



 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

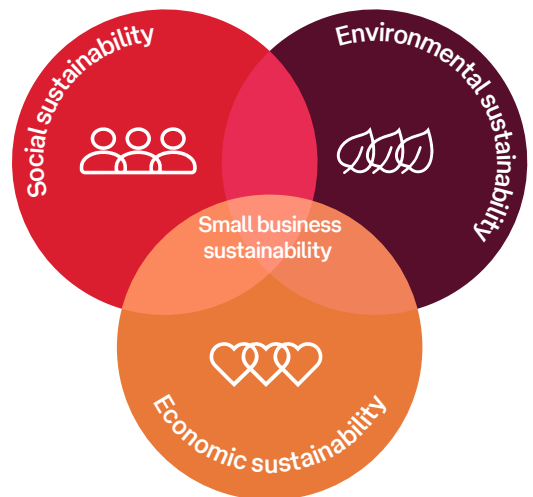
Small Business Sustainability Roadmap

Small businesses are the engine-room of our economy and one of Australia Post’s largest customer groups. We connect small businesses with their customers – across Australia and the world.

We’re a big business working in partnership with small businesses, so we appreciate how important sustainability is to long-term success for businesses of every size.

Sustainability is not always top of mind and they may not always know where to start.

That’s why we’ve created the **Small Business Sustainability Roadmap**, with practical steps that can be applied by any SME looking to improve their approach to sustainability.



What is sustainability?

Sustainability is most often defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

Businesses typically apply sustainable practices across three key pillars: social, environmental, and economic. These pillars are sometimes referred to as the “triple bottom line” or people, planet and profit.



Our research shows that that over **44%*** of SMEs consider sustainability very important to the future success of their business, **up from 31 per cent in 2016.**

Yet many SMEs are occupied with the immediate concerns of running a business – from managing cash flow, to attracting customers and dealing with suppliers.



* Small business sustainability in a COVID-19 world. A whitepaper by Australia Post in collaboration with the Banksia Foundation January 2021

How can my SME be more sustainable?

The Small Business Sustainability Roadmap sets out 10 simple steps you can apply to put your business on a sustainable path.



1. Adopt a principles-based approach to doing business

The [10 Principles of the UN Global Compact](#) provide a guide to sustainable business behaviour. Over 9,000 businesses globally have signed up to these principles - including Australia Post.

2. Consider your impacts

The SDGs you touch on directly or indirectly can also be a source of inspiration for developing new products and services that address a clear social or environmental need. [Download the SDGs in Action app](#) for more information about each goal, as well as news and updates about projects that are happening across the globe.

Find out more about how to map your business against the SDGs by accessing the [SDG Compass](#), a free online tool.

3. Prioritise what matters

Have you ever stopped and asked your customers and other key stakeholders how your business can be more sustainable? Engage your stakeholders by asking them to share their views on the sustainability issues they think you should be addressing. A stakeholder survey can assist in prioritising important topics for your business to focus on and guide your sustainability strategy and reporting process.

4. Assess your existing practices

Conduct a [quick assessment](#) of your sustainability practices to identify opportunities for improvement.

If you're deeper into the journey you can undertake a more rigorous assessment of your practices using the [B Impact Assessment](#) - a free tool designed to help holistically measure business performance and impact.

5. Measure and communicate progress

We all know what gets measured gets done, and sustainability is no different. By setting sustainability metrics and tracking progress, you can improve your practices and performance.

The risk of not communicating about your sustainability is that customers will fill in the gaps – either rightly or wrongly. It is also valuable to share progress as a mechanism for change in your industry and among peers. . Check out [ELK's Transparency Report](#) as a great example.

6. Commit to sustainable packaging

[APCO](#) provides a framework and resources to increase packaging sustainability within your business and along the entire supply chain - from design to distribution, retail and recovery.

Signing the Australian Packaging Covenant (the Covenant) means your business makes a public declaration to work collaboratively to achieve common goals.

7. Build eCommerce capability

In 2020, 82% of Australian households shopped online.[^] There is no doubt COVID-19 has created a new normal for the way people shop. SMEs need to ensure they have a strong online presence to meet changing customer needs and secure financial sustainability into the future. Check out [Australia Post's top four tips](#) to help your online business sell more. Check out [Australia Post's eCommerce trends and insights](#).

8. Partner up for financial sustainability

Financial sustainability is the primary goal for all SMEs and having a trusty financial partner can help with some of the day-to-day financial challenges in your business.

A financial advisor or your bank's business partner can help you identify your break-even point, and provide guidance around cash flow forecasts and financial buffers. They can also provide important advice around managing debt, making a profit and planning for tough times.

[NAB's SMEs Financial Health Check](#) and [ANZ's Business Planner](#) are online tools you may wish to explore to help you review and identify areas of focus for your business.

9. Access government support and guidance

[The Australian Government's Business website](#) provides information, grants, services and support to help your business succeed. From starting a business, to continuing your business during a crisis, the site is a central repository for information, support and resources.

10. Be recognised

Benchmark yourself against others and apply for recognition through awards programs like the [Banksia Awards](#). The Banksia Awards recognise individuals, communities, businesses and government for their innovation and excellence in environmental and social stewardship. The small business award category, sponsored by Australia Post, asks entrants to demonstrate how they are addressing the SDGs. All applicants receive feedback, and finalists gain recognition that can help with promoting their business



How can I find out more?

This roadmap is from a whitepaper titled: *Small Business Sustainability in a COVID-19 world*, launched by Australia Post in partnership with the Banksia Foundation. The insights in the whitepaper and this roadmap have been informed by a survey conducted by Australia Post of 614 SMEs and a series of conversations with SME leaders.

[Download your copy of the whitepaper.](#)

Sustainability checklist

Conduct a quick assessment of your sustainability practices to identify opportunities for improvement.

Sustainability practice	Y/N	Unsure	Notes
Health and safety standards - including in the supply chain			
Fair labour rights, human rights and no child labour - including in the supply chain			
Equal opportunities, diversity and flexibility in the workplace			
Local community involvement and philanthropic support			
Reducing or offsetting carbon footprint			
Reducing waste, water and energy used in operations			
Reusing and recycling materials			
Commit resources to developing sustainable products			
Commit resources to sourcing more sustainable products or materials			
Commit to sustainable packaging			
Develop sustainability targets and ways to measure progress			
Leverage sustainability of existing products to reach new customers or markets			
Good governance and accountability			
Code of ethics and transparent reporting processes			
Compliance and risk managements			