



# How to Start your Museum's Sustainability Journey in 8 Steps

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## Awareness

**Acknowledge** the considerable energy consumption by museums (e.g. cooling systems, lighting, old heating systems etc.), their potential reliance on funds from polluting sources, the possibility of wasteful practices in their operations (e.g. conservation & packing materials, temperature policies etc.), and the resistance to change inherent in some institutional structures.

**Recognise** the urgent need for action on climate change across all industries, including the museum sector, emphasising that the current rate of adaptation falls significantly short of what is necessary.

**Remember** that achieving sustainability involves more than just assessing environmental impact and managing energy usage. It also entails addressing issues such as gender equality, social inclusion, fair labour conditions, and access to education, as integral components of a fair and sustainable transition. This means that museums, as institutions of learning and heritage can be at the centre of this necessary change.

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## Assessment

**Establish a baseline** for your museum's sustainability journey by assessing its current practices, including the building, team capacity, priorities, and goals. This step lays the foundation for subsequent actions by understanding where the museum stands in terms of sustainability.

One way to start with this assessment is doing the questionnaire, provided in this toolkit.

If your museum already has a sustainability policy, or has sustainability goals incorporated into other policies, it will be part of this step, to examine existing policies and objectives concerning climate protection, greenhouse gas reduction, and other sustainable aims. Explore ways to integrate local, national, or global targets into your operations and value chain.

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## Sustainability Strategy Development

**Engage with your community** to determine priority actions based on local needs, while also raising public awareness about climate change. Align local needs with national or global targets. Recognise that the effects of your project and outreach efforts can extend beyond museum walls and positively impact the local community.

**Conduct research** on how to connect with policymakers in your area, particularly those involved in cultural policy, urban development, and sustainability. Be open to advice from stakeholders or potential funders who could influence your museum's impact.

**Design** a clear and concise **Sustainability Mission Statement and Sustainability Policy**, which summarise your aims and objectives and align them with the results of your research.

You can use the instructions for the DIY Sustainability Mission Statement and Sustainability Policy, provided in this toolkit.

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## Cultivation

**Seek inspiration** from innovative initiatives within and outside the cultural sector, while evaluating the progress at your own museum, to develop projects that engage stakeholders and funders.

**Forge partnerships** with museums, cultural entities, institutions, businesses, and community stakeholders committed to sustainability and climate action. **Participate** in established networks focused on these goals, collaborating with fellow museum professionals.

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## Advancing Sustainability

**Continuously evaluate** your museum's current achievements in alignment with your Sustainability Mission Statement and Sustainability Policy and climate adaptation objectives.

**Incorporate** the sustainable transition of your museum into an action plan with short term (to be achieved within the next year), medium term (to be achieved within 2-3 years) and long term goals (to be achieved in 5 years or more), and designate a 'green team/person' to oversee implementation. Ensure that all stakeholders, board members, employees, volunteers, funders, financiers, partners, supporters and the community, are well-informed about these initiatives. One way to do this is by making your Sustainability Mission Statement and Action Plan (including all actions already taken) accessible to the public on your website and welcome desk.

**Identify** additional actions your museum can take to contribute to sustainability while upholding its standards and responsibilities. For instance, consider organising workshops or public forums to explore the intersection of heritage and sustainability and enhance existing educational and social inclusion programs that your museum may already offer.

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## Sustainable Projects for Community Transition

**Implement** a project, regardless of scale, that aligns with your institution's values and contributes to the sustainable evolution of your community.

Utilise established assessment frameworks to evaluate your initiatives and substantiate your proposals. Identify focal areas for improvement and develop compelling arguments to support your project and campaign. For instance, when conducting an energy audit, identify optimal strategies for improving energy efficiency or transitioning to renewable energy sources, along with estimating associated costs.

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## Results and Commitment

**Communicate** your findings and proposals to decision-makers and potential funders, emphasising your institution's significance to the community and its steadfast dedication to sustainable development. Showcase existing successful initiatives while providing insights into areas for improvement, supported by a blend of data and compelling narratives about the museum's impact.

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## Advocate Change and Inspire

**Advocate for systemic changes** by integrating your research findings into existing policies or future funding programs. Engage with social media and the local media outlets with organised briefings and timely press releases, ensuring the public is informed about your initiative's objectives and progress.

**Collaborate** with stakeholders and funders to effectively communicate the necessity of your museum's sustainable transition and its broader implications for the community.

**Leverage** local partnerships to advocate for essential changes. Recognise that achieving a successful sustainable transition demands active participation from stakeholders and the wider community

**Always share your progress with your network to continue the cycle of inspiration and collective action in the sector!**