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## Example: reduce, reuse and recycle paper

Here is how you could reduce, reuse and recycle the paper you use.

### Reduce

Print or copy as few things as possible. Don't just automatically print an email, but consider first if you need to keep a hard copy. Printing or copying on both sides of the paper will reduce the amount of paper you need. Buying paper made from recycled products reduces the environmental impact.

### Reuse

Wherever possible, use the same paper again. If you have finished with a copy of something, use the reverse side for notes. If it is something that several people need to read, consider setting up a system to circulate one copy for everyone to share.

### Recycle

When you have finished with the paper, make sure it is recycled. Use a box to collect paper for recycling at your desk then transfer it to the recycling bins when it is full.

For some documents, it is important to comply with your organisation's requirements for storage and disposal. Some things, such as client letters or orders, may need to be printed for legal reasons. Other documents may need to be shredded before they are recycled to maintain confidentiality.

## Green workplace policies and procedures

Laws and regulations about the environment exist to protect the public and the environment. They relate to many different things, including how to dispose of potentially dangerous wastes, how to store chemicals safely and how to reduce pollution. Many policies and procedures arise from the need to comply with laws and regulations. Green workplace policies and procedures are used to reduce the workplace's environmental impact.

As an employee, you have a responsibility to follow policies and procedures to ensure the organisation complies with laws and regulations. For example, your workplace may wish to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, so a policy may be that employees must switch off all lights not in use. In big organisations, a policies

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**Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 (Cth)**

- Defines water efficiency standards and labelling procedures including those used on appliances such as dishwashers and washing machines.

**National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (Cth)**

- Provides for the reporting and distribution of information about greenhouse gas emissions, greenhouse gas projects, energy production and energy consumption.

## State and territory laws

States and territories have a responsibility for the environment. For example, although the *Sea Installations Act 1987* (Cth) covers what may be installed in federal waters, the first 3 nautical miles from the coast are not federal waters, and each state and the Northern Territory has its own legislation and regulations to govern coastal waters.

Each state and territory has its own departments and agencies relating to the environment. For example, in New South Wales there is the Department of Planning and Environment; and in Victoria the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning, and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria.

Work health and safety (WHS) requires employers to provide safe premises, safe machinery, safe systems of work, information and training and a suitable work environment. WHS is regulated at state and territory level, and some of the regulations vary quite widely.

You need to be aware that there are laws and regulations that are different in different states and territories, especially if you work for a national organisation. You should review practices in your organisation and consider which may be affected by environmental legislation or regulations.

**Example: compliance tools and examples of use**

**Best practice comparison**



Write out a step-by-step best practice procedure. Then write out the current procedure in your organisation. Compare the steps. Where are they different? The differences will help you identify what you need to do to improve your procedure.

**Audit or survey**



Conduct an audit over two weeks; for example, to check if computer screens in your work group are left on overnight. You could count the monitors left on or use a map each day to see if there are obvious trends.

**Checklists**



Checklists are a quick and easy way for employees to identify if key elements are being completed. A checklist lists the key criteria and allows reviewers to rate how well they are being followed. A checklist can be completed regularly.

**Objectives, targets and action plans**



By setting an objective or target for improvement, you can then measure whether or not you have achieved the target. Your action plan should list the steps and when they should be achieved.

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For an initiative to succeed, it is important to provide two types of information, as described below.

### Motivational information

Motivational information explains to people why they should do something. People are more likely to get involved and participate when they fully understand what the benefit is; for example, featuring a short statement on a 'reduce, reuse and recycle' poster about how reducing paper use saves trees and makes the air cleaner.

### Operational information

Even if someone is keen to participate, they can't help you reduce paper usage if they don't know how. Some people may be embarrassed to say they don't know something, so make sure you give them the operational information in a way that is easy to understand. The easier you make it for people to change, the more likely they will be to participate; for example, providing some simple instructions on how to make duplex copies.

## Get the right information

Successfully implementing a green initiative requires people to want to participate and to know how to participate. You need to provide motivational and operational information.

Motivational information means explaining the benefit of doing something in a way that is relevant to the person you are telling. For example, it may not be necessary to tell the customer-service team in an office how to manage a hazardous material spill, and a team in a manufacturing plant may not need to know about saving paper.

If you are going to try to introduce an initiative to reduce waste, you could tell your team about an example where another company has successfully achieved this.



## 1D Identify sources of information to support improvement

There are many places from which you can gather information about appropriate environmental initiatives. Wherever you get your information from, make sure you tell your group where you found it. Make sure it is from a credible source. It is important that your source provides valid and verifiable information so your co-workers will be more inclined to participate in your initiative.

Once you have identified an initiative to suggest in your workplace, the next step is to decide how to tell people about it. It is important to plan this because how people respond may be the difference between success and failure.

Some examples of credible sources to gather green information from include:

### Government departments

Government department websites provide links or suggestions freely on environmentally sustainable initiatives. It is quick and easy to get information from the internet. Here are some examples:

- The Department of the Environment provides documents and examples of sustainability projects at: [www.environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au).
- Sustainability Victoria provides various resources at: [www.sustainability.vic.gov.au](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au).

### Industry groups

On their websites, industry groups provide resources to help improve environmental procedures.

- Energy and water providers also have information on their websites about how to reduce usage. Your local water authority may have suggestions about how to reduce water usage at home or in the office. Gas and electricity providers often suggest ways to use energy more efficiently.

### Sustainable management organisations

Sustainable management organisations have websites that provide up-to-date information on legislation and regulations. They provide suggestions and ideas for implementing practical and effective sustainable practices in workplaces.

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**Water**

Dishwashers, washing machines, toilets and gardens require large amounts of water, as do some manufacturing processes. Look at the water usage information from your supplier for this information.

**Production materials**

You could review the materials used to produce goods or services for sale to customers, where they are from and whether they are able to be recycled. You could also look at the energy and water used. You may need help from other areas for this.

**Packaging materials**

You could measure how much packaging is used in things your organisation consumes by measuring the waste disposal. You could also measure how much packaging you used in producing your own goods and services by monitoring invoice values.

## Environmental footprint

Environmental footprints are measurements that indicate the amount of land needed to regenerate per person based on national resource consumption, depletion and regeneration. It is worrying to realise that if everyone in the world had the same environmental footprint as the average Australian, we would need three times as much land as there is on Earth to contain it.

Organisations can neutralise their carbon emissions by reducing overall energy use, maximising use of renewable energy resources and offsetting or balancing the remaining emissions through counter actions. Planting trees is a common form of carbon offset.

You could investigate one of the carbon offsetting plans available and present the information to your manager for approval. Log onto [www.carbonneutral.com.au](http://www.carbonneutral.com.au) to view examples of carbon offset projects.

## Reporting tools

When reporting information, it is important to remember your green principles. For example, don't report on the success of reducing paper usage by producing a thick report using lots of different coloured ink. Some suggested reporting tools are below.

### Spreadsheets

Spreadsheets are useful for reporting changes over time. They also allow you to create simple graphs that illustrate any changes.

### Regular reports

You should use regular reports if you measure information regularly. Combining your information with a similar or relevant report is efficient and saves time.

### Emails

Emails are useful to summarise information and to share information with lots of people. You can attach spreadsheets or graphs to your emails.

### Staff meetings

Staff meetings are good for encouraging participants. They also provide an opportunity for the supervisor or manager to thank the team.

### Presentations

Presentations allow you to present details of measurement without producing hard copies. If handouts are needed, try to print several slides to a page.



## 2A Seek input from others

To initiate change, you must consult or discuss your proposal with other stakeholders so you are aware of any potential problems, concerns or additional opportunities in advance. When people have been involved in developing a process, they are more likely to be supportive, which helps you achieve your goal.

Stakeholders may be internal, such as your colleagues or managers; or external, such as customers, suppliers and local community groups. Your supervisor can help you identify key stakeholders for your initiatives.

Stakeholders may include:

- customers
- suppliers
- operational staff
- shareholders
- supervisors or managers
- the public
- colleagues and team members
- other departments
- other interested parties.

### Get advice from the experts

No matter how good you are at your job, you are not expected to know everything. Sometimes, you need information from experts in particular areas to successfully carry out your idea for change.

For example, if you want to switch to green power, you need information from your energy supplier. If you want to change how people use their computers, you need to consult with the IT department.



### External advice

You may need to consult with a number of external organisations to implement a green workplace solution. You may just need to review information provided on websites. Or you may need to contact the organisation and meet with a representative for more detailed information.

## 2C

### Identify alternative solutions

After researching external sources, collecting internal information and consulting with appropriate stakeholders, you will probably have a lot of information, ideas and possibilities. This can be exciting or overwhelming. Once you have identified opportunities for environmental initiatives in your workplace, it is time to evaluate and develop your own alternative solutions.



### Problem statement

Developing a new solution is, essentially, trying to solve a problem. When solving problems, you must understand the reason behind each problem.

It is helpful to begin by writing a problem statement. This does not need to be complicated. Let's say you are trying to reduce the amount of paper used in an office. Your problem statement might be: 'People are using too much paper and not using the recycling bins'.

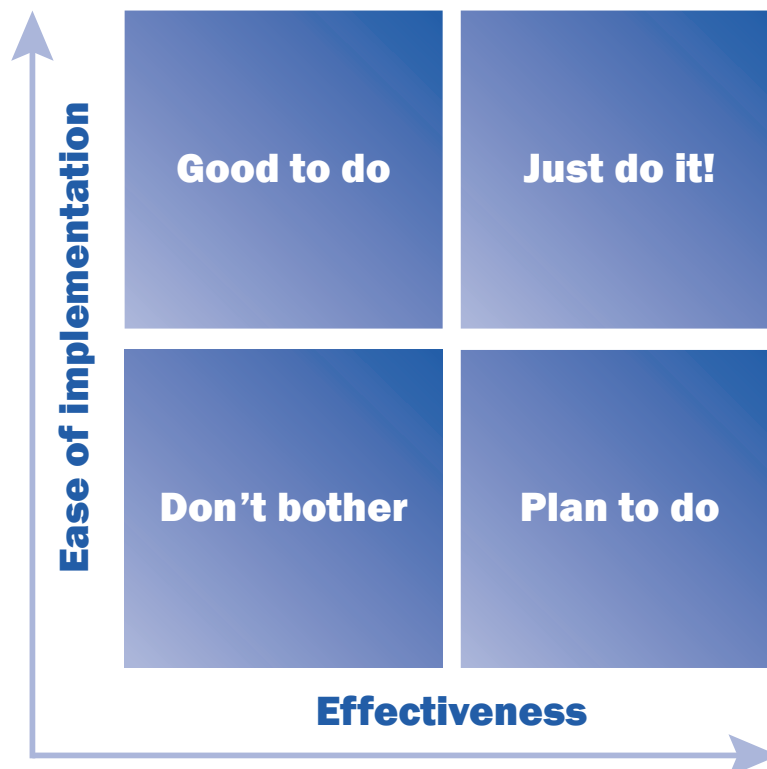
However, this does not help you identify the best solution. First, consider separating the two points: using too much paper and not recycling. See if you can identify the real reason for each point. There may be more than one. When you have done this, the solution will be more obvious.

Consider all possible reasons for the problems. It may be helpful to use some data in your problem statement. For example, you may extend 'not using recycling bins' to 'only 15 per cent of paper is being recycled'. This is helpful because it gives you a base from which to measure your improvement.

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### Prioritising ideas

- Choosing the best idea can be difficult when there are a lot of options available. Use the brainstorming group to help with this task. Apply a scale consistently; for example, by assigning points of high, medium and low. Think about each idea in terms of its effectiveness and ease of implementation, and complete an assessment matrix similar to the one shown here.
- Once you have categorised your ideas in this way, you can easily prioritise them. If an idea is very effective and easy to implement, then it should be implemented. These ideas are sometimes called 'low-hanging fruit', as they are easy to pick. They can also really motivate a team.
- Ideas that are very effective but difficult to implement should still be considered. They may take more planning and may require approval from management or other areas. But because they are very effective, they should still be seriously considered.
- Ideas that are easy to implement but not particularly effective require some further analysis. Don't bother with ideas that are ineffective and difficult.



# 3A

## Use tools and techniques to achieve targets

Measuring and reporting progress is an important part of achieving any target. Without it, targets tend to become too general and less is achieved. This section focuses on how to measure progress towards achieving a target.

### Tools to measure targets

How you measure your targets will depend on your objectives. It is important to measure progress regularly so you can identify any concerns and implement improvements where necessary.

If you are collecting measurements regularly, they need to be easy to collect. If they are too difficult to gather, they might take up too much time or might not be collected.

It is important that measures are objective. Test this by asking two people to use the same measures. If they get different results, you may need to clarify your measures further.

There are many different tools that can be used to measure or demonstrate progress towards a target. Some of these tools and their common uses are summarised below. As long as the tool is objective, gives consistent results and is relatively easy to use, you can use any information at your disposal to measure progress.

#### Fishbone diagram

**Description:** Shows cause-and-effect relationships.

**When to use:** Use when trying to define the problem and understand the root cause.

#### Resource usage trends

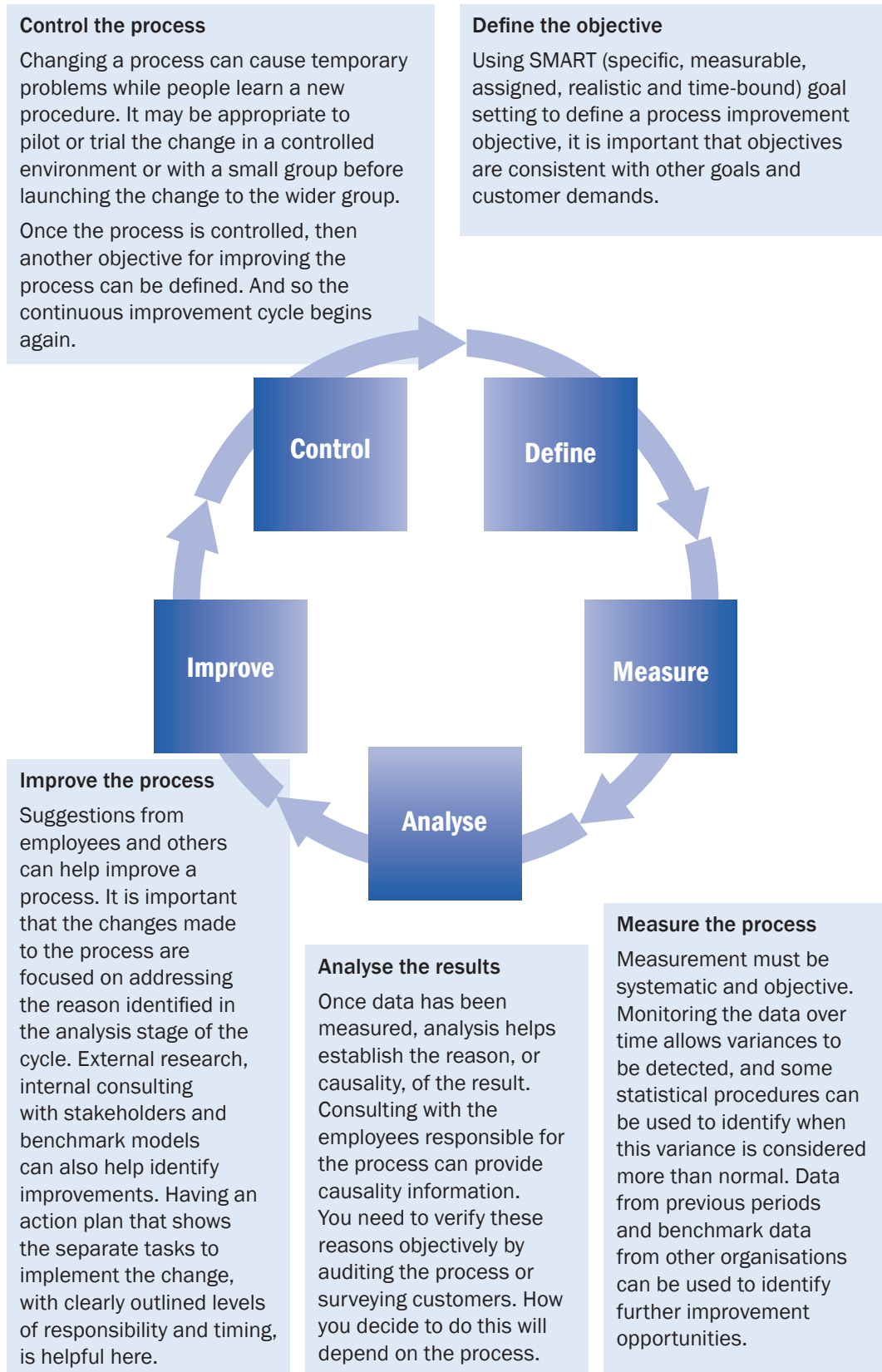
**Description:** Uses supplier invoice data to measure use of a resource such as paper, energy or water.

**When to use:** Use to monitor the success of programs designed to reduce resource usage or to monitor changes in waste collection

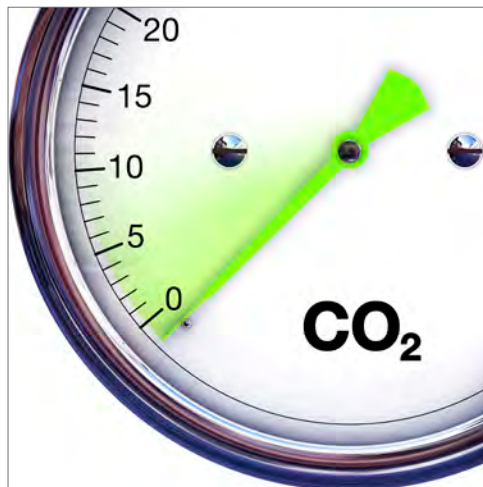
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## Continuous improvement cycle

It may help to see continuous improvement as an ongoing cycle made up of a series of steps. Because it is a cycle, one step flows into the next. These five steps form a continuous improvement cycle.



## Reduce energy consumption



Greenhouse gases are made up of water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Greenhouse gases are in fact a necessary part of the Earth's atmosphere; however, their levels are increasing, which scientists believe is contributing to climate change.

Carbon dioxide is emitted when we consume energy produced from non-renewable sources such as coal. It is also one of the gases emitted from cars and trucks. To reduce greenhouse gases, it is important to consider those from stationary sources, such as electricity generation, and non-stationary sources, such as transport.

If you are responsible for developing green initiatives in your workplace, consider developing procedures in regard to both stationary and non-stationary energy.

### Stationary energy

Here are some ideas for initiatives in regard to stationary energy.

#### Use green power

Switching to green power will reduce emissions, as it is generated from renewable sources such as wind and solar energy. Your energy provider will be able to assist you.

#### Use cold water

Use cold water, not hot. Take shorter showers, and use eco settings on washing machines and dishwashers.

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## 3D

### Support team members to identify areas for improvement



You may have procedures or instructions for managing your own work area. You may be responsible for conveying workplace environmental procedures or instructions to your work team. Make sure you convey the information clearly and accurately, whether you do it verbally, such as in a meeting, in conversation or on the telephone; or in writing, such as via email, memos, procedure manuals or signs.

### Communicate instructions to your work team

The types of procedures and instructions could be quite varied.

#### Examples of communicating environmental procedures

- Reminding team members about specific energy-saving procedures
- Encouraging your team to adopt a new environmental work practice
- Circulating instructions about a changed procedure
- Warning staff about hazardous materials
- Providing information about contingency plans or emergency procedures

Here are some examples of ways to reuse, recycle and reclaim materials.

### Reuse

- Provide reusable crockery, cutlery and cups in common kitchen facilities rather than disposable ones. Provide filtered water for staff to refill water containers.
- Work with suppliers to make deliveries using recyclable packaging, such as pallets, rather than cardboard.
- Find community groups that may be able to use some of your waste materials. For example, children's centres may be able to use some of the packaging materials.
- Create green notebooks from paper that has been printed on one side. Alternatively, if you do not have a printer with duplex abilities, put this paper into a printer designated for draft copies or internal printing.
- Wash food in a container, rather than a sink, and then reuse the water on the plants or garden areas.
- Provide boxes or reusable bags to retail customers to discourage plastic bag use.

### Recycle

- Community groups, charities or schools may be able to use the office equipment you are replacing. Environmental organisations also provide information on groups that may purchase this equipment from you.
- Biodegradable recycling programs for food waste reduce methane from landfill and produce compost that can be used in garden areas. This could be used within the organisation or provided to other groups.
- Commingled recycling schemes allow organisations to recycle more than just paper. Your waste contractor can provide information.

### Reclaim

- Use reclaimed materials for landscaping in your organisation. Builders' yards or eBay may sources of this material.



**3F****Implement costing strategies to fully utilise environmental assets**

Environmental assets come from the environment. They may include raw materials or particular holdings such as estates, bush land, gardens and lakes.

Some assets are quite straightforward to value. For example, a real estate agent can estimate how much your home will sell for based on their knowledge of the local market, and shares can be valued based on the current share price. However, environmental assets are more difficult to value.

Consider how a mining company might value the gold in a mine. First, it needs to estimate how much is there, which a technical specialist can do. It could multiply this by the current price of gold.

However, some environmental assets have a value that is separate from their market value. An old-growth forest could be valued at the amount the wood could sell for. However, conservationists would fiercely disagree with this approach. They would point to the value of the forest to the wider community, in terms of both the environmental benefit of the oxygen it produces and the pleasure in being able to visit such an area.



### Example: application of triple bottom line reporting

A company may own a body of water, into which it dumps waste materials. Over time, as the water becomes polluted, the value to the community and the environment will decrease. However, if these values were not recognised in the first place, then the cost of losing them will be ignored. In traditional accounting, dumping the waste in the water seems the cheapest method because there is no obvious cost to dispose of the waste. However, triple bottom line reporting reveals the cost at a social and environmental level and environmental legislation would likely prevent or restrict the dumping of waste in water.



### Practice task 17

Read the case study, then complete the task that follows.

#### Case study

Cindy is a purchasing officer at Holiday Hotels. They are setting up two new hotels in the next three months and she is currently deciding which washing machines and dishwashers to choose. They are already over budget for refitting the hotels, so she has been asked to keep the costs as low as possible.

Cindy has identified two models each of washing machines and dishwashers. The only models within her budget are the least efficient for both water and energy use. Cindy knows her manager is concerned about their current budget, but she is concerned that saving money at this stage may be false economy. She decides to complete a cost-benefit analysis, using this information.

	Washing machine 1	Washing machine 2	Dishwasher 1	Dishwasher 2
Price	\$1,000	\$1,400	\$800	\$1,200
Monthly operating costs	\$110	\$80	\$120	\$70
Water use	100 L/load	70 L/load	25 L/load	15 L/load
Warranty	12 months	24 months	12 months	12 months
Purchase budget	\$1,000		\$800	

*continued ...*

## Management support

Management support for a target can help to achieve the goal. Encouraging managers to follow a procedure can set a positive example to the rest of the team.

Regularly informing managers and supervisors of performance versus target gives them the opportunity to encourage improvement and reward success. This may be part of a discussion in a team meeting, an announcement in one of their regular communications to the work group or an individual discussion.

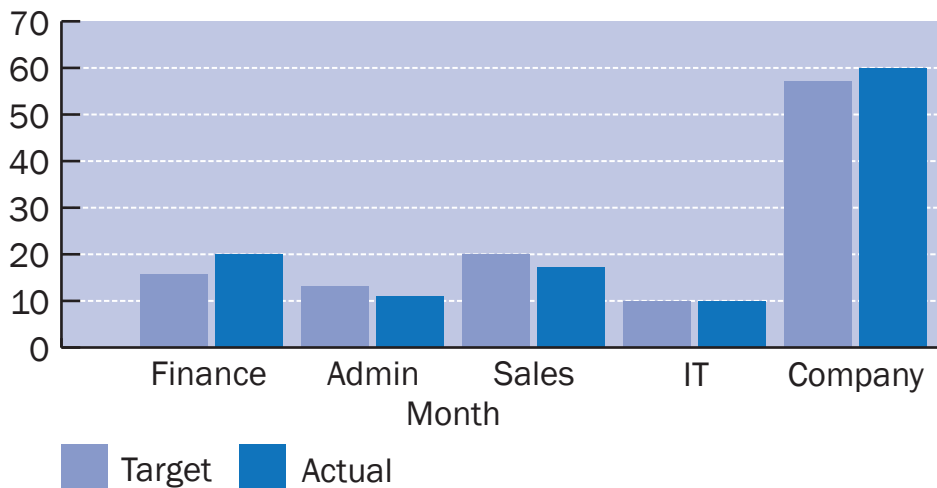
Even small acknowledgments from management can make a big difference to morale, so make sure your manager is aware of progress. You may ask them for support if performance is declining to encourage greater focus and participation.

## Visual reporting

It is important to report performance in a way that it is easily understood. If possible, summarise the key performance aspects in one page or less, perhaps attaching supporting detail. Clear, simple presentation of data makes it much more likely that people will read it and take appropriate action.

Traffic light indicators are a useful tool, particularly for annual targets. This means defining three levels of performance: red, yellow and green. The green light means things are on track, yellow means things are not on target but are within reach, and red means things are off target and a concern.

This chart shows an example of visual reporting. It depicts each department's target progress by comparing the target with the actual progress.



# 4C

## Evaluate strategies

As part of the continuous improvement cycle, you should define, measure, analyse, improve and control your process or procedure on an ongoing basis. Analysis helps you evaluate the reason for a particular result and identify appropriate enhancements. Evaluation also helps determine whether or not a strategy, procedure or initiative is effective. The best time to define what you will be evaluating is at the commencement of an initiative. By having a clear understanding of what it is you want to achieve, you will be able to determine what it is you are evaluating.

When a target is achieved, it is easy to conclude the procedure was a success. However, there is still an opportunity to enhance the process and achieve even better results or the same results in less time and with fewer resources. Be sure to document the process and any revisions. Most workplace policies and procedures have a mechanism for regular updates. Providing a brief explanation for the update will help your successor or people in other areas to understand the reason for the change.

### Things to consider when evaluating an environmental strategy

- Keep it objective. Try to keep the review about the process, rather than individual or work group performance. People will be less defensive when discussing the process. Address specific performance concerns separately from the process evaluation.
- Involve all levels. Involving staff in developing improvements or making suggestions helps encourage ownership and engage staff. Suggestion schemes, group meetings and informal discussion are all ways of gathering suggestions.
- Provide feedback. If you have asked for help from other staff members, make sure you inform them how their information will be used. If appropriate, recognise individuals or teams for particular suggestions.
- Create a 'lessons learned' database. Mistakes happen. The important thing is to acknowledge them, understand them and implement changes to prevent recurrence. A 'lessons learned' database need not be highly technical. It should be a summary of the concern, the cause and the steps to rectify it. It should be located in a central location.
- Use what you have learned to plan for the future. Evaluating procedures teaches you about process design and implementation. Next time you are planning a new procedure, you will be able to do so more quickly and effectively.