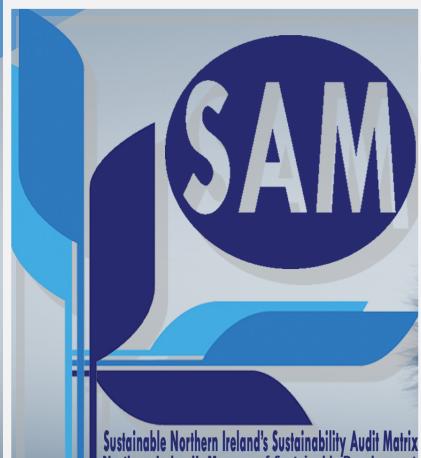


# Sustainability Audit Matrix®



"The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with but whether it is the same problem you had last year."

John Foster Dulles



## Briefing Note

Measurement provides a gauge for progress, a way to predict the outcomes of our actions and a means of identifying shortcomings. Sustainable Northern Ireland has developed a tool to help assess how and where sustainability has been integrated by organisations into their policies, practices and operations. The Sustainability Audit Matrix (SAM) was developed initially for district councils but has been adapted successfully for use by other bodies. Its purpose is to make sustainable development easier to understand and to enable officers to identify and describe the work that is already being undertaken within their organisations.

The Matrix measures progress towards sustainable development by looking for evidence of sustainable behaviour or the incorporation of the principles of sustainability within key documents, departmental plans, activities and, importantly, from discussions with key members of staff.

### ***The Benefits of the SAM***

The Matrix should be used to help organisations carry out their business in a way that contributes to sustainable development. It offers a simple means of self-assessment and helps to:

- Develop a better understanding of sustainable development among an organisation's management and staff;
- Contribute to the training of staff on what sustainable development looks like in practice;
- Enable managers to recognise how their organisation already contributes to sustainable development;
- Assess the stage that an organisation has reached, and then identify priorities for improvement;
- Design sustainable development strategies and action plans that link to other plans, such as corporate business plans.

## Understanding and Identifying Sustainable Development

*An example of SAM: integrating sustainability with organisational responsibilities*

### **Strategic Integration**

Towards Sustainability (Policy)  
Commitment and Integration  
Embedding at Corporate Level  
Embedding at Service Level  
Capacity Building  
Participation and Community Planning  
Measurement and Review  
Communication

### **Internal Cross-Cutting Integration**

Sustainable Procurement  
Energy Management  
Transport  
Waste Management  
Land and Property Management  
Environmental Management  
Corporate Management

### **External Operations**

Biodiversity  
Waste Management  
Leisure/Sports/Recreation & Culture  
Sustainable Communities  
Environmental Health  
Economic Development  
Tourism  
Building Control  
Cleaner, Safer, Greener  
Sustainability Education



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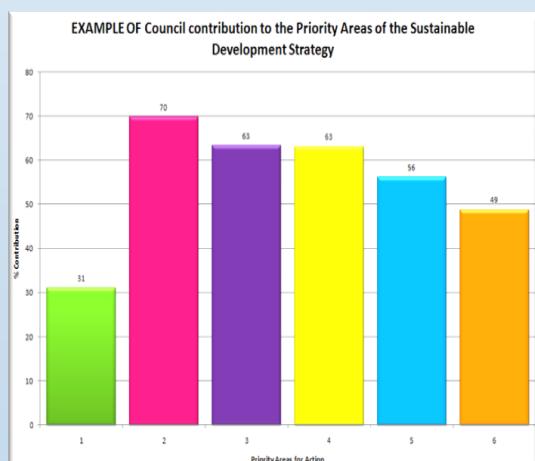
*A sustainable society is distinguished by a system of governance that focuses on mainstreaming and balancing social, economic and environmental progress. It exercises sound management and the efficient use of natural resources. It has democratic values and is prepared to invest in the health and well-being of its people. It encourages sustainable economic growth and takes a holistic approach to solving environmental problems.*

## Sustainability in organisational success

Climate change, depleting natural resources, low skills levels and employment inequalities are all challenging issues. Every organisation has an opportunity to help in tackling them by adopting a socially and environmentally responsible approach to sustainability.

Progressive organisations around the world understand that their long term value is enhanced by embedding sustainability values into their business strategy and by fully disclosing their progress to their stakeholders.

Using the SAM, you can determine your progress and use it for reporting and corporate improvement.



## Ten Steps to the SAM

1. An organisation takes the decision to run the SAM
2. Training is provided by Sustainable Northern Ireland
3. Planning for SAM; choosing the organisation's SAM team
4. Undertaking the in-house SAM assessment
5. Validation of assessment results by Sustainable Northern Ireland
6. Finalising the SAM score
7. Development of the SAM Action Plan
8. Presenting the results of the SAM to the organisation
9. Signing off the SAM Action Plan
10. Over time, repeating the process from step 3

