnel involved in sustainability initiatives. This establishes accountability and leadership for your sustainability plan.

**3. Environmental Policy Statement**

* **Develop Your Policy:** Craft an Environmental Policy Statement that reflects your company's commitment to sustainability. Use the provided framework to discuss your dedication to energy conservation, waste reduction, water conservation, and other pertinent sustainability practices.

**4. Vision and Goals**

* **Define Your Vision and Goals:** Customize the Vision and Goals section to outline your sustainability vision, metrics for measuring goals, and both short-term and long-term objectives. Ensure these goals align with the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). The visions and goals provided in the chart below are examples of language you can use. Customize the chart to fit the needs of your business.

| **Sustainability Vision** | **Metrics to Measure Goals** | **Short-Term Goals (1–2 years)** | **Long-Term Goals (3+ years)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reduce energy consumption | kWh of electricity used per month | Reduce energy use by 10% through LED lighting upgrades and employee awareness programs | Upgrade equipment to models that use less energy |
| Minimize waste generation | Pounds of waste sent to landfill vs. recycled | Implement a waste sorting program and reduce landfill waste by 20% | Achieve zero waste certification |
| Sustainable sourcing | Percentage of materials sourced sustainably | Source 50% of office supplies from sustainable vendors | Transition to 100% sustainably sourced raw materials |
| Strengthening community ties and promoting local economic growth | Percentage of products/services sourced from local businesses, number of community partnerships | Partner with at least three local suppliers and sponsor two community events annually | Establish long-term collaborations with local organizations and ensure 75% of suppliers are local businesses |

**5. Benchmarking and Audits**

* **Establish a Baseline:** Use the Benchmarking and Audits section to document your current performance in key areas like energy, water, and waste. This involves collecting baseline data to inform your sustainability strategy and track progress over time. Visit the [Resources](https://dep.nj.gov/sustainability/steps-to-sustainability/plan-for-sustainability/#resources) section on the [Plan for Sustainability](https://dep.nj.gov/sustainability/steps-to-sustainability/plan-for-sustainability) webpage for more information on performing benchmarking and audits.

**6. Sustainable Actions**

* **Identify Actions:** In Section 6, Sustainable Actions, evaluate and select actions relevant to your business from categories like Management & Leadership, Energy, Waste, Water, Transportation, and more. You can delete the actions that you are not interested in pursuing and customize the example language for the actions you will be working on. You can also add additional actions that are not included in the plan template. Use the “Plan for Sustainability Action Worksheets” document to expand on these actions.
* **Action Worksheets:** For each selected action, fill out the Action Worksheets in Appendix 1. These worksheets guide you in detailing the objectives, resources required, monitoring plans, and expected outcomes for each sustainability initiative.

**7. Monitoring and Reporting**

* **Develop a Reporting Strategy:** Outline a strategy for measuring and reporting your sustainability progress to stakeholders. Define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and specify the frequency and format of your sustainability reports.
* **Tracking Progress:** Establish a system for regularly tracking energy, water, and waste metrics. Conduct annual sustainability audits to assess progress and make necessary adjustments to your goals and actions.

**8. Continuous Improvement**

* **Foster a Culture of Innovation:** Implement evaluation and feedback mechanisms to continuously improve your sustainability practices. Regularly review and adjust your goals based on performance data and stakeholder feedback.

**9. Conclusion and Approval**

* **Finalize Your Plan:** Summarize the key points of your sustainability plan and reiterate your business's commitment to sustainability. Ensure the plan is approved by the designated authority within your organization.

**Appendix**

* **Complete Action Worksheets:** Use the template or prefilled worksheets to document detailed plans for each action item. This includes specifying action leaders, timelines, and success metrics.

By following these instructions, your business can effectively leverage the Plan for Sustainability Template to create a meaningful and impactful sustainability strategy. Your commitment to sustainability will drive positive change, benefiting your business, stakeholders, and the planet.