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Special points of interest:

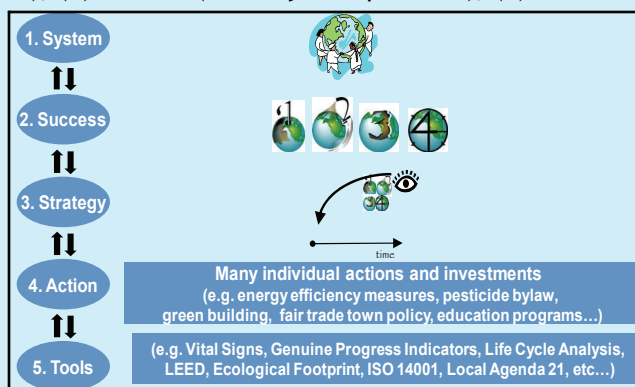
- Use the 5-level model to analyse your sustainability initiatives
- Next ACSI workshop and Sustainability Summit coming up April 17-18, 2008. More information online at <http://www.atlanticsustainability.ca/events/summit.htm>

Thinking strategically about sustainability

by [Sarah Brooks](#) (TNS Sustainability Advisor and TNS-ACSI liaison)

The five level model for planning is an integral part of The Natural Step Framework. This model can help clarify the context in which you are working, articulate what you are working towards, the strategies that will help to arrive there, the specific actions that will fulfill those strategies, and the tools and metrics that support your actions and measure their effectiveness. In the language of the five-level model, we are talking about the (1) system (context), (2) success (where you hope to be), (3) strategies (to arrive at success); (4) actions (to fulfill the strategies) and (5) tools / metrics (to support the actions). Each level feeds into the levels above and below, creating a lens through which to identify different parts of any initiative.

ACSI partners are currently undertaking many different sustainability initiatives. Each initiative can be viewed through the lens of this five-level model. Consider asking yourself, “What is the system I am working in?” (for example, the system might be Halifax Regional Municipality in society in the biosphere). Then, “What does the success of my initiative look like?” After you have articulated that, consider what strategies you might develop to maximize your likelihood of arriving at success in your system. Once you’ve done this, brainstorm all the actions you might undertake to achieve your strategies and finally, identify what tools might support your journey and what metrics will help you to measure your progress along the way.



This model can also be used to analyse existing initiatives. This can help you to identify where your initiative is already in good shape and may also reveal areas that need further development. For ACSI partners, don’t forget that your coaches are here to help you!

Greening your meetings

What is a green meeting? Green meetings are all about minimizing your use of resources and reducing the production of waste. Whether you are hosting a conference for 500 people, or just a small social gathering with your friends, greening your meetings is a great way to raise awareness about environmental issues, and begin to take steps to change attitudes and behaviours. Here are a few tips you can follow:

1. Start planning with a green event in mind. Consider travel options and distance, available food choices, and green initiatives in place when choosing your venue.
2. Reduce paper usage by providing materials electronically, printing on both sides of the paper, reusing signage and name tags, handling registrations and payments electronically and providing cloth rather than paper napkins.
3. Minimize your transportation impact by encouraging car-

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Sustainability Challenge

Each newsletter will include a sustainability question or challenge. Please tell us how you would respond. Send your answers to us at coordinator@atlanticsustainability.ca

This month's question: Tell us how you have used, or might use, the 5-level model to analyse your sustainability initiatives.



Tip of the Month

Meat production requires a tremendous amount of resources such as water and fossil fuels, while runoff from livestock operations may pollute our water. Try reducing your meat consumption by eating a meat-free meal at least once a week.

Canadians eat more than twice as much meat as the global average and this has serious environmental impacts ([David Suzuki Foundation website](#)).

Greening your meetings . . . Cont'd from page 1

pooling and active transportation (walking, cycling), ensuring there are public transportation options, and offsetting the carbon emissions produced by travel. If possible, hold your meeting via telephone or videoconference to reduce travel altogether!

4. Minimize your production of waste by choosing items with less packaging, using re-usable rather than disposable items (e.g. ceramic mugs vs. Styrofoam), providing food and personal care items (e.g. cream and sugar, water and juice, shampoo and soap) in bulk rather than individual packages. Ensure proper waste separation and disposal (recyclables, compostable materials and garbage) for any waste that is produced.

5. Select food options with a reduced impact – locally produced or fair trade food, organic food, and vegetarian food options. Ensure food scraps are composted and consider donating unused food where possible.

Make sure you promote your greening initiatives to meeting participants, the public and the media. Informing people about the actions you are taking may be the first step in encouraging them to change their own behaviour.

These green meeting tips were compiled from a variety of sources. You can find more tips in all of these resources as well: [White Point Beach Resort](#), [The Otesha Project](#), Resource Recovery Fund Board ([PDF](#)), [Government of Nova Scotia](#).

The Sustainability Bulletin: Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative newsletter

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About Us

The Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative (ACSI) is a collaborative project coordinated by the [Centre for Rural Sustainability](#), designed to build capacity and momentum around sustainability in Atlantic Canada using [The Natural Step framework](#) as a guide. It was developed by a grass-roots network of municipalities, businesses and NGOs in Atlantic Canada in order to better understand the challenges and opportunities of sustainability and to move the region toward sustainable solutions. United by a common vision of a sustainable Atlantic Canada – and a common commitment to action – these organizations engage with each other and with other communities, businesses, and all levels of government to create a broad-based network that acts as a tipping point for greater sustainability in the region.

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Visit our website!

www.atlanticsustainability.ca