



One Planet Living[®] for local governments and community stakeholders

Guidance on outcomes and
indicators

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Introduction

Bioregional has written a set of [Goals and Guidance](#) documents for all projects wishing to use the One Planet Living® framework, including one for cities and regions. Those documents form the basis of One Planet Living, laying out what a city or area can aim for to be truly sustainable, and the high-level actions and strategies that can be used to achieve this vision.

There are two further documents available for local governments and community stakeholders, which can be used to support the high-level Goals and Guidance: (1) Guidance on outcomes and indicators; and (2) Guidance on good practice actions. This document draws on the existing literature to propose specific outcomes and indicators for each One Planet Living principle, to act as a reference for municipal officers or members of the community who are developing a One Planet Living vision or action plan for their city or region. This is not meant to be a definitive list but aims to provide inspiration and guidance – what are the types of outcomes a project can aim for and what are the indicators that can be used to track progress and monitor performance?

Terminology and suggestions for use

Basic terminology

This document is structured around the ten Principles of the One Planet Living Framework. It has been written to be compatible with the online platform: oneplanet.com. This section introduces some of the terminology used on the platform.

'Outcomes', 'actions' and 'indicators'

Plans in the digital platform are composed of 'outcomes' and 'actions', together with ways of monitoring these – indicators, and qualitative data. Examples of outcomes, actions and indicators are provided below. The digital platform is innovative in allowing the user to draw links across outcomes, actions and indicators, helping them to appreciate the relationships between these. For example, the 'action' of creating green space may impact positively on a range of outcomes across health, community, biodiversity, climate regulation and flood risk management, and it may also have some drawbacks. Indicators may attempt to track these outcomes and actions, such as the proportion of green space per resident or the improvements in biodiversity. Examples of outcomes, actions and indicators are provided below.

Outcome:

- Rich local biodiversity

Action:

- Incorporate biodiversity and conservation principles into all relevant local strategies and plans

Indicators:

- Change in species of plants/birds/butterflies
- Number of teams and departments cooperating on biodiversity

Action plans and ecosystem plans

For cities and local governments, there are two plans types that are especially relevant:

1. *Action plans*: these are applicable to local governments' own areas of activity, as well as any other local organisations and stakeholders which are developing their own action plans. These contain outcomes, actions and indicators. The guidance in this document is particularly directed at

local government organisations, but many actions are also relevant to other organisations in the local area.

2. *Ecosystem plans*: these are connectable plans applicable to the whole area. Organisation plans can link up to this plan, and can adopt the shared outcomes. Ecosystem plans contain only outcomes and indicators, not actions (actions are 'owned' by specific organisations and therefore only included in organisation plans). This document specifies possible outcomes and indicators which may be included in area-wide plans.

Indicators and targets: suggestions for use

Focusing on outcomes can be helpful

There are benefits to focusing on outcomes, and not relying on indicators and targets as the sole aims of plans. An indicator may miss out important information – just because something can be measured, does not mean it should necessarily be prioritised. There may be multiple outcomes to consider, or something that is not measured by a particular indicator.

Indicators and targets are not the only measures of success

As indicators are not the sole basis of desirable outcomes of a plan, they should not be the only measures of success or failure. Indicators can provide useful feedback, but so can other more qualitative forms of information, such as surveys, conversations, or images.

Consider how indicators fit local contexts

There may be a range of reasons to select indicators specific to a particular local context. They may be more relevant to local plans and policies; based on locally available data; chosen with the input of local stakeholders; or have a special symbolic value to a local community. The indicators provided here should not be thought of as necessarily being the correct option. However, many of them are based on established indicator sets and methods of monitoring, and so can help provide additional comparability and link to established ways of doing things.

It may be better to think of targets as aspirations rather than fixed commitments

Sometimes targets are thought of as fixed commitments, against which organisations can be held accountable. Targets often attempt to balance what is necessary, i.e. what is 'sustainable', 'healthy', etc. – with what is achievable. This can be a difficult compromise to strike, either resulting in targets which

downplay what is necessary or truly sustainable, or in targets which are unlikely to be achieved. Over-focusing on particular numerical targets can also detract from a more holistic approach to decision-making based on information about broader outcomes. It may be more helpful to think about and communicate targets as flexible aspirations. This way they can be ambitious and drive change without limiting future decision-making or becoming a source of criticism at a later stage.

Some indicators may link more strongly to organisation-level actions and outcomes

Some indicators are more within the control or influence of a single organisation than others. For example, indicators relating to an organisation's land and buildings, employees, procurement; or a those relating to a local government's spatial planning policies. It may be helpful to consider the extent of this control or influence, if indicators are being used to provide feedback on actions, and are being used together with targets. Nevertheless, an organisation may also wish to include other indicators to provide more 'contextual' information, giving a better overall picture of sustainability, even if indicators are not directly within its control or influence. It may be better to put these in an 'area-wide' plan, however (see above).

Some indicators may be more suitable for an ecosystem plan

Some indicators may not be primarily within the control or influence of a single organisation, but they may still be important for providing a better overall picture of sustainability. These may be more relevant at the area-wide or collective level, such as those relating to citizen behaviours or outcomes.

Consider what data is available

When selecting an indicator, it is important to ensure that data is easy enough to obtain. Easier data sources may include existing public data, information from local plans, or information from staff within an organisation. It may, for example, be more difficult to obtain data that requires additional surveys of the community. However, when selecting indicators based on existing data availability it is important to consider other factors such as how well they are linked to outcomes and actions, how relevant they are, and whether they help to provide a good overall sense of sustainability.

Consider the number of indicators carefully

From previous experience, it seems that a medium-sized local government team may wish to avoid using more than approximately 30 or 40 indicators.

Too much time spent collecting information may detract from the time spent actually implementing the action plan.

References and further information

Indicator sets which are referenced in brackets are mainly based on the sources below. Many of these sources come with more detailed definitions and guidance on monitoring.

- Singapore City Biodiversity Index ('Singapore) – see [definitions](#)
- Data for Cities - World Council for City Data ('WCCD') – see [interactive site](#) and [ISO 37120 definitions \(paywall\)](#)
- SDG indicators ('SDGs') – see [definitions](#)
- Global Reporting Initiative ('GRI') – see [definitions](#)
- OECD Better Life Index ('OECD') – see [interactive site](#) and [data](#)
- Sustain's Good Food for London ('Sustain') – see [definitions](#)
- PAS 2070 – see [definitions](#) and [case study](#)

Outcomes and indicators¹

Health and happiness

Organisation level (any organisation's action plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High satisfaction with work • Healthy and safe work environments • More flexible working 	Staff, operations and fleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee turnover (GRI) • Employee satisfaction (1 – 10)

Community scale (e.g. local government action plan, or ecosystem plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean air • Comfortable buildings and communities • Fun and recreation • Happy lives • Healthy lifestyles • Bullying is prevented • Access to excellent healthcare and care • Robust abuse prevention and support • Robust mental health and addiction support • Robust management of natural hazards • Better coordination and partnership working 	Planning and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution (WCCD/SDGs) • % dwellings within (a) 400m and (b) 1km of a shop selling fresh ingredients
	Initiatives (e.g. sports, fitness and leisure/schools /retail)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uptake of health classes or gym memberships • Number and % of schools participating in initiative, e.g. health/sports/anti-bullying • % and number of shops participating, e.g. reducing alcohol strength
	Health and social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage of essential health services (SDGs) • Number of physicians/nurses/mental health practitioners per 100,000 (WCCD) • Emergency response time (WCCD) • Child mortality under five per 1,000 births (WCCD/SDGs/OECD) • Life expectancy at birth (WCCD/SDGs/OECD)

¹ Indicator sources (e.g. GRI or WCCD) are given in brackets. For definitions and benchmarking data see 'references and further information', above.

	Fire services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fire emergency response time (WCCD)• Deaths due to fire per 100,000 (WCCD)
	Citizens and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of population which is physically active (75 mins intensive/150 mins moderate activity per week)• % of population which is obese

Equity and local economy

Organisation level (any organisation's action plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People receive a living wage • More training and development opportunities • Local businesses are supported • Ethical supply chains • Accessible buildings • Gender equality • Inclusive cultures without discrimination 	Staff, operations and fleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of apprenticeships created • Hours of training per employee (GRI) • % employees receiving living wage • % of managers who are women (GRI)
	Catering and procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of purchases from SMEs • % of purchases from within 100km • % of suppliers undergoing human rights screening (GRI)

Community scale (e.g. local government action plan, or ecosystem plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing is good quality and affordable • Secure land rights • Excellent training and job opportunities • Thriving local businesses and organisations • People receive a living wage • Buildings and spaces are accessible • Gender equality • Inclusive cultures without discrimination • Good access to finance • Better digital connectivity • A culture of innovation • A resilient economy • Sound public finances • No poverty 	Planning and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % living in informal settlements (WCCD) • Affordable housing waiting lists
	Initiatives (e.g. training/ apprenticeships/ incubators/ loan schemes/ smart city/ living wage/ university collaborations/ homelessness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business growth in target industries • The number of incubators, co-working spaces or maker spaces in the locality • Enrolment in innovation or business support programmes • Homeless per 100,000 (WCCD)
	Politics and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax collected as a % of tax billed (WCCD) • Debt service as a % of government revenue (WCCD) • % covered by safety net (SDGs)

	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cell phone connections per 100,000 (WCCD)• Internet connections per 100,000 (WCCD)
	Other area-wide indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % living in poverty (WCCD/SDGs)• Number of businesses per 100,000 (WCCD)• Median house price to income ratio (UN Habitat)

Culture and community

Organisation level (any organisation's action plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyable social activities • Good knowledge sharing • Fair dispute resolution 	Staff, operations and fleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of social events held

Community scale (e.g. local government action plan, or ecosystem plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality public spaces • Thriving arts and culture • Supportive community and youth services • Heritage is celebrated • Planning is participatory • Safe communities and low crime • More volunteering • A good education for all • Increased political engagement and freedom • Low corruption 	Planning and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor recreation space per capita (WCCD) • Indoor recreation space per capita (WCCD)
	Initiatives (e.g. arts, culture, heritage, festivals/schools/universities/libraries, community and youth services/volunteering)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer hours committed • Number of events held and people attending • Number of visits per pupil per year
	Politics and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convictions for corruption per 100,000 (WCCD) • % local government seats held by women (WCCD)
	Crime and police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police per 100,000 (WCCD) • Violent crime per 100,000 (WCCD) • Homicides per 100,000 (WCCD) • Police emergency response time (WCCD)

	Citizens and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voter turnout for local elections (WCCD)• Primary and secondary education participation and completion rates (WCCD)• Higher education degrees per 100,000 (WCCD)
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Land and nature

Organisation level (any organisation's action plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich biodiversity 	Land and buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See biodiversity management below

Community scale (e.g. local government action plan, or ecosystem plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality green spaces • Rich biodiversity • More carbon sequestered • Air cooling and purification • Connected biodiversity • Drought resilient plants • More nature activities and education • Better biodiversity management and partnership working 	Planning and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green space, hectares per 100,000 (WCCD/Singapore) • % of development on greenfield sites
	Biodiversity governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of teams and departments cooperating on biodiversity (Singapore)
	Biodiversity management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in species of plant/birds/butterflies/other groups (Singapore) • Connectivity mesh size (see Singapore indicators for a definition) • Trees planted per annum (WCCD) • Condition of specified habitat, e.g. poor/average/good
	Initiatives (e.g. public engagement / schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events per year (Singapore) • % of schools participating in biodiversity programme • Biodiversity visits per child per year (Singapore)

Sustainable water

Organisation level (any organisation's action plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low potable water consumption • Buildings are flood resilient 	Land and buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water consumption per employee, l/day

Community scale (e.g. local government action plan, or ecosystem plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean water and sanitation for all • Sustainable water supplies • Low potable water consumption • Healthy water habitats • Flood resilient communities • Drought resilient communities • Water habitats are healthy • Fishing is sustainable • Better coordination and partnership working on water issues 	Planning and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % permeable surface area (Singapore) • % homes built on land at risk of a 1-in-100-year flood
	Flood risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of teams and departments cooperating on flood risk
	Initiatives (e.g. retrofit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of homes retrofitted as part of water saving initiative • Number of water saving measures installed as part of initiative
	Freshwater resources and utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to sanitation (WCCD) • Access to drinking water (WCCD) • % wastewater receiving primary/secondary/tertiary treatment (WCCD) • % metered homes • Domestic and total water consumption per capita, l/day (WCCD) • Water withdrawal as a % of available resource (SDGs) • % of bodies with good ambient water quality (SDGs) • Number of days specified body of water runs dry

	Coastlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Average marine acidity (SDGs)• % fish caught sustainably
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Local and sustainable food

Organisation level (any organisation's action plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish is sourced sustainably • Diets are humane, healthy and low-impact • Fair food supply chains 	Catering and procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % fruit and veg (by value) which is seasonal, local or organic • % of food purchased (by value) which is plant-based • % of eggs (by value) which are free-range • % of meat and dairy (by value) which is outdoor-reared or organic • Whether buying Fairtrade products of two or more significant types, e.g. tea, coffee, fruit juice (Sustain) • % of fish (by value) which is sustainably sourced

Community scale (e.g. local government action plan, or ecosystem plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More community food growing • All have access to healthy food • Diets are humane, healthy and low-impact • Fair food supply chains • Fish is sourced sustainably • Food supplies are secure and resilient 	Planning and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % residents 400m from a healthy food outlet (STAR) • Support for food growing in planning policy (Sustain) • Number of community gardens, city farms or allotment sites
	Initiatives (e.g. public sector and schools catering/local food partnerships/retail and catering)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of schools/care homes/public organisations always offering plant-based options • % of schools/care homes/public organisations buying free-range eggs (Sustain) • % of schools/care homes/public organisations buying outdoor-reared or organic meat or dairy (Sustain) • % of schools/care homes/public organisations buying

		<p>seasonal, local or organic fruit and vegetables (Sustain)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•% of schools/care homes/ public organisations buying sustainable fish (Sustain)•% of schools/care homes/ public organisations buying Fairtrade products of two or more significant types, e.g. tea, coffee, fruit juice (Sustain)•Existence of local food partnership (Sustain)•Number and percentage of relevant food businesses engaged in a healthy catering initiative•% malnutrition among under-5-year-olds – either wasting or overweight (SDGs)
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Travel and transport

Organisation level (any organisation's action plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking and cycling are the norm • Low or zero emissions due to transport • More car sharing 	Staff, operations and fleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % staff travelling by sustainable transport • % of fleet which are low-emission • Organisation's transport emissions

Community scale (e.g. local government action plan, or ecosystem plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy air • Safe roads • Walking and cycling are the norm • Compact, walkable communities • Low or zero emissions due to transport • Freight is consolidated • Access to excellent public transport 	Planning and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Km bike paths per 100,000 (WCCD) • Road deaths per 100,000 (WCCD)
	Initiatives (e.g. EVs/car clubs/fleets and deliveries/schools/ freight consolidation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric car charging points per 100,000 people • % schools participating in sustainable transport initiative • % students travelling via active transport • Number of freight consolidation centres
	Public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport trips per capita (WCCD) • % of people within 0.5 km of public transport which runs at least every 20 mins (SDGs)

Materials and products

Organisation level (any organisation's action plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goods and materials are low-impact • Goods and materials are reused and shared • Fair supply chains 	Catering and procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of purchases meeting published sustainability policy • % of suppliers with sustainability policies • % of suppliers without sustainability policies engaged in developing them

Community scale (e.g. local government action plan, or ecosystem plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goods and materials are low-impact • Goods and materials are reused • A circular and sharing economy • Fair supply chains 	Planning and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of local materials and building guidelines for developers • % of developers adopting guidelines
	Initiatives (e.g. public sector procurement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of specified public institutions, such as schools or care homes, adopting published policy

Zero waste

Organisation level (any organisation's action plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little waste is produced • High levels of recycling and composting 	Staff and operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % waste recycled or composted
	Procurement and catering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste produced per employee, kg/year

Community scale (e.g. local government action plan, or ecosystem plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little waste is produced • High levels of recycling and composting • Safe disposal of waste • A sharing economy • More reuse of products and waste materials • A circular economy 	Planning and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of developments using guidelines
	Waste collection and disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tonnes of waste produced per capita • % waste disposed of via recycling/incinerator/open dump/sanitary landfill/other means (both WCCD)
	Initiatives (e.g. circular economy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of organisations participating

Zero carbon energy

Organisation level (any organisation's action plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings and appliances are highly efficient • All energy from renewables • Low or zero emissions from energy 	Land and buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy consumption due to buildings, total and per employee, kWh/year • % renewable energy
	Organisation emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope 1 and 2 emissions, total and per employee/year (GRI) • Scope 3 emissions, total and per employee/year (GRI)

Community scale (e.g. local government action plan, or ecosystem plan)

Outcomes to consider	Who/what?	Suggested indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings and appliances are highly efficient • All energy from renewables • Low or zero emissions from energy • Only clean fuels in homes • All have access to energy • No fuel poverty 	Planning and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of buildings meeting benchmark
	Initiatives (e.g. retrofit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of suitable roof space with solar photovoltaic panels installed • % of homes surveyed as part of initiatives • % of homes with retrofit measures as part of initiative
	Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % population with access to electricity (WCCD) • Total and domestic electricity consumption per capita, kWh/year (WCCD) • % of electricity from renewables (WCCD)
	Community-wide emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct plus supply chain and consumption-based emissions (PAS 2070)