Construction Clients' Protocols Best Practice Guide 2:

Sustainability

Written by clients for clients

NZGBC NEW ZEALAND GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

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Sustainability

Internationally there is a significant movement towards creating more sustainable buildings to reduce our environmental impact, increase social and economic benefits and meet the needs of the future.

Sustainability in construction anticipates future risks and addresses a number of key factors including:

1. Reducing costs across the whole of a building's life
2. Efficiently using energy, water, materials and other resources
3. Improving health, comfort and employee productivity.

It is recognised that relative to other sectors the built environment provides one of the most significant opportunities for substantial and rapid cost effective carbon emission reductions.

This guide aims to bring together some of the ideas and language surrounding sustainability in a simple, accessible form. We hope it will help to improve all round understanding of current industry developments.

What does sustainability include?

- Address environmental, social and economic aspects of projects
- Business case and targets set within contracts
- Address resource use, waste minimisation, low-carbon performance
- Employment, training and local community engagement
- Protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats
- Enhance the environment of the local community

Sustainability rating tools for buildings are widely adopted internationally and play a key role in delivering sustainability through providing:

- A common language that brings together stakeholders across the building and construction sector
- A robust and comprehensive measurement of sustainability
- An evidence based demonstration of sustainability
- Confidence that sustainability principles are incorporated into a project
- Benchmarking against best practice, both nationally and internationally.

"Sustainability is critical to the whole life performance of any built asset and its future operation."

What are the benefits to you?

- Healthier buildings leading to increased staff productivity and reduced absenteeism
- Reduced building operating costs due to increased energy and water efficiency
- Increased property values for certified sustainable buildings
- Higher lease rates and increased tenant attraction and retention
- Asset protection as certified sustainable buildings anticipate potential changes in market demand and legislation
- Preparedness against any energy and water cost increases and supply shortages
- Enhanced reputation for your organisation and demonstration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
- Enhanced marketability as sustainable buildings are recognised as leading edge and high quality

The Port Taranaki Centre
Photo: Pip Guthrie

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How do you do it?

- Upskill your own competence as a construction client on sustainability issues
- Establish a sustainability focus and implement sustainability principles at the very start of project planning by using an integrated design approach
- Engage with sustainability professionals and understand the opportunity for building certification (eg Green Star) to ensure that sustainability is delivered and can be robustly demonstrated
- Develop and implement a business case and plan that addresses environmental, social and economic factors
- Engage your supply chain partners by setting targets for sustainable performance and including in tender documentation
- Encourage use of environmental policies and certification schemes by supply chain partners to enhance traceability
- Engage the local community to encourage buy-in and by developing employment and training policies
- Consider the impact of the project on the local community from all sustainability dimensions.

Supply chain partners should be challenged to demonstrate their:

- Evidence of environmental, social and economic policies in place and used on previous projects
- Commitment to engage with local communities and evidence of this in previous projects
- Proactivity in enabling clients to upskill their competence
- Sustainability and community engagement plans are in place and active
- Previous experience of Green Star/Homestar projects.

When do you need to do it?

At the start of any project your sustainability and community engagement policies should be in place to engage the supply chain early in your project decision making process. This will enable you to get better performance from your sustainability commitment and to get best use from your supply chain partners.

MAF Multipurpose Building
Photo: Paul McCredie

Take the following action:

- Develop and implement strong sustainability principles and policies
- Identify the opportunity for certifying your project (eg Green Star) to ensure that sustainability is delivered and demonstrable
- Use an integrated design process to engage your supply chain partners early in your decision making process
- Ensure your supply chain partners have the right sustainability policies in place and understand the impact this will have on their business
- Measure, benchmark and report on your own performance as well as that of supply chain partners
- Take time to upskill your own competence as a construction client
- Commit to enhancing the local environment and community
- Engage local communities in your project

Measuring success

Success can be measured at design stage and post construction stage.

Measure the following attributes:

- Energy use
- Water use
- Biodiversity protection and enhancement
- Materials use
- Waste and recycling
- Indoor environment quality (IEQ)
- Emissions

A Green Star/Homestar rating will address these attributes, applies robustness to the decision-making process and publicly demonstrates value.

Further advice & guidance

- Construction Clients' Group: www.constructing.co.nz
- New Zealand Green Building Council: www.nzgbc.org.nz
- Homestar: www.homestar.org.nz
- BRANZ: www.branz.co.nz
- Environmental Choice New Zealand: www.enviro-choice.org.nz
- Enviro-Mark® NZ – www.enviro-mark.co.nz
- Zero Waste – www.zerowaste.co.nz

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Clients' Action Plan

The Clients' Action Plan brings together the 6 key steps vital to you delivering more sustainable construction projects. They represent the principles which will enable clients to get better value and performance from their construction projects. This simple yet effective process should enable all stakeholders in the supply chain to collaborate more effectively in the adoption of this framework for action.

Further details can be found via the websites of the Construction Clients' Group, (www.constructing.co.nz).

About the Construction Clients' Group

The Construction Clients' Group (CCG) is a New Zealand group dedicated to learning and sharing knowledge about building better, faster, safer and achieving better value for money from your construction procurement. CCG supports both private and public sector customers of construction as well as organisations throughout the delivery supply chain. We recognise that our members need to work collaboratively to achieve the key CCG objectives. Our members from both the public (central and local government) and private sectors represent a significant proportion of New Zealand construction clients. CCG supports all clients, regardless of their core business activity, by promoting best practice that will provide better value for their construction procurement and ultimately an improved built asset. Of equal importance, alongside our best practice role, the CCG provides its members with a credible voice to key industry stakeholder groups and Government agencies.

As an organisation we:

- are a voice for all construction clients and our members
- provide opportunities for clients and supply chain companies to network and share best practice
- provide regional events in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch
- influence government policy and industry improvement programmes
- offers opportunities for training and development
- publish guidance and disseminate best practice
- further information can be found on the CCG website (www.constructing.co.nz)

About the New Zealand Green Building Council

The New Zealand Green Building Council (NZGBC) is a not-for-profit, industry organisation dedicated to accelerating the development and adoption of market-based green building practices. Approximately 450 organisational members include industry leaders committed to developing market based solutions that help deliver environmentally sustainable, innovative buildings for New Zealand.

To date the NZGBC has successfully introduced the suite of Green Star NZ rating tools for office, industrial, education and office fit out projects, as well as the Homestar residential rating tool in partnership with BRANZ.

For further information visit www.nzgbc.org.nz

The Action Plan

Step 1: Gather all stakeholders (design, engineers, contractors, facilities management) together at the feasibility stage

Step 2: Use an integrated design process and ensure requisite sustainability skills and experience on the team

Step 3: Establish the commitment to sustainability and how that translates into the vision for the project. Consider the entire lifecycle of the building: design, built, operations.

Step 4: Include sustainability across all documentation, including tendering information and any requirements for project certification

Step 5: Measure progress throughout against established targets using recognised assessment model (eg Green Star / Homestar).

Step 6: Report publicly on achievement of demonstrated outcomes (eg certification through a rating tool).

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Constructing Excellence is committed to reducing its carbon impact.
Printed October 2011