

MONITORING PROGRESS FOR SUCCESS

Introduction

Monitoring is an often overlooked, but vital step in working towards implementing a sustainability vision and evaluating success. Once the institution has in place all the moving parts, including having launched and begun implementing the plan, consideration must be given to monitoring of each project/metric. To ensure progress, limit stagnation, and readjust initiative or program delivery on-going monitoring is required.

Project/metric monitoring plays a key part in current and future decision-making processes. Identifying the future steps and strategic direction of a project or initiative without data on the progress to date is ineffectual. Decisions without evidence will lead to misdirected or inefficient activities that may lead to wasted staff time and institution resources. Monitoring and evaluation improve performance and help to achieve desired results while also improving accountability.

The following document provides guidance on effectively monitoring ongoing metrics and projects in a timely manner.

Taking a systematic approach to monitoring is crucial to success. Fill out the table below. It is meant to serve as an example and can be modified as the institution and staff see fit. Keep in mind that the chosen columns should be filled out for all projects.

Key Components of Effective Monitoring

The following elements are suggestions to include in setting up a monitoring system:

1. Write the monitoring plan down. It's extremely important to take a bit of time to understand how to evaluate project /target success, otherwise staff time and resources will be wasted and project continuation may be much less effective.
2. Delegate a responsible office or department and, more importantly, a responsible individual(s) who is accountable for monitoring project metrics.
3. Identify relevant metrics for each project. Don't choose too many, one to three metrics per project is enough. If it has been established for a project, make sure to include the defined target.
4. For each metric, identify the data required to fulfill metric monitoring.
5. Develop a timeline for each metric that identifies how often and when monitoring needs to occur and how often the responsible individuals should be reporting to their superiors to evaluate next steps for continued success.
6. A final important step is linking the project and/or metric to the institutions strategic plan. This helps provide relevance for senior leadership and gather support for continuation of the work.

Project	Responsible Department/Office	Responsible Individual	Metric for Success	Target (if applicable)	Data to be Collected	Metric Check-in	Link to Strategic Plan
Composting Bins on Campus	Sustainability and Facilities	NAME	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Organic diversion rate from waste stream Year over year increase in organic material in organics bins 	30% reduction of organic material in waste stream by December 31, 2025 vs 2018 baseline.	Monthly waste reports from hauler	March - Annually	Target aligns with goal # of institutions strategic plan.
Institutional Carpooling	Sustainability	NAME	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of individuals that carpool to work. 	10% of single occupancy vehicles carpool by December 31, 2020 vs 2017 baseline.	Annual parking pass information	April - Annually	Target aligns with goal # of institutions strategic plan.
Sustainability Academic Programming	VP academic	NAME	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of on campus programs that have sustainability learning outcomes. 	100% of in-person, on campus academic programs have sustainability learnings outcomes embedded.	Learning outcomes from all on campus full time programs.	April - Biannually	Target aligns with goal # of institutions strategic plan.

Note: This list needs to be ongoing, depending on if the work has been completed or not.

Potential Challenges

- Difficulty allotting dedicated time to updating metrics.
- Lack of sufficient tools for tracking.
- Different methods of tracking year to year or with staff turnover.
- Not effectively leveraging and sharing results to drive and inform next steps.

Conclusion

Proper ongoing monitoring is essential to ensure continued success and ensure an efficient use of resources, whether it be a project with set timeframe or a relevant long-term sustainability metric. By setting up a simple check-in and accountability system, success can be effectively evaluated and used to leverage support for similar projects. Furthermore, monitoring important metric/project achievements can be a key factor in effective decision-making and strategy.