

GUIDE 14

SUSTAINABILITY & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



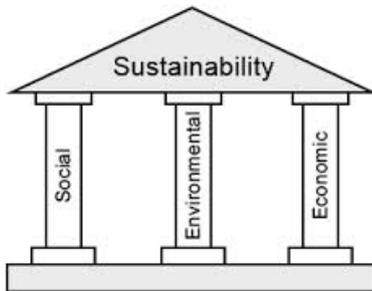
BRONZE LEVEL

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1. The Three Pillars of Sustainability

Your business should aim to keep running for a long time and not stop at the end of this year. We want your business to develop and grow so it can generate more income for your school in the future. **Now is the time for you to reflect on how sustainable your business is and how sustainable it will be in the future.**



A sustainable business is one that can trade on a continuous and potentially indefinite basis (i.e. forever!). It should not trade on the basis of a service or product that is a 'one-off,' or one that may become unobtainable in the future. **When we talk about sustainability, we often focus on three important areas, or 'pillars': Social, Environmental and Economic (Financial).** All of these areas must work together in harmony for your business to keep running.

Sustainability is about the long term processes and practices in your business that creates a positive impact on society, the environment and your ability to make a profit.

Social Sustainability

Social Sustainability is about meeting your customers' needs and contributing positively to society, both now and in the future. For your business to be **socially sustainable**, your students will need to think about the following questions:

- ✓ Will the product/service you are selling be required in the future?
- ✓ How will you make sure customers keep choosing you over your competitors?
- ✓ How will you make sure you have the right staff to run your business in the future?

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental Sustainability is about making responsible decisions that will reduce your business' negative impact on the environment. Your business should be consistently investing in the environment to replenish the resources you take from it. To be environmentally sustainable, your students will need to think about the following:

- ✓ Will you continue to have access to the raw materials you need to make your product/service in the future?
- ✓ What processes will you have to ensure you reduce your impact on the environment? E.g. 'Every time we use a tree for our paper business, we will plant a new one'.

Financial Sustainability

Financial Sustainability is especially important. It is concerned with your ability to make consistent profits over the years. Will your school business continue to make enough money to maintain it? To be financially sustainable, your students will need to think about the following questions:

- ✓ **How will you increase your income over time?** For example, if you plan to sell more products, how will you manage this? Alternatively, will you seek donations or grants to increase your income?

- ✓ **How will you make a continuous profit?** Think about your production processes. Are there ways you could save money (lower your costs) in the future? To identify areas in which you could save money, you will need a Finance team who maintain excellent financial records. Good financial records will help you to view sales trends, identify areas for improvement and get better at managing your stock (refer back to Guide 11: 'Accounting and Record Keeping' if you need a reminder!)



For example, when thinking about their sustainability, 'Proactive School' came up with the following resolutions:

- *Social Sustainability:* 'We will run a School Partnership Programme. This way we can extend our area of influence and establish new relationships with nearby schools'.
- *Environmental Sustainability:* 'We will get further involvement from our local community as it is essential for us to make them partners in our venture. We already started collaborating with two churches and have asked them to give us their bio-degradable waste so we can use it to make compost. This will also help us increase our production in a cost-effective way'.
- *Financial Sustainability:* 'The financial sustainability of our business is safe for now, as we have already made a good amount of profit. Part of it will be invested in the next six months and the business will have enough standby profit to meet any unexpected requirements'.

2. Business Development and Thinking Forward

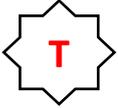
Business development and sustainability are closely connected. **If you are going to be sustainable, you must grow, adapt and develop your business.** Similarly, if you want to grow and develop, **you will need to make a continuously good profit**, i.e. be sustainable!

Take the time to reflect on the current sustainability of your business. Does it have the potential to run sustainably for at least the next year? What would you need to do to ensure that? You might need to:

- Mentor new students so they can continue running the business next year
- Ensure that 'X' % of the profits are re-invested in the business
- Plan a sensitisation event to ensure community/parent support for the school business
- Re-visit your 4 P's (Marketing & Sales plan) and plan a strategy to help you reach more customers. For example, if you have only been selling your product/service within your school this year, how could you adapt your Marketing & Sales plan to expand your business into the wider community next year?

If you decide that your business does not have the potential to run sustainably next year, don't worry. Sometimes the best way to learn is through trial and error! Think back to the beginning of your business planning journey. With the knowledge and experience that you now have, what would you do differently next time? Perhaps you would:

- Conduct market research with more people or in a different way (e.g. customer observation and focus groups, as well as surveys), to better understand who your customers are
- Identify a way to lower your costs so that you could generate some, or more, profit
- Seek advice from a local, experienced businessperson



This is an opportunity to collect evidence and information that will help you complete Questions 5 and 6 in **'Section E: Sustainability and Business Development'** on your **BRONZE Annual Report Template**.

Well done! You have now *learned about the three pillars of sustainability and thought about how you can be sustainable and develop your business.*

3. Submitting your Bronze Annual Report

You are almost ready to submit your Bronze Annual Report! By now you should have collected all the information you need to complete it. Keep your business running as long as possible and submit your Annual Report before the deadline.

Before you submit it, have a final check of the following:

- Have you **answered ALL the sections** of the Bronze Annual Report template, including **Section A: Our Business Details**, the **Financial Summary** on the first page and the **M&E section** on the last page?
- Have you answered each question with enough **depth and detail**? Remember, we have not been around to see your school business thrive, watched your team grow or seen the skills you have learnt, so when you are filling out the Annual Report template please be descriptive and give us lots of examples to illustrate and evidence your answers!
- Have you double-checked that all the **calculations in your Financial Reporting are correct**?
- Have you included **photos** in the Appendix section which clearly show **evidence of your students taking the lead** in the running of your business? (If photos aren't possible, you can include quotes from the students about their experience).

If you answered YES, then it's time to SUBMIT your BRONZE Annual Report!

Login to your account at <http://www.schoolenterprisechallenge.org/join/login/>
and submit online **NOW!**

If you have problems submitting, check out our [Frequently Asked Questions](#), email us at info@schoolenterprisechallenge.org or send us a WhatsApp message to +44 77 22 481 841.

Well done! You have successfully completed Step 3 of the School Enterprise Challenge Bronze Award! You have launched and run your own school business – this is a super achievement!

4. What happens next?

Once you have submitted your Annual Report, you have officially completed the 2020 School Enterprise Challenge (Bronze Level) – Congratulations! You have achieved so much and gained practical, hands-on experience of running a business successfully! Well done!

In the coming weeks, we will be busy marking your Annual Reports, reviewing which schools have met the Achievement Criteria to receive their Bronze Award and deciding on the winners of this year's programme. Your patience and understanding during this time is very much appreciated, as our small team work hard to mark hundreds of Annual Reports from schools that have launched their businesses all over the world.

In the meantime, we strongly encourage every school to continue running their school businesses.

You can stay connected with us and share your news on Facebook and Twitter. We will also be sending more newsletters and posting new blogs on www.schoolenterprisechallenge.wordpress.com with mini-competitions and other exciting opportunities!

Keep in mind that soon you will be able to apply for the additional prizes such as our **'Enterprising Student'**, **'Inspirational Teacher'** and the **'Head Teacher'** Awards (remember these are exclusive opportunities for schools that reach the Business Implementation step of the programme!). We will email you when nominations for these prizes are open.

Remember, this isn't the end of your School Enterprise Challenge journey – in fact, it is just the beginning! **If you achieve your Bronze Award, then next year you can sign up for the SILVER Level where you'll be able to gain lots more experience and new skills, by growing your existing business or starting a new, different one and doing it even better.** We look forward to welcoming you to the 2021 School Enterprise Challenge Awards Programme!