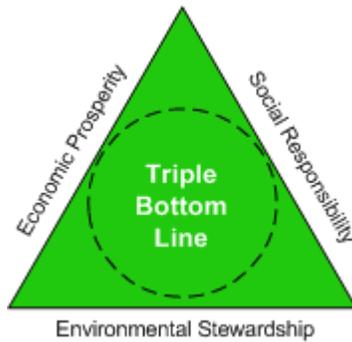


# greenTEAM

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*The federal government is poised to significantly reduce its impact on the natural environment and influence the commercial market-place toward sustainable practices. Executive Order 13514 requires federal agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, energy and water use, increase recycling and solid waste diversion, and increase sustainable practices. The General Services Administration provides office space for over one million federal employees in over 9,600 federal buildings and commercial leases and offers over 12 million products and services to other federal agencies. The purpose of this guide is to provide practical steps for forming and managing Green Teams within GSA occupied space, thereby translating the vision to actionable steps within the spaces federal employees work.*

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## Green TEAM Benefits

- Community Benefit
- Environmental Goal Achievement
- Regulatory Compliance
- Employee Satisfaction
- Public Image Enhancement
- Tenant Satisfaction
- Improved Quality
- Cost Savings

### Beyond the Bottom Line

GSA considers the triple bottom line – its social responsibility, economic influence, and environmental stewardship – and has demonstrated its commitment to this philosophy by pursuing Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED®) designated construction projects, setting aside procurements to 8(a) firms for small, women, and minority owned businesses, and leasing from private sector buildings across the nation. Ipsos MORI, a research company, indicates in a 2007 report, individuals view the government as the primary responsible party when asked, “Who should take the lead when it comes to limiting the effects of climate change?”<sup>1</sup> Their survey report further reveals a majority of respondents believe government sustainability policies or incentives would “most likely encourage their organizations to become more environmentally responsible than it is today.” Establishing Green Teams in owned and leased buildings within GSA’s inventory demonstrates the government’s commitment to implementing green business practices.

#### ➤ Employee and Tenant Satisfaction

Improving quality of work life is critical for recruitment and retention efforts. *Fast Company’s* Dov Seidman pointed out that employees desire more than just a pay check<sup>2</sup>. They want to feel as if they’re accomplishing something more important than they could do alone. People want to “connect and collaborate” on the job versus experiencing a command and control atmosphere. The quality of the work environment is the key ingredient in achieving tenant

satisfaction. GSA completed a post-occupancy study of 12 sustainably designed GSA buildings (seven of which used LEED® ratings) against average performance of U.S. commercial buildings<sup>3</sup>. The results indicate that balancing environmental, financial, and occupant satisfaction needs improves performance – the buildings produced 33% lower carbon emissions; used 26% less energy, 3% less domestic water, and tenants were on average 27% more satisfied than the national average. Satisfaction within GSA space is important for tenants as this

translates into their satisfaction as an employee. Employees who are more satisfied are more productive.

#### ➤ Cost Savings

In light of the U.S. economic recovery, saving federal dollars is critical. Every dollar is scrutinized and rightfully so; taxpayers expect the fiduciary responsibility of wise spending. The federal government must look to reduce costs and improve efficiencies at every level. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided the GSA \$4.5 billion to convert federal buildings to high-performing green buildings as

defined under the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA). This investment improves federal building operations and when combined with operational improvements, including Green Teams, will ultimately reduce costs. As GSA reduces operating costs, additional reinvestment in performance can be made. This is compounded to achieve lower rent costs for agencies in federal buildings, reducing the government's costs.

Green Team practices can include education and awareness activities, recycling promotion, and energy reduction measures. The Teams translate federal policy in a way that encourages individual behavior to achieve a culture of conservation.

**Environmental Goal Achievement**

Federal agencies' performance is measured on an ongoing basis. Establishing Green Teams enables real change at the user level of a building to influence

the reduction of energy and water use, increased recycling and green purchasing, and the lowering of green house gases. These activities facilitate the government being able to realize the goals outlined in EO 13423, EISA, and EO 13514. The table in Figure 1 shows activities Green Teams will be involved in and how those activities influence government legislation related to sustainability. Citizens expect this government leadership.

**Launching and Sustaining a Green Team: 7 Key Steps**

**1. Establish Leadership Advocacy**

Grass roots advocacy is the excitement that early adopters of sustainable practices bring to a Green Team. Senior-management endorsement combined with grass roots' efforts provides a recipe for success. The commitment of resources, from people and their time to supplies must be tied to business operations. The Green Team's initiative must be treated just like any other business initiative, with a senior level manager championing efforts and communicating the importance of Green Teams on a regular basis. Teams perform better when they are rooted in a culture that encourages high performance. To avoid common pit falls where teams start out strong and then lose momentum or experience conflict, leaders can:

**Figure 1. Federal Sustainability Policy & Regulation**

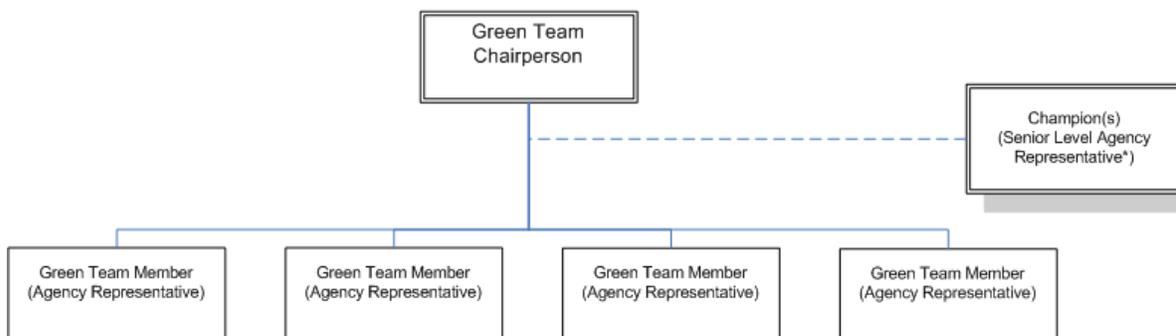
	Procurement	Energy	Water	GHG Emissions Scopes 1, 2 & 3	Recycling	Transportation
EO13423	Office paper must contain at least 30% post-consumer content.		Reduce water consumption intensity – gallon per square foot by 16% by the end of FY 2015 from a 2007 baseline.		Increase solid waste diversion "as appropriate".	Reduce fleet's total petroleum based consumption by 2% annually by FY 2015 from 2005 baseline.
EISA 2007		Reduce energy intensity by 3% annually through the end of FY 2015 or 30% by end of FY 2015, relative to baseline of each agency's energy use in FY 2003.				
EO13514	Ensure 95 % of new contract actions are energy and water-efficient, biobased, environmentally preferable, generally non-toxic, and contain recycled content with 95% electronic products meeting for Electronic Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) criteria.		Reduce potable water consumption intensity 2% annually through FY 2020 or 26% by end of FY 2020 relative to FY 2007 baseline.	Scope 1 and 2 - Percentage reduction target of agency-wide GHG emissions in absolute terms relative to FY 2008 baseline. Scope 3 GHGs associated with vendors, contractors, employee commutes and travel.	Divert at least 50% of non-hazardous solid waste by the end of FY 2015; reduce paper use, increase composting, and decrease chemical use.	EO 13423 requirement plus increase use of low GHG emitting vehicles including alternative fuel vehicles.

Source: [www.1.eere.energy.gov/femp/regulations/requirements\\_by\\_subject.html](http://www.1.eere.energy.gov/femp/regulations/requirements_by_subject.html)

- Clearly define the Team’s relevance to the building and government goals.
- Establish a reporting structure and timeline.
- Request SMART goals from the Green Team (Specific, Measurable (and monitored), Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound).
- Promote Team effectiveness by engaging the Team and participating in Green Team activities.
- Support innovation and collaboration.
- Expect success.
- Value superior quality and service.
- Pay attention to details.
- Value team recommendations.
- Reward teamwork rather than individual performance on an ongoing basis.

One or more Senior Level Agency Representatives can serve this critical role. They are shown in the Sample Green Team Structure chart with the dotted line as the Team’s Champion. They do not have to come from the largest occupying agency. With their passion for sustainability and their ability to communicate, influence, and unite will boost the capacity of the Green Team and bolster their efforts.

### Sample Green Team Structure



*The number of Agency Representatives on the team will vary by the size of the building and number of agencies, with a suggested maximum of 10 individuals.*

## 2. Create a Multi-Agency/Disciplinary Team

Representation across a building’s agency makeup with a cross-section of roles is critical in forming and maintaining an active Green Team. The first step is

recruiting for team membership. An early adopter can be critical in jump starting a Green Team and may even hold a position within their agency that would serve well as the chairperson of the Team. The GSA Property Management Office may initiate this step, but does not have to serve as the chairperson. In fact, GSA prefers agencies take the lead of Green Teams within GSA’s owned and leased facilities, so that property management personnel can serve as a member of the team. This preference comes from the desire to not have sustainability practices be perceived as direction from GSA. Certainly there are facility aspects that GSA continues to be responsible for, but as Green Teams are related to culture and behavior, there is no requirement for GSA to provide individual building Green Team leadership. If the building is a single tenant agency, consider diversifying membership with individuals from different offices within the agency to represent the make-up within the building.

The Team Charter includes the Green Team’s mission statement and identifies membership as well as team norms –or how the group functions – makes decisions, sets priorities, meeting frequency, and communication.

The size of the Team is generally limited to the smallest number of members necessary to accomplish its goals, without sacrificing the diversity necessary to achieve quality results within

a federal facility. Seven to ten people on a team have the most success in terms of group dynamics. Once a group grows outside this range, it becomes more challenging to make decisions.

The Senior Level Agency Representative or representatives serving as the Champion(s) does not have to be the primary tenant agency within a building. It can be an individual with a commitment to sustainable practices. The Champion does just that, they champion the efforts of the Green Team, as identified in Step 1. Establish Leadership Advocacy. The can attend Green Team meetings as appropriate. They also communicate with their peers, other senior agency leaders, within the building or facility as agency representatives will have different chains of command and decision-making practices. The Champion connects with the Green Team Chairperson to ensure adequate support is being received.

The Chairperson role is filled by one of the Green Team members (Agency Representatives). This role can be rotated within the Green Team membership, with a suggested frequency of no more than every two years in order to ensure consistency and effectiveness to serve the role.

**Role Descriptions**

<b>Green Team Members</b>	Representatives from agencies within the building. Suggested maximum of 10 individuals on team including the property manager. Responsible for charting the Team's course for influencing sustainable business practices through building occupant culture and behaviors.
<b>Chairperson</b>	A Green Team member selected to serve as Chairperson. Role includes calling and leading meetings and briefing the Champion(s). Although not obligated to prepare meeting minutes, the Chairperson does ensure this task is performed, minutes are distributed including forwarding to the Green Teams Program manager and archived for future access.
<b>Champion(s)</b>	Can have more than one Champion based on the building's agency makeup. They remove barriers for the Green Team, advocate on their behalf, advise the Green Team, communicate with their peers (other senior leaders in the building), and attend meetings as appropriate – generally one at least every 3 months.

The formation of sub-groups designed to address a specific activity or initiative (Earth Day or America Recycles Day events, reusable lunch containers, composting, etc) will enable the Green Team to be most effective and efficient. Subgroups allow for

increased building occupant participation and strengthen individual commitment.

**3. Hold a Kick Off Team Meeting**

Once Team members representing agencies or offices within a building have been identified, a formal session to kick off the Green Team is essential in getting started on the right foot. The Chairperson can be identified by the senior representative of the primary tenant or the agency representatives (Green Team members) could select a Chairperson. Suggested activities for the first meeting include introductions, commitment to the mission, charter development, and familiarization with tools and templates. See Green Teams Toolbox for agendas, charter, roles and responsibilities matrix, and much more.

**4. Perform a Building Sustainability Assessment**

The best way for a Green Team to establish goals to accomplish over the next 3, 6, 9 months to a year is through a building sustainability assessment. GSA's Property Management Office can provide specifics related to energy and water use, recycling, and resources for assessing green house gases (GHG). GSA's Carbon Footprint Tool provides an interactive and robust tool for understanding current measurements, creating targets, and scenario running for different projects and activities and how they'll impact the building's GHGs. Understanding this data as a baseline is only the very first step. The representatives can view this data through the filter of their individual Agency Sustainability Plans. Agency Sustainability Plans are available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/sustainability/plans>. The specific building data combined with agency goals are the foundation for setting priorities. The Team may determine they want to hold a building wide event to promote awareness in the building. This could be an energy fair, a commuter trip reduction campaign, or even a waste

audit – put on those hip waders and see what’s being thrown away that could actually be recycled. As priorities are established, meeting these targets is how the Team will measure their success.

If performing a building sustainability assessment doesn’t quickly identify the Team’s priorities, another way to action plan is to ask these questions: What can be accomplished easily as a quick success to build support? What would provide the most visibility for building occupants to build commitment? Where are we at the most risk within the building safety, health, regulatory compliance or financially? Where could we achieve the most impact on reducing our environmental footprint?

### 5. Maintain Momentum

Teams tend to start off with terrific energy fueled by the excitement of taking on an important endeavor. The key is to maintain that momentum and avoid burnout from Team members. The goal is to have sustainable green teams, *pun intended*. The previous four steps get the Team started on the right foot and should be revisited on an ongoing basis, every two to three months to keep the focus going. The Teams will also need to hold productive and engaging meetings with an appropriate frequency - twice a month in the beginning to every month thereafter. Without clear goals, timelines, roles, expectations as well as recognition and celebration for progress made, and a resource to consult when hitting roadblocks a Team quickly loses commitment. This is not due to a lack of concern from the members of the Team; it is the reality Teams face when individuals balance multiple responsibilities and assignments. GSA’s commitment to the success of Green Teams includes a program manager, who is available for suggestions and creative problem solving. Doreen Sheih can be reached at 253.931.7304 or [doreen.sheih@gsa.gov](mailto:doreen.sheih@gsa.gov).

A website provides Teams the tools and templates to work efficiently and effectively without having to

spend the time creating them from scratch. This enables Teams to “hit the ground running.” [www.gsa.gov/r10greenteams](http://www.gsa.gov/r10greenteams)

### 6. Track Performance - Report Progress – Celebrate Success

Tracking performance is not only about comparing actual measurements to targets, but also about celebrating behavior changes. Recognize those individuals that have made new commitments to sustainable practices. Maybe Sally now rides her bike to work twice a week or the building has started a composting program. It’s important to document these achievements, celebrate and share them as best practices. Use regularly occurring events to report a building’s progress – at an Earth Day (April 22) event, Energy Awareness Month in October, or America Recycles Day (November 15). Report Team progress and use existing communication channels to promote involvement – building newsletters, signage, websites, and lobby or building displays.

Using the traditional model of Plan, Do, Check, Act, a Team will be more successful evaluating its progress – were goals achieved? What worked? What could be done differently? This type of assessment can happen on a project or event basis as well as reflecting back on a Team’s progress over a period of time.



## 7. Be Ready for Challenges

As with any change, there will be resistance. The changes may be inconvenient. Some may feel the problem is bigger than the Team can impact. And with the awareness of sustainability that comes from Green Team activities, individuals will be overwhelmed. Do I pack my lunch, buy my lunch? Should I telework? How will I stay connected? Does turning off my monitor when I leave really matter? Is day-time cleaning an option for our building? What qualifies as green cleaning products? This can be overwhelming from an individual and a business perspective. Using the planning and prioritizing actions at the start and tracking progress will bring the incremental progress, as well as make sustainable business changes palatable to building occupants. The key is to accept imperfect progress, as long as it's progress.

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<sup>1</sup> "Corporate Environmental Behavior and the Impact on Brand Values." Tandberg & Ipsos MORI, 2007. 7 Jul 2010.

<<http://www.ivci.com/pdf/corporate-environmental-behaviour-and-the-impact-on-brand-values.pdf>>.

<sup>2</sup> Seidman, Dov. "Sustainability: It's Not About Light Bulbs.." Fast Company, 2009. Web. 13 Sept 2010. <<http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/dov-seidman/how-why-how-we-do-anything-means-everything/sustainability-its-not-about-light-bulb-0>>.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. General Services Administration. *Sustainability Matters*. 2008. Page 19.

Those that venture down the road of sustainability understand the process will be messy. The more successful organizations also realize that, once they start down the path, going just part-way or stopping, could be more harmful than not engaging in the process at all. Consistency and persistence are the hallmark of leading sustainability-based organizations.

Bob Doppelt, author of *Leading Change Toward Sustainability*.

