



How-to
guide

How to form a green team



LIVING PLANET
@WORK



How to form a green team

Learn how to start
a green team at
your workplace.

About this guide

The Living Planet @ Work green team guide provides practical tips on how to create and operate your green team to maximize potential for positive impact.

Step 1: Build the core group

Creating a formal green team can take some time, but you don't have to do it alone. Start by engaging a few co-workers and asking for their support. Meet with colleagues in different departments and with different levels of seniority to gauge their interest in getting involved. Take them for coffee, introduce yourself and highlight why you're interested in starting a green team. Even if they're not interested in participating, you may receive valuable feedback to help inform the structure or goals for your green team.

Try to build a core group of individuals (start with 3 or 4) who can help you brainstorm and plan the path forward to creating a formal green team. Find individuals who are like-minded: passionate about sustainability and ready to take action.

Step 2: Determine priority areas

With this core group, list as many of your workplace's environmental impacts as you can. This can include areas such as:

- Travel, waste, carbon footprint, sustainable materials, water, supply chain sustainability, food

Which of the listed areas are a priority for your organization? Think about criteria that can help you determine which areas to focus on. These can include:

- Biggest environmental impact
- Ability to engage employees at multiple levels and across teams
- Ability to demonstrate company leadership
- Integrates into existing organizational efforts
- Builds workplace capability in a strategic area



Step 3: Establish team structure

What will the composition of your green team look like and what areas of work will it focus on? An ideal structure will:

- Enable leadership and ownership over key areas of work and key infrastructure elements
- Use expertise from staff already doing work in priority areas as part of their jobs
- Reflect an ideal team size. It should be sufficient to accomplish goals but not too big to be ineffective (usually 5 to 10 members)
- Encourage alignment with and integration across the workplace

The table below provides a breakdown of the key areas of work within a green team structure:

TIP: Get senior leader support

Try to seek buy-in from a senior leader on this initiative. Presenting a business case can be a useful way to help you get there. In other words, explain how establishing a green team will benefit the organization.



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Area of Work	Sample Role description
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads development of team strategy • Ensures integration into workplace priorities • Provides support to and motivates team members • Reports to management and breaks down barriers
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads efforts to ensure team is on track to achieve goals • Ensures team meeting minutes and decisions are noted
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads tracking and reporting of team efforts and progress toward goals • Holds team members accountable
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads development of employee communications • Engages staff in green team activities and events
Organizational integration & departmental expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures representation across the organization • Provides input based on experience with previous related initiatives • Connects with and coordinates initiatives across teams
Priority areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans, develops and executes initiatives to reduce the environmental impact specific to priority area • Educates and engages the organization to adopt lower-impact solutions wherever possible



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Now, dig a little deeper. Based on the key areas of work your team has established, what will the specific member roles look like? Identify roles that:

- Are required as part of the team’s foundation
- Are required to execute work required for priority areas
- Provide additional support or expertise

The table below is an example of what specific member roles may look like:



Image credit: © OLG

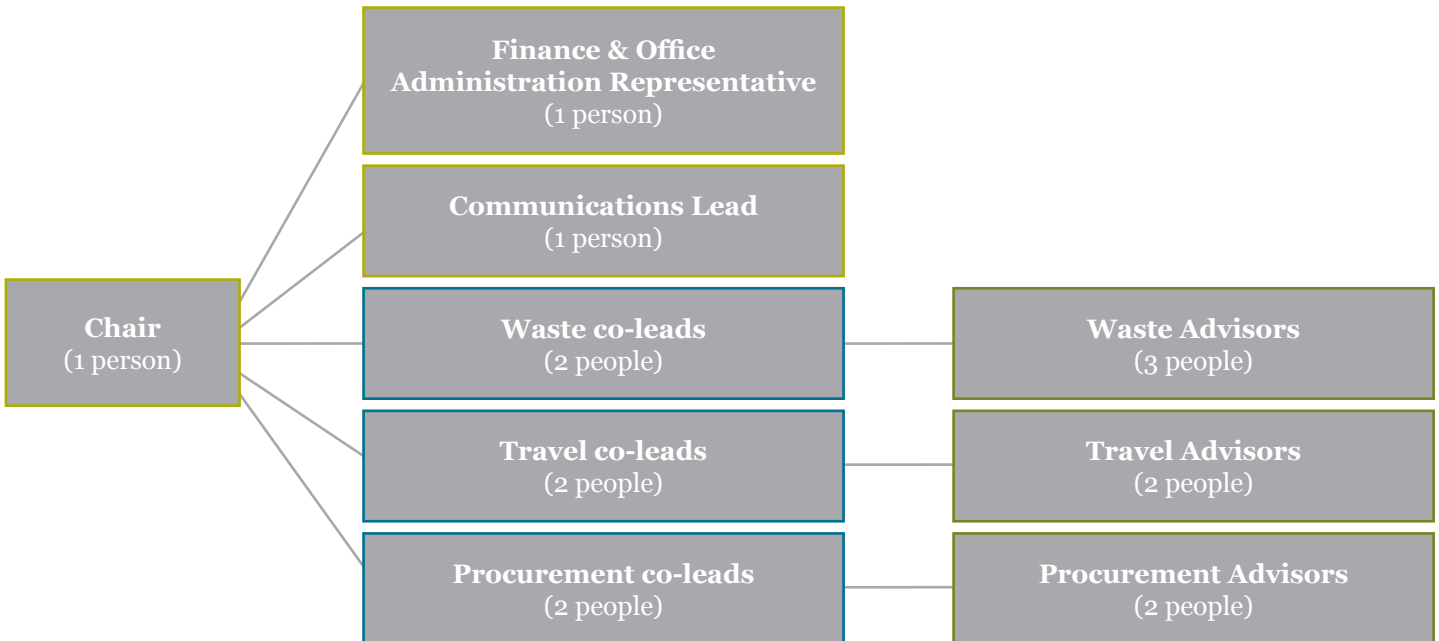
Role	Description	Responsibility
Foundation	Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairs meetings and leads the team • Develops team strategy • Reports to management
	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads regular communications with all staff
	Finance & office administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracks budget and financial reporting
Priority Areas	Travel lead Waste lead Procurement lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops policies • Creates green criteria for consultants/suppliers • Educates and engages staff on initiatives specific to respective key priority area
Advisor	Specific to priority areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports priority leads according to expertise • Breaks down barriers to implementation as needed



Image credit: © RSA Canada



Sample team structure



Step 4: Outline process for selection and recruitment

Once you have identified your team structure and roles, it's time to think about recruitment. Your first step is to outline expectations for green team members, such as:

- Frequency of and attendance at meetings
- Membership duration
- Time requirement
- Recruitment mechanisms
- Accountability mechanisms (e.g., managerial approval)

Next, decide who can get involved and what your application and selection processes will be. The selection process can include:

- Submissions from interested candidates
- Short entry stating the position they are interested and why they feel they are an ideal candidate
- Interviews with interested candidates



TIP: Be flexible

As time passes, you may find that the initial environmental priority areas and goals you've set will change. As this happens, adjust the structure of your team to reflect these changes. This could involve shifting roles based on expertise or finding new members to join as project advisors.

TIP: Target your message to get the right recruit

Think about what interests, qualities and experiences you're looking for in your green team members. This could include interests in sustainability, leadership in the workplace, responsibilities in a department that will have high overlap with the work of the team (HR, Finance, IT, etc.)

Step 5: Conduct outreach and select members

Start your outreach by creating a plan outlining the tactics you're going to use to recruit green team members. Outreach tactics can include:

- Email blasts
- Internal newsletters
- Company intranet site
- Posters in lunchrooms and elevator, on bulletin boards, etc.
- Digital signage
- Emails from senior executives
- Lunch and learns



Image credit: © OLG



What's next?

With an established green team, you can now begin your footprint-reduction journey.



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Summary checklist: How to form a green team

- ✓ Build a core group to help you brainstorm a path forward
- ✓ Create a list of your workplace's environmental impact areas
- ✓ Draft criteria for determining which impact areas to focus on
- ✓ Select priority environmental impact areas based on the criteria you have selected
- ✓ Establish your green team's structure (e.g., Administration, Communications, Priority Areas)
- ✓ Create role descriptions based on team structure
- ✓ Outline a process for green team member selection
- ✓ Conduct outreach and select members
- ✓ Conduct annual team assessments to ensure alignment with changing priority environmental impact areas