



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



# Defra Group Sustainable Information Technology Strategy

## Together we are building a green and healthy future



# Our vision

Defra's vision is clear and compelling: we are here to make our air purer, water cleaner, land greener and food more sustainable.

Central to delivering this vision is a close partnership between government, industry and other actors to achieve the [United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and implement the UK Government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#). These documents are the blueprints to create a better, more sustainable future for all. They interconnect to address major global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change and environmental degradation.

As the Senior Responsible Owner for [Sustainable Information Technology \(IT\) Across Government](#), our vision for sustainability in Digital, Data and Technology Services is to show leadership and expertise as a ["Center of Excellence"](#) in sustainability while supporting Defra's plan to improve the environment, enhance innovation and contribute to the community and economic success.

## **Digital Data and Technology Services (DDTS) defines sustainability as:**

Protecting the environment and benefiting the communities where we work while conducting our business in a socially responsible manner. We, therefore, recognise that embedding sustainability in our ways of working and activities, means, focusing on the

environmental pillar whilst protecting our business against sustainability social risk and ensuring initiatives and projects recognise and exploit all opportunities to maximise sustainability benefits.

## **Taking a sustainability approach will enable us to:**

- Deliver the ambitions of the Defra group plan;
- Reduce the amount of natural resources we consume and purchase, whilst achieving savings;
- Improve the sustainability of the supply chain;
- Increase the resilience of corporate services;
- and ensure that we protect the organisation from sustainability risk.

We believe that our [ambitious internal action](#) to achieve net-zero, improve reuse and provide net gains for the environment will drive national and international influence.



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# 5 sustainability strategic objectives guide our work



## 1 Reduce and Mitigate Carbon Emissions:

We will deliver approaches to reducing organisational emissions including embodied carbon from travel, energy consumption, products and services through efficiency, renewable energy, innovation and data as part of our net zero target.



## 2 Efficient RESOURCE USE Reduced waste:

We will deliver approaches to reducing waste through the waste hierarchy and product hierarchy by ensuring that materials are kept in productive use for longer, design and purchase sustainable products and services and reduce consumption of resources. We will innovate to promote sustainable and efficient use of resources.



## 3 Demonstrate TRANSPARENCY and mitigate risk:

Respecting workers in our supply chain and the communities where we operate, are a fundamental expectation of our supply chain and partners. We will work with internal and external stakeholders to procure sustainably and monitor supplier performance, address systemic challenges, and continuously raise the bar.



## 4 Make SUSTAINABILITY business as usual:

We will integrate sustainability in our ways of working and activities. This will include setting IT performance objectives based on sustainability, rewarding and providing opportunities for growth. Sustainability will sit as a core part of our activities from projects, initiatives to whole life costing



## 5 Providing NET GAINS for the environment:

We will deliver IT solutions that will provide environmental benefits which outweigh environmental costs. This includes the condition of ecosystem services that flow from natural assets. For example solutions that manage our land, rivers and oceans more sustainably and digital solutions for public facing services.

# Sustainability approach



# 5 principles inform how we act



We act with conviction and clarity of purpose, showing **leadership and working in partnership** across government, the country and internationally for the good of nature and society.

We **communicate transparently and engage in dialogue**, with our stakeholders in a spirit of partnership.

We **focus on the things that only government can do**, and our interventions make a contribution on behalf of people the economy and the environment and are driven by clear prioritisation and good governance.

We design, deliver and operate our activities with sustainability in mind with clear and ambitious metrics to **create incentives to do the right thing** and encourage others to play their part.

We are building a **world-class centre of excellence** in sustainability and making the best use of technology, data and digital media.