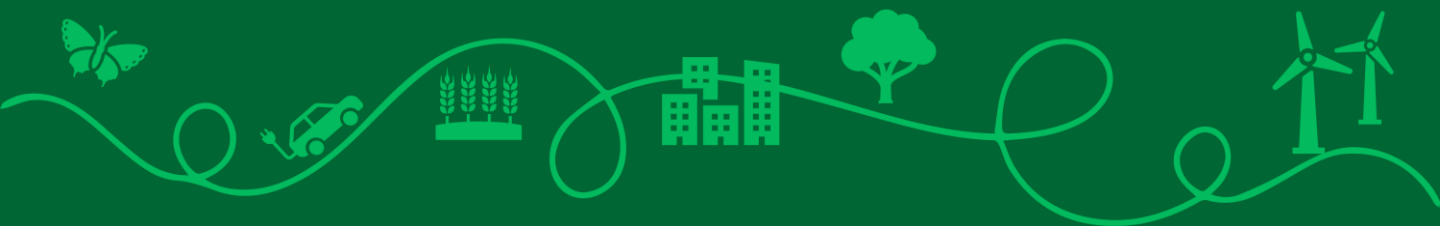




Sustainable Business Alliance

# SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS HANDBOOK





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123 Home Farm Drive  
Boughton  
Northamptonshire NN2 8ES  
United Kingdom

Website: [www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk](http://www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk)  
Email:  
[enquiries@sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk)

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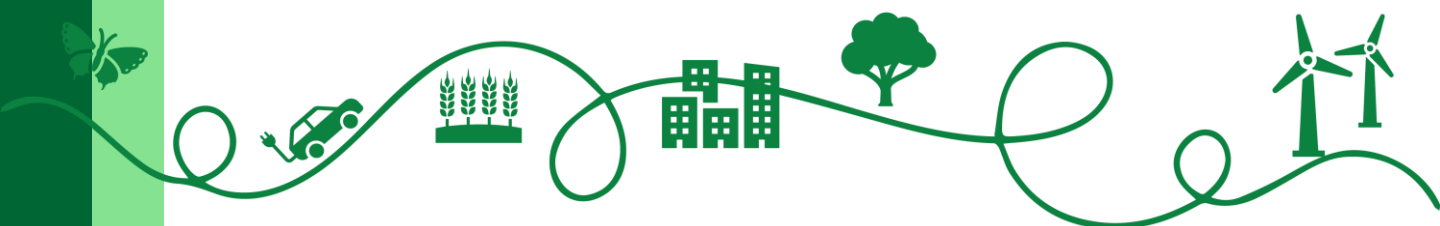
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### **Additional Information**

For more information or to access additional resources, please visit  
[www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk](http://www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk)





## Introduction

In an era of environmental challenges, social inequality, and economic uncertainty, the role of business is critical. Yet, many enterprises struggle with a maze of complex standards, frameworks, and acronyms. The Sustainable Business Handbook cuts through this confusion, offering a simple guide to help businesses take meaningful steps toward sustainability.

Sustainability is no longer optional; it is essential for long-term success. It's about creating impact—sharing prosperity, driving innovation, and preserving resources for future generations. Businesses that make sustainability central unlock opportunities, build resilience, and inspire trust among stakeholders.

This handbook helps businesses set priorities, craft strategies, take impactful action, and monitor progress. It guides enterprises to focus efforts where they matter most, driving meaningful change and leaving a legacy of progress. Sustainability isn't just good for business; it's vital for humanity. Let's get started.

## Get Started

Over the next few pages, we'll outline the **Sustainable Business framework in simple terms: starting with guidance on defining priorities, then creating and implementing strategies and action plans, and finally, monitoring and reporting to ensure transparency, credibility, and impactful action.**

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Our Delivery Partners



**Be. Partners**



# 1 Assess your priorities

Focusing on the most relevant sustainability topics enables businesses to make meaningful impacts, meet stakeholder expectations, and use resources effectively. Without clear priorities, efforts risk becoming scattered, reducing their effectiveness.

To identify key areas, conduct a double materiality assessment, which evaluates both the company's impact on society and the environment (impact materiality) and how sustainability issues affect financial performance (financial materiality). Engage stakeholders such as employees, customers, and investors to understand their concerns, and align these with regulatory requirements, industry trends, and strategic goals.

Reassess priorities regularly to stay aligned with evolving circumstances. This approach helps businesses focus their actions and reporting on what truly matters, fostering credibility and driving progress.

## Get Started

To get started, conduct your own Double Materiality assessment. Identify the most material topics by evaluating financial risks and opportunities to your business and where your business has the greatest impact on society and the environment.

How the Sustainable Business Alliance can help:



Download the SBA double materiality tools



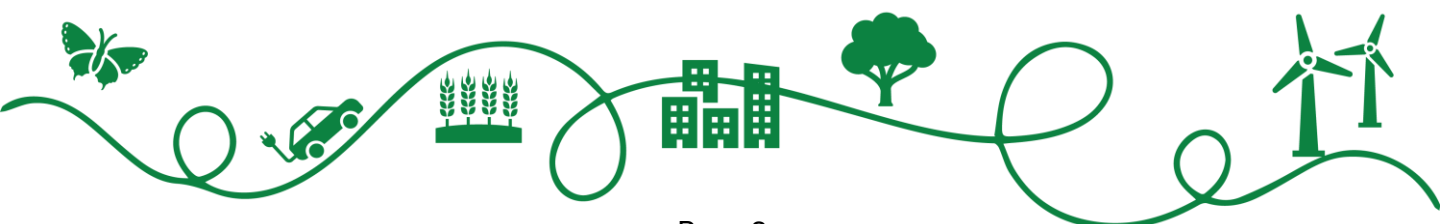
Access on-demand training in the SBA Academy



Join our half-day 'Good Start' workshop



Let SBA help you conduct a Materiality Assessment





**Quick Tip**

# Assessing Financial Risks and Opportunities

Conducting a financial risks and opportunities assessment involves identifying key sustainability topics impacting financial performance and resilience. A suitable framework should be chosen to define these topics, and the SBA Reporting Framework can serve as a useful starting point (see below). Evaluate risks (physical, reputational, liability, and regulatory) and opportunities (market shifts, innovation, and resource efficiency). Consider current and upcoming regulations, customer and investor expectations, and due diligence requirements. Conduct scenario analyses to test resilience and prioritise key risks and opportunities. Regularly review these priorities and integrate findings into strategic planning.

**Get in touch to find out how SBA can help you conduct a Financial Risks and Opportunities Assessment**

SBA Reporting Framework					
Embedded Strategy	Management Approach	Reporting and Transparency	Fraud and Corruption	Data Privacy	Corruption
Labour Practices	Training and Development	Health and Safety	Diversity and Equality	Modern Slavery	Local Communities
Energy	Climate and Emissions	Waste	Water	Materials	Biodiversity



## 2 Drive action with strategy

Building a clear sustainability strategy is essential for businesses to focus on topics most relevant to their operations and stakeholders. It ensures efforts deliver maximum impact by leveraging strengths and addressing weaknesses.

Start by identifying priorities through a materiality assessment and align targets with these focus areas. Develop SMART targets—specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound—to guide progress. Align goals with industry standards, stakeholder expectations, and regulatory requirements for credibility. For environmental goals, consider science-based targets to meet global climate commitments.

Create actionable plans to build on strengths and address gaps, assigning responsibilities and timelines. Regularly review and update the strategy to stay aligned with evolving priorities and external requirements, driving meaningful progress.

### Get Started

**Set clear goals and targets around your top three priorities. Align with science-based frameworks, customer expectations, and industry benchmarks. Develop actionable plans for each target, assigning timelines and responsibilities to ensure effective implementation and measurable progress.**

How the Sustainable Business Alliance can help



Download our strategy and action plan templates



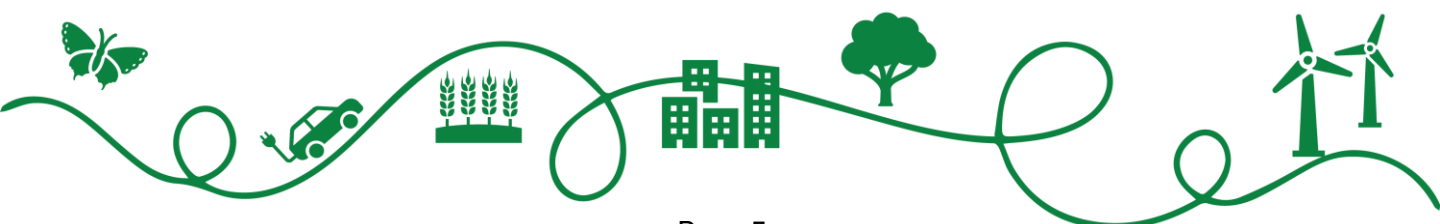
Access on-demand training in the SBA Academy



Join our half-day 'Good Start' workshop



Let SBA facilitate a strategy and action planning workshop





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Through  
Enterprise**



**Quick Tip**

## Using Self Assessment as a tool to inform your strategy

Conducting a sustainability self-assessment can help businesses understand where they are doing well and where they might need to improve, focusing particularly on the most material topics as identified through a double materiality assessment. This can help to ensure that strategies are designed to drive impact where it is most needed within an organisation.

There are various self assessment tools available including the B-Corp Impact Assessment for a comprehensive review or the simpler SBA Self-Assessment Tool.

**[Sign up to SBA to take our free Self Assessment](#)**

## Let's make a plan

Let SBA help you make a simple sustainability plan for your business.





# 3 Monitor and Report

Monitoring and reporting are crucial for tracking progress against sustainability priorities and targets. Businesses should develop internal tools to measure performance against key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with their strategy. These tools provide insights to inform decision-making and drive action.

Keep it simple—focus on priority areas where the business can make the most impact. Avoid overcomplicating processes and ensure reporting tools are user-friendly and aligned with resources. Regularly review performance to identify successes and address gaps.

For external reporting, align disclosures with frameworks like GRI or CDP to meet stakeholder and regulatory expectations. Transparent reporting builds credibility and accountability. Start with concise reports focused on key priorities, and expand over time as the strategy evolves, ensuring internal and external audiences understand progress and commitment.

## Get Started

**Establish KPIs aligned with your strategy and action plans, using simple tools to measure and report progress. Regularly share updates internally to foster engagement and ensure clear accountability. Publish an annual sustainability report to enhance trust, transparency, and credibility with your key stakeholders.**

How the Sustainable Business Alliance can help



Download our ESG reporting and carbon calculation tools



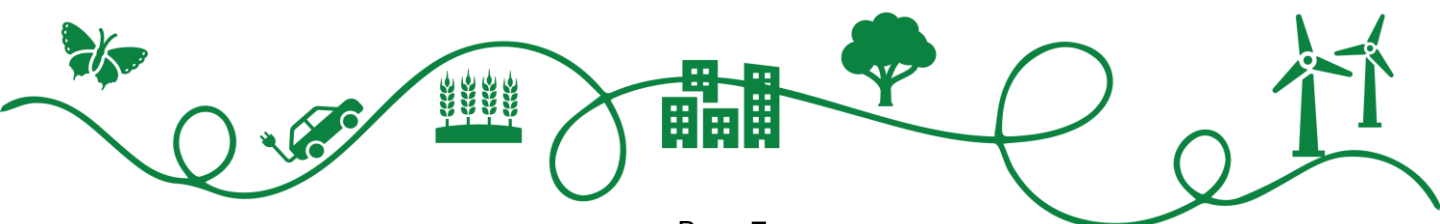
Access on-demand training in the SBA Academy



Join our half-day 'Good Start' workshop



Let SBA publish and verify your annual sustainability report







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### **Quick Tip**

## **Get accredited to build trust and showcase your impact**

Obtaining sustainability accreditation demonstrates a business's commitment to responsible practices, building trust, credibility, and competitive advantage. Accreditation can attract customers, investors, and partners aligned with sustainability values while enhancing transparency. SBA supports businesses by providing accreditation upon completing a self-assessment and submitting evidence. SBA also offers third-party verification of sustainability reports, ensuring information accuracy and strengthening trust among stakeholders. Accreditation simplifies demonstrating impact and fostering long-term success.

**Get in touch to enquire about SBA accreditation for your business**





# Join an alliance of businesses committed to sustainability



**Our mission is to  
empower every  
business to be a  
sustainable business**

By joining the Sustainable Business Alliance (SBA), you gain access to a comprehensive suite of tools and expert support to guide your sustainability journey. From user-friendly Excel templates and practical training for those who prefer a hands-on approach to tailored solutions where SBA takes the lead, we offer support that meets your unique needs. Whether you're just beginning, advancing your efforts, or refining established strategies, SBA is your trusted partner in achieving impactful sustainability goals.

Become a member of SBA at:  
[www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk](http://www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk)

## Member Benefits

### Community Member Benefits

- Take our Sustainability Self-Assessment
- Download free tools and templates including the Materiality Matrix tool and our basic Carbon Calculator
- Access basic on-demand training in the SBA Pro Academy.

### Pro Member Benefits

- All Community Member benefits plus...
- Enrollment on our Good Start half-day workshop and six drop-in support sessions
- All our Premium tools and Templates including Materiality Matrix Plus and our ESG reporting tool
- Free access to advanced on-demand training in the SBA Pro Academy

### Accredited Member benefits

- All Pro Member Benefits
- SBA Accreditation



# The SBA Commitment

At the Sustainable Business Alliance (SBA), we ask all our members to agree to the following commitment:

We, the members of the Sustainable Business Alliance, commit to embark on a shared journey toward sustainability by identifying our priorities, creating and executing actionable strategies, and openly reporting our progress.

We commit to embedding sustainability at the heart of our operations, aligning with best practices, and striving for continuous improvement to deliver measurable impact.

Together, we strive to drive transformative change for a sustainable future, enabling impact through enterprise.





# Membership Options



SBA offers three different membership options to support you on your journey towards sustainability.

Benefits	Get Started	Professional	Accredited
<b>Tools and Templates</b>			
Self Assessment	✓	✓	✓
Materiality Matrix Tool	✓	✓	✓
Carbon Calculator Lite	✓	✓	✓
Strategy and Action Plan Templates		✓	✓
Materiality Matrix PRO		✓	✓
Policy Templates		✓	✓
ESG Reporting Template		✓	✓
<b>Training and Development</b>			
Get Started Academy	✓	✓	✓
Access to talks and webinars	✓	✓	✓
Good Start Half-Day Workshop		✓	✓
Pro Academy		✓	✓
<b>Accreditation</b>			
SBA Accreditation			✓
Price	£50 per Year	£275 per year	£500 per year





# Sign up for our Half-Day Short Course



Join our half-day workshop for just £275 and receive one year of free Professional membership to SBA! The package includes over £500 worth of tools and templates, plus six 1-hour drop-in sessions. See the course outline below:

Section	What's covered
Target Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-Assessment: understanding your strengths and weaknesses</li><li>• Conducting a Risks and Opportunities Assessment<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Competitor benchmarking</li><li>○ Customer and Investor Requirements</li><li>○ Statutory Requirements</li><li>○ Physical impacts</li></ul></li><li>• Conducting a Business Impacts Assessment</li><li>• How to use the Double Materiality Matrix</li><li>• Top tips for target setting</li></ul>
Action Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An introduction to the SBA Action Plan templates</li><li>• Ideas and Inspiration:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Easy Wins and Low Hanging Fruit</li><li>○ Innovation</li></ul></li><li>• Sources of funding</li></ul>
Measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitoring and reporting overview</li><li>• An introduction to the SBA ESG reporting tool</li><li>• An introduction to the SBA carbon calculator</li><li>• How to create an annual report</li></ul>
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete the homework to refine your strategy</li><li>• Sign up for drop-in coaching and support sessions</li></ul>
Find out more at <a href="http://www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk/goodstart">www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk/goodstart</a>	

Our Delivery Partners





# Get Tailored support from the Business Towards Sustainability Programme

## **BUSINESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY**

The Business Towards Sustainability Programme accelerates businesses on their path to sustainability. With dedicated support and expert tools, the programme provides a structured, hands-on framework to guide organisations in developing and implementing a comprehensive sustainability strategy and reporting system

### **1 Assess your Priorities**

We'll conduct a financial and impact materiality assessment to help you identify the topics to prioritise for reporting and action.

### **2 Drive Action with Strategy**

We will co-create a sustainability strategy aligned to your business goals, identify targets and build action plans.

### **3 Monitor and Report**

We 'll develop systems to monitor and report your impact including carbon calculators and ESG reporting tools.

### **4 Get Accredited**

Get your sustainability score third-party verified through our research partners.

Find out more at [www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk/bts](http://www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk/bts)



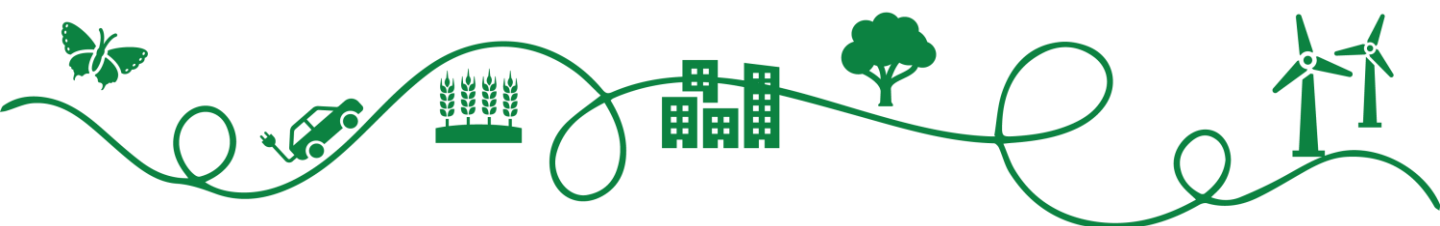
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## Get in touch

We'd love to hear from you! Whether you have a question, need support, or want to explore how we can help your business thrive sustainably, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Sustainable Business Alliance  
123 Home Farm Drive  
Boughton  
Northamptonshire NN2 8ES  
United Kingdom

[www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk](http://www.sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk)  
[simon.derrick@sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk](mailto:simon.derrick@sustainablebusinessalliance.org.uk)





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