



Training materials

STEP 2: CARRY OUT A
SUSTAINABILITY AUDIT

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What is Sustainability Audit?



It is a process of evaluating a company's operations and practices to determine their impact on the environment. In our case, the company is our school.

According to the definition given by FEE, we use it “to identify the school’s current environmental and social impact and highlight the good, the bad and the ugly.”

<https://www.ecoschools.global/seven-steps-methodology>



About the Sustainability Audit

1. **The aim** is to investigate the environmental and social issues in your school/community.
2. **All main themes** should be reviewed annually (the school is free to also choose other areas of concern that are more relevant to its needs and to devise appropriate checklists accordingly)
3. Make sure that **the wider school community works as closely** as possible with the Eco Committee to carry out the Review. It is essential that as many pupils as possible participate in this process
4. **The results** of your Sustainability Audit will inform your Action Plan

The aim of the audit is...

- to investigate and address environmental and social issues within the school and community,
- to promote awareness, sustainable practices, and positive change through collaborative efforts and student-led initiatives.
- **The aim should be** clear and well-defined, the same way goals should be **SMART**(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely). The aim of the audit will also help you it decide the on the ways and methods you will use to prepare the audit (use of checklists, people involved, attitudes survey etc)



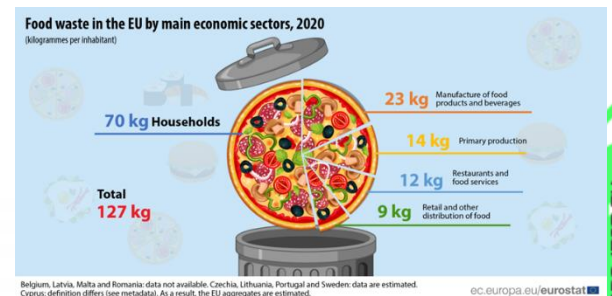
Sustainability Audit - It is about the wider community

- Make sure that the wider school community works as closely as possible with the Eco Committee to carry out the Review. It is essential that as many pupils as possible participate in this process
- Separate the stages involved in a review and make sure all parties can share their opinion and be involved



Sustainability Audit - The results

- The presentation of the results of a sustainability audit is an important step before the action plan as:
 1. It provides all the necessary information the school community needs to see “the problem”. Identifying a problem is the first step that motivates people to take action. The meetings can be open to public
 2. It lays the foundations of the action plan because it helps the Eco committee decide on SMART goals.
 3. It should be clear and easy to understand as students, parents, teachers, school staff come from different (socioeconomic and educational) backgrounds and often have different perspectives which influence the way they see things (eg a non-educated staff member who works in the cafeteria may need a presentation of results with fewer words and more numbers or a 6 - year old student may need more visuals to understand what the results of a review mean.



Let's put the theory into practice

Waste Management at school is the topic the Eco Committee wants to deal with.

An audit of this type may involve:



- Measure the amount and type of waste produced on a weekly basis for a month and create a chart
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current recycling programs. You can ask from the Head of the school a record of the amount of waste recycled the previous year and use it as your starting point to observe and monitor the progress of the recycling programmes.

Let's put the theory into practice **GEN**

Solid Waste Management Checklist

- ✓ Identify new opportunities to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

For example, you can participate in national and international school networks and create waste management projects with other schools, you can take part in competitions regarding the amount of waste recycled, you can call experts to talk to your students about the new opportunities schools have to reduce, reuse and recycle so that you make informed decision about your action plan)

- ✓ Assess student and staff participation in waste reduction through attitude survey in classes and staffrooms with a checklist (e.g how often do you recycle? / Can you easily find the recycling bins for each material? Are the things placed in the recycling bins in the proper condition?)

Waste Management

Are waste containers appropriate for use? (for example, food waste containers should have lids)

Yes

No

N/A

Are all waste containers in good condition?

Yes

No

N/A

Are waste containers lined properly?

Yes

No

N/A

Are waste from the different departments handled separately?

Yes

No

N/A

Are all recycling bins clearly labeled?

Yes

No

N/A

Are waste containers emptied regularly?

Yes

No

N/A

Are number of bins and dumpsters adequate?

Yes

No

N/A

Let's put the theory into practice



Waste management through food waste

An annual review checklist regarding food waste at the school's cafeteria may involve the following steps:

- Review the school's nutrition and dietary programme (how often students eat meat, vegetables, dairy product etc)
- Monitor the amount of food that is thrown away on a daily basis
- Assess the availability and quality of healthy and green food options. (e.g does the school buy products from local farms? Could we cooperate with a local farm and provide them with compost or food leftovers for their animals in exchange of products)
- Evaluate the school's carbon footprint regarding the food consumption and waste
- Present the results to the students. Are they interested in organizing an action plan to solve this problem? Do they identify it as a problem? Then you have your THEME! AND THAT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING!

Let's put the theory into practice

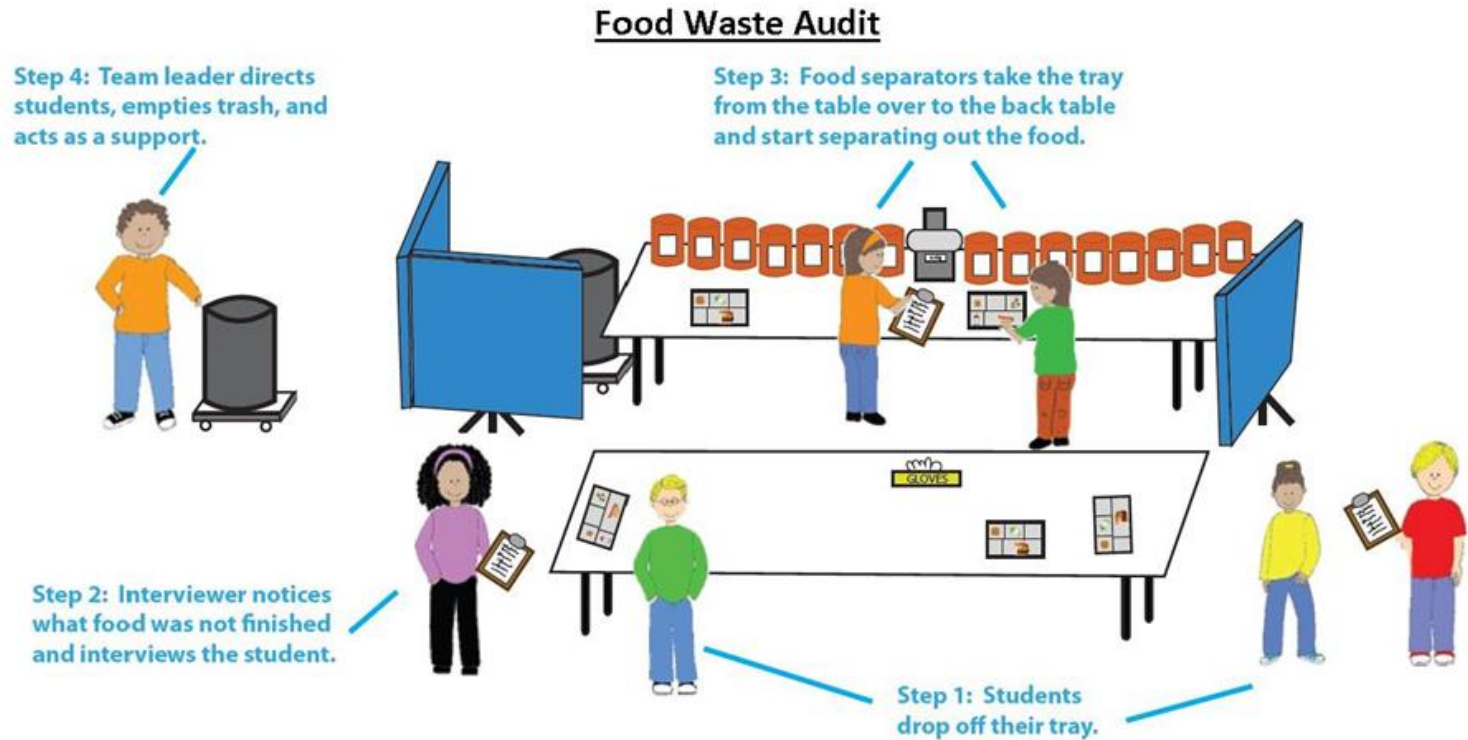


FIGURE 1 Sample setup of a school food waste audit.

Let's put the theory into practice

To make everyone involved in the audit, in an activity such as monitoring the food that is thrown away, the Eco Committee needs to decide on:

1. **The students** from each class that will be responsible for monitoring
2. **The students / teachers** who will create the checklist/table/questionnaire that will be used
3. The people from **the cafeteria staff** that will help the students weigh/measure the amount of food that is wasted
4. **The teachers** (Math teacher, IT teacher) that will help the students present the results of the review
5. The **parents association representatives** that will participate in the review, attend the presentation of results and share the findings with the wider community.
6. **The Head of the School** that needs to ensure that all processes are legal and all safety measures are kept during the review (eg the students wear gloves when they weigh the amount of leftovers that is wasted)
7. **The target group** who will answer a questionnaire regarding the survey of attitudes & food waste



Let's put the theory into practice

PRESENTING THE RESULTS OF AN AUDIT ON THE SCHOOL WASTE

School Assemblies and Presentations

- They are a great opportunity to present the results to students, teachers, and staff . You can use visuals like charts and infographics to make the data more engaging. Pie charts always help younger students to see how much waste is produced and what type of waste
- Classroom Presentations organised by the members of the ECO committee who can present the findings in individual classrooms, and adjust the language and medium to the different age groups.

Newsletters and Bulletins

- School Newsletter: This can have the form of a detailed summary of the audit results and highlight the key findings and invite the readership to an open meeting where they can suggest possible solutions. This way may be more effective with parents
- Special Bulletin: You can create a sustainability bulletin at the school entrance where people would expect to find info related to that topic.

Let's put the theory into practice

- **Hallway Displays or Interactive Boards:** You can use posters and infographics with the audit results and display them either in the school hallways or on interactive boards at the school entrance. This can be more effective with younger students.

Especially for a review on the use of bioeconomy methods at school to tackle with the problem of waste, the Eco Committee can place some paper and a box made of biobased material under the board which students can use to suggest solutions to the problem (write them on the recycable post-it note paper, fold it and throw it in the box)

School Website and Social Media

- **Website Updates:** These methods of dissemination are more popular with teenagers and adults. You can post the results on the school's website.
- **Social Media:** This method provides a quick spread of the findings using images and short videos to capture the target's group attention. Another advantage is that the findings may even reach people from the wider community or Municipality that may not be immediately involved with the school but may want to make a difference at the level of a neighborhood or the area the school is located.

Educational Resources



- <https://www.ecoschools.global/seven-steps-methodology>
- <https://nam.edu/the-power-of-postconsumer-school-food-waste-audits/>



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