

DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

05

Sustainability:

Sustainability is a difficult concept to define as it encompasses so many different elements. What constitutes sustainability is constantly changing as new ideas emerge and new scientific developments are made. However, sustainability at its core means that any given activity, be it how we live, work or exist, can be continued indefinitely.

[Johnston, Everard, Santillo & Robert, 2007]

Business sustainability:

Business sustainability is the ability of a business to survive, adapt and succeed in a complex and changing business environment whilst considering social, environmental and economic issues. Businesses must take responsibility and accountability for the impact they have, whether the impact is positive or negative.

[Spiliakos, 2018]

Sustainable development:

Sustainable development was first defined in the Brundtland Report in 1987: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

[Brundtland, 1987]

Biosphere Reserve:

The formal definition of a Biosphere is the part of the earth's surface where all life naturally occurs on land and within the seas on oceans.

A Biosphere Reserve, as defined by UNESCO, is a site of learning where we can test interdisciplinary approaches to understand and manage changes between the social and ecological systems that exist within the Biosphere.

[Collins, 2022; UNESCO, 2022]

What does sustainability mean to your business at present?



UNESCO BIOSPHERE ISLE OF MAN

To provide context to the toolkit it is useful to first understand what UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man (UBIOM) is, what its purpose and aims are and how you, as a business, link in.

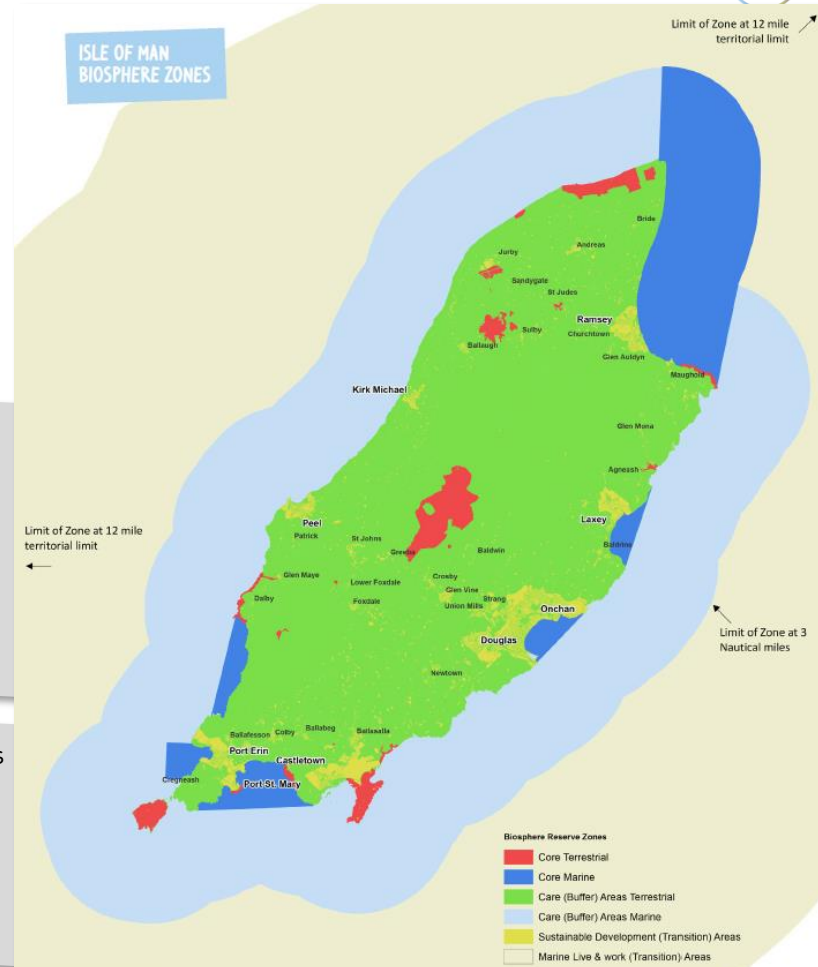
The Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) was launched by UNESCO in 1971 with an aim to establish a scientific basis for enhancing the relationship between people and their environments. It combines both natural and social sciences to find a balance between improving human livelihoods and safeguarding natural and managed ecosystems which create innovative approaches to sustainable development.



The Isle of Man was awarded UNESCO Biosphere status in 2016 and remains the only entire nation to be awarded the accolade to date (as of June 2022). The Biosphere Reserve status includes the land, the territorial sea surrounding the Island and everything within it, including us as individuals. The Island is divided into Core, Care and Sustainable Development zones which have varying levels of protection.

Our unique status as the only entire nation Biosphere allows us to work across all sectors of our Island and encourage a holistic approach to sustainable development, conservation and learning.

The nature of UBIOM means that it is not enshrined in legislation and has no formal powers. Instead, UBIOM relies on education, awareness-raising and engagement to get the sustainability messaging across.



CONNECT WITH US



Click on the icons above to explore our social media pages and our website.

Become a Refill Station. Refill contributes to reducing single use plastic use, litter and pollution. If you are shop, café, museum, gallery, visitor attraction, etc., offer to refill customers' own reusable bottles and receptacles with tap water. Display a sticker and appear on a global app.



The Refill campaign is more than just about water. It is trying to reduce plastic pollution and change behaviours across the world.

refill@gov.im

Click the Refill icon to watch our YouTube video promoting Refill on the Island, featuring some familiar faces from the Ravens.



UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man's partner scheme provides an inclusive network of partners, connecting organisations in a variety of sectors together and providing ideas for Biosphere-related projects and other initiatives. We also run a number of projects ourselves throughout the year which you could get involved with. Explore our website to find out more.



There may be Partner businesses who are already doing what you are trying to achieve so reach out.

biosphere@gov.im

As an individual you can sign up to be a Biosphere Buddy and receive our monthly newsletter, or if you are a keen photographer become a Biosphere Photographer and share your amazing photos with us. We can then use these on our social media channels and on our website.



Click on the icons to find out more:



BASICS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Before exploring the more in depth topics surrounding sustainability you need to consider the basics firsts. Both goods and service providers consume resources and produce waste and emissions.

You may have started to consider how you could introduce sustainability into your business or have already started to introduce sustainable practices but want to further this. Sustainability requires a holistic approach in order to address the broad range of topics that sustainability encompasses.

The basics of sustainability are often overlooked or are not fully understood. Individuals and businesses often have the preconception that their contribution won't matter but if everyone makes a collective effort it creates a larger impact.

(Moon & Parc, 2019)

Businesses must generate value for themselves and for society simultaneously. However, when creating a shared value you need to consider future generations within decision making. Most businesses have a short term view in order to seek immediate gratification. A sustainable business, therefore, requires a change in mind-set in order to take a long term view.

Shared Value

Our 'Sustainable Mann' series of workshops are held annually and cover a range of different topics. Hosts of the workshops are experts in their respective fields and take a thorough look into each topic and how business fits in with this.

Keep an eye on our social media pages for the registration links which are released closer to the workshop dates.

When businesses and society work collaboratively it creates value, increasing the benefits for both the business and society. Shared value is, therefore, mutually beneficial.

Needs of the business

Needs of society

'SUSTAINABLE MANN'

A workshop series for businesses offering solutions to challenges that affect our sustainability.

Topics: Starting a sustainable business, addressing climate change, adapting to greener energy, recycling, circular economy and encouraging nature/wildlife.

Starting on
13th September 2022

Each workshop costs £5 to attend
Book via links advertised

Working Together for a Sustainable Future.



THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015. The 17 Goals and 169 associated targets were designed to provide a consistent framework for countries to use to address the urgent sustainability issues.

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man supports the goals as part of its 'sustainable development' function. Many aspects of the Isle of Man Government's Our Island Plan complement these goals.



The SDGs can be used by businesses as an overarching framework to help guide, shape and communicate goals and activities to take advantage of a number of benefits.

- Identify new growth opportunities.
- Strengthen your brand.
- Attract investors.
- Highlight priorities and give purpose to your activities.
- Enhance your local community.

Not all the goals will be relevant to your business but it is still useful to know the different factors included within sustainability to aid with decision making.

Explore the individual goals in more detail. Click the image:



MYTH BUSTING

As identified through the SDGs, sustainability is not just about the environment. It includes a variety of social issues with an aim to provide a future for everyone and everything on earth.

SUSTAINABILITY IS ALL ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT.

BEING SUSTAINABLE IS TOO EXPENSIVE.

The initial cost of becoming sustainable may be high if the changes are drastic and have not been budgeted for. Infrastructure to support sustainable business is becoming more accessible. As the production of sustainable products has increased, prices are being driven down.

SUSTAINABILITY MEANS COMPROMISE.

This may have been true historically but there are now substitutes for most products which are of equal quality but which don't exploit the environment or the people creating it.

As more research is being conducted into sustainable ways of doing business the concept of sustainability is constantly evolving. New products or ways of doing business may emerge which could be of benefit to your business.

SUSTAINABILITY HAS AN ENDPOINT.

OPERATING COMPLETELY SUSTAINABLY IS EASY ONCE YOU FIGURE IT OUT.

Even on an individual level, living a completely sustainable life is not possible in today's society. There will be a lot of trial and error in terms of what practices best suit your business and even then, new challenges may present themselves further down the line.

IT TAKES UP TOO MUCH TIME TO BE SUSTAINABLE.

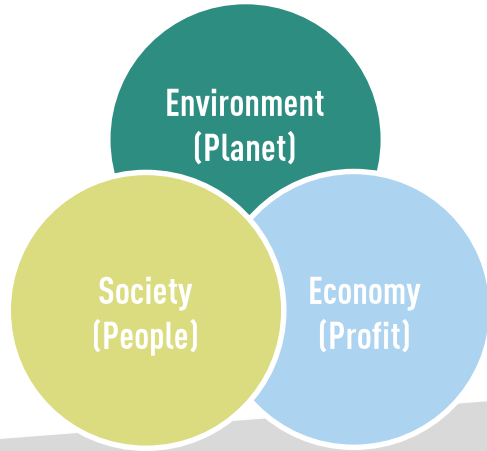
Although it may take time to change and adopt a sustainable mind-set, there are small wins which would take up as much time as you would normally spend researching best practice solutions for your business.

MY IMPACT WON'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

This is a myth often thought by individuals but it can also relate to businesses who may think they are too small or won't have enough of an impact to make a difference.

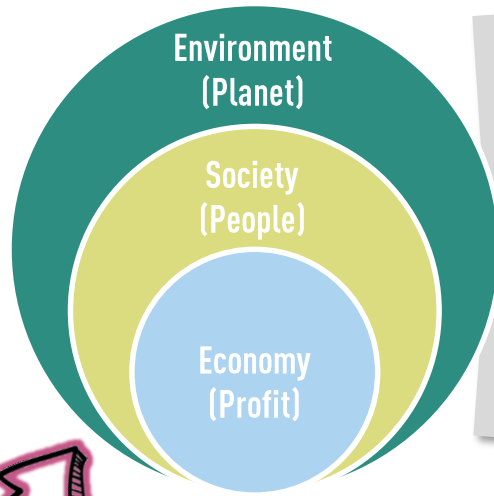
MODELS OF SUSTAINABILITY

11



The Triple Bottom Line model was developed by John Elkington in 1994 as a way of measuring sustainability in large corporations, moving away from the traditional models that a businesses sole purpose was to make profit. The model continues to be used by businesses today and has aided the development of other sustainability based models and concepts, such as Corporate Social Responsibility.

(Elkington, 2004)



The traditional way of looking at the Triple Bottom Line has been highly regarded within business but it allows for flexibility which often means that businesses choose to address one factor to the detriment of another.

(Block & Paredis, 2019)

Instead, the three factors need to be considered as interdependent with the success of economic and social factors being reliant on how successful you are at addressing environmental concerns. Economy is the smallest sphere as it is directly influenced by the other two spheres.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a broad concept and can be adapted based on the type of business and sector. CSR initiatives force businesses to examine their internal processes in a variety of business areas including the management of staff, procurement of resources, and meeting the needs of customers.

CSR reporting is now common in many large businesses to demonstrate to their internal and external stakeholders that they are addressing sustainability issues within their operations.

Environment, Social, Governance (ESG) models also link in with CSR with many of the same underlying principles.

(Stobierski, 2021)

Ethical Responsibility

Environmental Responsibility

Philanthropic Responsibility

Economic Responsibility

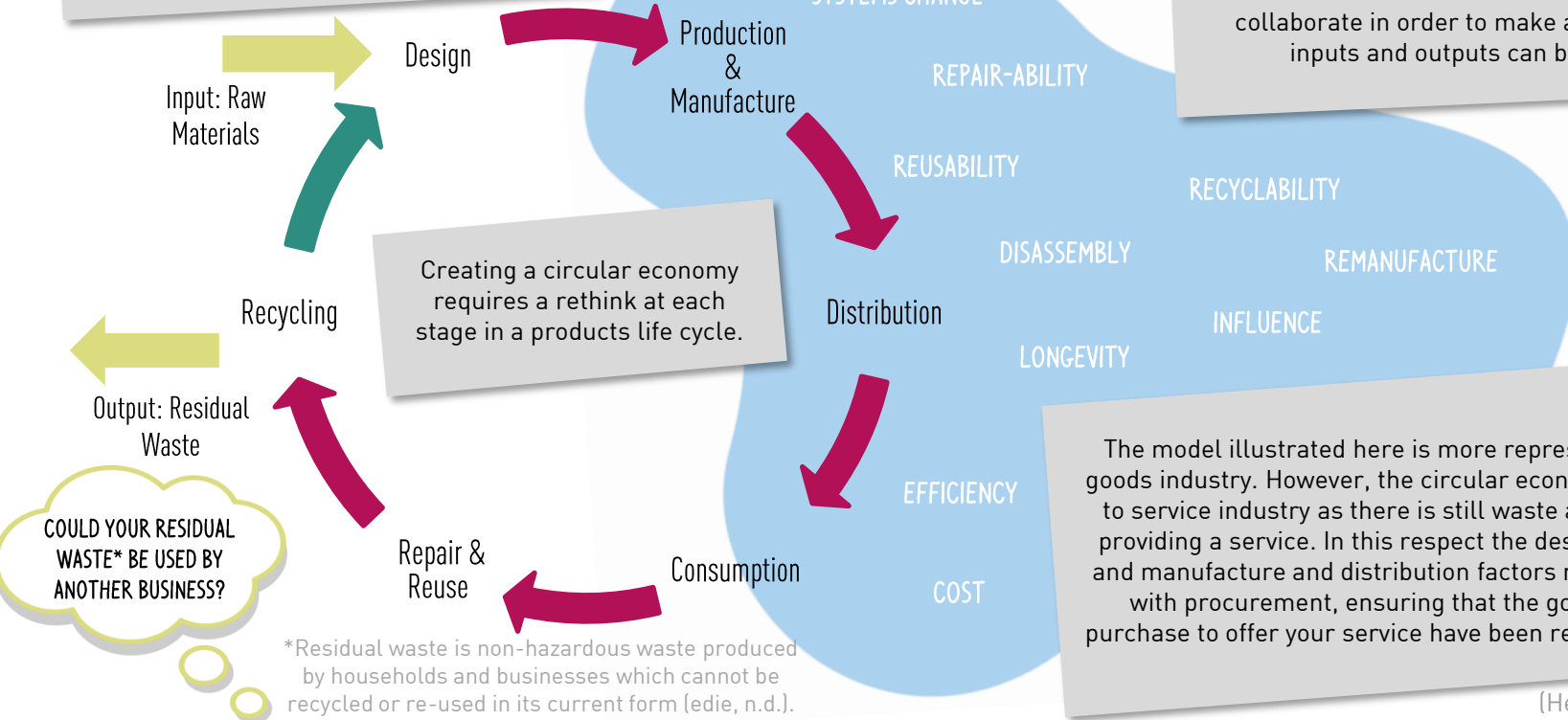
A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

12

The circular economy model is based around the main aim of extending the life cycle of a product or service to reduce waste as much as possible.

When a product reaches the end of its life, the broken down components are kept within the economy where possible, being redesigned, repaired, refurbished or recycled where possible.

Due to the reliance the Isle of Man has on imports in terms of both goods and services, the Island currently can't support a circular economy. Businesses would need to work together and collaborate in order to make a system where inputs and outputs can be reduced.



The model illustrated here is more representative of the goods industry. However, the circular economy also applies to service industry as there is still waste associated with providing a service. In this respect the design, production and manufacture and distribution factors may be replaced with procurement, ensuring that the goods you may purchase to offer your service have been responsibly made.

(Henry le Fleming, 2016)

HOW DOES THIS LINK WITH MY BUSINESS?

13

Micro

Medium

Large

Small

Joint
venture

Multi-
national

Sole-trader

Businesses in all sectors play a vital role in supporting the Island's economy, however, they also produce waste and emissions. It is not just environmental impacts that need to be considered.

Taking a holistic approach means addressing a variety of issues, which include staff wellbeing, engaging with the local community, contributing to the economy in a sustainable way, protecting the environment and promoting the Island's culture.

More than 43,500 people are either employed or self-employed on the Island which is around 50% of the total population (Isle of Man Government, 2022). People working full time spend a significant amount of their week committing time to the business they work for.

YOUR BUSINESS

Biospheres offer business opportunities which can add both intrinsic and commercial value to the area. Entrepreneurs looking to explore new business opportunities play a vital role in the transformation towards a more sustainable future.

Each business has an impact on the people who work within the business as well as on the society they operate within. When looking to recruit, potential employees are now looking more in depth into how a business operates and treats their employees. There is less loyalty by employees to a business that doesn't meet their needs.

No matter what sector your business falls within or the size of your business, the responsibility to be sustainable still lies with you as a business.

Private Sector

- Primary Sector
- Secondary Sector
- Tertiary Sector
- Third Sector

Public Sector

- Isle of Man Government
- Local authorities.

- Government owned / run enterprises.

Are you an entrepreneur looking to explore new business opportunities? When considering new business opportunities consider how sustainability can be embedded into the new direction you want to take. This will meet the growing needs of consumers who want to shop more sustainably while meeting societal and environmental needs.

