



The 7-Steps Framework

The Eco-Schools 7-Steps Framework is a series of carefully guided measures to help schools maximise their success along the journey. The students play a primary role in the process, with support from a wide diversity of individuals from the school community. Some steps depend on work from previous steps. There is no restriction on how long to spend at each step, but it is recommended to strive to complete one pathway (i.e. energy, waste, water) within one school year.

It is important to keep accurate and meaningful records of progress through each of the 7-steps. Once you have completed all steps, you may be eligible for an Eco-School award and will need these records for your portfolio application,

See “Earn an Award” in your Eco-Schools handbook or on our main Eco-School webpage

<https://www.buei.bm/education/eco-schools-bermuda>



The 7-Steps

Step 1 – Form an Eco-Committee

Step 2 – Sustainability Audit

Step 3 – Action Plan

Step 4 – Monitor and Evaluate

Step 5 – Curriculum work

Step 6 – Inform and Involve



STEP 1: FORM AN ECO-COMMITTEE

(Or Green Team or Environment Club etc. You choose, be creative!)

The core group that drives the Eco-Schools programme

Members:

Mostly students (from various year levels), teachers and staff, ideally a parent, someone from the community, or a local environmental organization and/or governmental department.

New members of the school can, and are encouraged to, join at any point, as long as continuity is maintained throughout the process.

Meetings:

- **Regular:** at least once a term, preferably once a month; during lunch time, after school, or in advisory.
- **Recorded:** keep notes of discussions or ideas and take pictures.
- **Inclusive:** anyone and everyone has an opportunity to participate in some way.

Student Roles:

Often exciting for students, they can have significant responsibilities other than just 'showing up.' Invite them to share where they feel most comfortable/impactful or host elections for other members to vote. Roles can include president, secretary, fundraiser, researcher, communications (coordinate assemblies and bulletins), photographer etc. and students can share roles and rotate each month or term to give everyone a turn.

What do they do?

- Ensure all sectors of the school community are represented in the decision-making process.
- Conduct the audit (recruiting help as needed).
- With BUEI's help, seek out experts in the community to advise the action plan.
- Design and run campaigns and projects, making sure everyone knows about them and can get involved.
- Set up a plan to monitor and record progress.
- Facilitate hosting events relating to or integrating your pathway (topic) and the Eco-Schools journey.
- Represent the school and attend Eco-Schools events.
- Share updates with the school and BUEI.
- Ensure continuity, if/when members leave.

Some tips on what works well:

- **Provide incentives for students** – i.e. 'eco-club' badges, T-shirts, field trips, grub day, and recognition in assemblies or within the school community (wall of fame).
- **Ensure effective communication** with Eco-Committee members and the school community. This includes meeting times and location, current focus/questions, what you're requesting of people, why they should get involved/support, etc.
- **Maintain consistency** - keep up on regular meetings and the structure of the group. While it will vary depending on which stage you're at, don't let the momentum fall when it gets difficult.
- **Host a launch event** - i.e. "Green Day" where students explore everything green (wear, eat, drink) to launch participation in Eco-Schools or to celebrate Earth Day (April 22) or another occasion.
- **Host a celebration event** - i.e. a "Glow Walk" for switching off lights; invite the community to participate
- **Be part of a community or school event** (i.e. Earth Hour, Agricultural Exhibition, Sports Day, School Plays, Science Fairs.)
- **Find out about or help facilitate teacher professional development opportunities** to enhance knowledge of environmental/social issues and provide resources to integrate into their teaching.
- **Elicit sponsorship** or fundraise to help with materials (reusable lunch boxes, gardening supplies, paint).
- **Invite guests** to the school who can offer insight into your topic and share their experiences with it.
- **Visit other eco-friendly facilities** (e.g. ACE, Lindos, Fairmont Southampton Princess etc.)
- **Encourage administration to track financial savings** and visualize the potential.
- **Create a school mural** to instil pride in the space and inspire creativity and beauty around the school.

Eco-Committee Introduction Meeting

This sets a framework for meetings. Some students may be used to extra-curricular activities and this can function in a similar way. Yet, without feeling like another class or simply just a meeting, it is meant to become and remain an integral part of school life.

Spend the first session giving a very brief overview of the Eco-School concept (*BUEI staff can help facilitate this*) and then focus on the STUDENTS - What does "Eco" mean to them? - What does "School" mean to them? This will allow you to build future campaigns and initiatives around their skills and interests which helps ensure a more meaningful participation from them.

Here's an example of some questions you can discuss as a group or each complete individually and share later.

1. I have joined this club because...
2. My favourite subject(s) in school is/are... because...
3. Outside of school, I like to...
4. The best thing about my school is...
5. The thing my school most needs to improve is...
6. The environment is important because...
7. People are important because...
8. The economy (money) is important because...
9. Bermuda's biggest problem is...
10. I think a future solution for Bermuda is...

Suggested Eco-Committee Agendas

1. Introduction/Goal Setting - Why are we here? What is Eco-Schools? What do we want to get out of this club? What are our skills? What are our interests? Do we have enough people? If not, how can we recruit more? How often can we meet?

2. Becoming an Eco-School - What does the programme entail? Is it right for us? Can we commit to follow through? What are schools doing in Bermuda/around the world? Where can we get inspiration? Where do we need support? What kind of support?

3. Focus on Your School - What is our school culture like (among our students, teachers, parents)? What makes it different? Which are the best parts? What needs improvement? How do we want our community to think about us? What do they think already? What is our space like (one building, separate buildings)? Do we have any community partners? (i.e. local businesses, organizations, keen parents.) Which pathway can we start with?

4. Brainstorm (*Consider inviting a specialist from the community.*) - What is our selected pathway (energy, waste, biodiversity) about? What more do we need to find out about this theme (i.e. where are our energy bills? When is our waste collected?) Are any classes currently or planning on covering this or related topics? What community groups/ government departments can help us? How might an audit look? When can we do the audit?

5. Develop ideas - Create the detail of the audit. What questions should you ask? What, where, and how can you observe? Assign responsibilities to club members or seek further help from experts in the community where needed.

6. & 7. Conduct audit. - Enlist the help of other students and/or parents, if they're interested. It can be done during eco club time or after school or during lunch time or a school wide event (depending on the pathway).

8. Collate data, start to analyse - Look for any trends and identify priority areas. Find a balance between 'quick wins' (something easy such as implementing recycling bins) and big impacts (such as running a campaign to reduce paper consumption).

9. Look deeper into data. (*Again, enlist the help of BUEI's delivery partners*) Pull out action plan items. What concrete things can we do to make these changes? How long will it take us? Who will be responsible for each aspect?

10. Present. - Show data to group (either PTA green team, staff meeting, school administration, specific science or social studies class, community organisation). Invite further input to action plan.

11. Develop action plan - How do we address each of the priority areas identified in the audit? (i.e. Where did most of the trash come from and which material was the most common? How can we increase species diversity on our grounds?)

12. Finalize action plan - Assign responsibilities and deadlines; determine monitoring plan (how we will know if it's working).

Remember BUEI is happy to assist in any Eco-Committee meetings.



STEP 2: CONDUCT A SUSTAINABILITY AUDIT

For samples of audits for each pathway, go to the [Pathway webpages](#)

What is it?

- A way to measure a baseline or starting point of data, to compare improvements against
- An opportunity to examine priority areas for change and understand where to make the most impact
- A way to look deeper at how the school and the people within it operate
- The start of seeing how all behaviours and infrastructure is related.



Which 'pathway'?

Spend some time brainstorming which Pathway or environmental focus area you feel will have the most meaning to begin your Eco-School journey on. You can start with something that the school already has movement with (i.e. some people bring reusable containers, so let's do 'waste' or we had a gardening club, so let's do 'school grounds'). However, sometimes a series of initiatives that have not reached their full potential can feel like a heavy burden to re-energize and a new topic would be more inspiring.

Share preliminary ideas among the Eco-Committee (and possibly invite the wider school community to give input) and document the reasons for the pathway you choose.

Why an Audit?

Just jumping in and trying to implement changes will not have as much impact as if you know where you are starting from and where the priority areas are. The audit is meant to measure current behaviour, ideally without the school knowing you are observing them. This is called a **"baseline"** and will allow you to compare future data to see where you have made a difference! Secondly, by analysing all the behaviours related to that pathway, you can identify which ones to focus on in the action plan. These are called the **"priority areas."**

How to do it:

1. Record your school population as this will impact the measurements - be sure to include number of students, teachers, and other staff. Note if the school is used for other groups (i.e. afterschool activities).
2. Assess the school's impact of the selected pathway. That is, how much trash are we producing and where is it coming from? or How much energy are we consuming and where do we consume the most? or How many different plant and animal species are at our school and where are others missing? Ask BUEI for sample templates.
3. Record the results with numbers (e.g. amount of waste, distance food has travelled). Share observations with the school.
4. Keep in mind that conducting your audit over a few days may generate more meaningful results. Perhaps Mondays are different from Fridays or perhaps one week some students were not in school so it's important to get a good representation of 'normal' behaviour.
5. Set a target date to do the review again to check improvements are being made. Keep in mind, this should be mostly led by the students so that they learn by doing.
6. Share the results with the whole school and the community.



STEP 3: DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

This is the core of the Eco-Schools work and should be developed using the results of the Sustainability Audit (Step 2).

What is it?

- A way to focus your thoughts and turn ideas into a reality, making sure they are concrete.
- A document that lists the steps and strategies to address the results of the audit and meet certain goals.
- An outline of initiatives and projects, including proposed timelines, who would be responsible, and what resources might be needed.

How to do it:

If you like, you can arrange for BUEI to come and help develop your Action Plan.

Examine the results of the audit and identify the “priority areas” on which to focus.

Decide on 3-5 actions (projects or campaigns) and deadlines for short, medium, and long-term goals.

Brainstorm how best these actions will be communicated to the school - “tell them” in assembly vs. “inspire them” through a competition, “remind them” with posters, “reward them” with recognition.

Determine how you will measure change, i.e., weight of trash, energy bills, # of plants.

Set specific and realistic targets for improvement, including deadlines.

Share the plans with the community – on a bulletin board, in a newsletter or assembly.

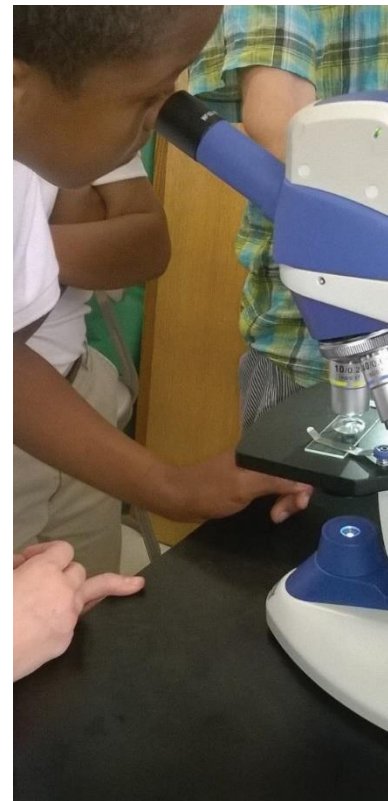
Agree on who will be responsible for implementing, measuring, and following up when necessary.

Identify any costs involved (i.e. if you need recycling bins) and where the funds will come from, and when.

Evaluate the actions and be open to making changes if something is not working.

Develop this step in parallel with the next, monitor and evaluate.

For action plan ideas for each pathway, see the pathways section.



Remember to be SMART

Specific: sets a clear goal of what you want to achieve

Measurable: outlines concrete targets

Attainable: realistically can be achieved with the time, budget, and people-power you have

Relevant: addresses an issue that people in your school will connect with

Time-bound: has a deadline



STEP 4: MONITOR AND EVALUATE YOUR IMPROVEMENT AND PROGRES

This step shows if you are on the right track to engaging your school community and implementing change or if and where you need to make some adjustments.

Celebrate every time you hit one of your goals, however small!

How to do it:

- Develop in parallel with your action plan and feed back into a revised action plan.
- Conduct a mini/revised audit to compare new data with the baseline (use the same unit of performance).
- To change behaviour, we also need to know if people's attitudes (towards environmental issues, about the school, about their community) have changed. Conduct surveys to record opinions.
- Look at the goal dates and targets you set in your action plan and ensure you are keeping to them.
- Where feasible and relevant, take photos as good visual evidence to measure change.
- Then, looking at your new data, ask your team the following questions:
 - What have we done so far? Is everyone in the school **aware** of our participation?
 - Were the chosen activities **relevant** and did they help us to meet our objectives?
 - How **effective** were our initiatives? Did we achieve the goals outlined in the Action Plan?
 - Were our activities carried out **efficiently**? Could we do anything to make them better?
 - Did our activities have the **impact** we were hoping for? If not, why not?
 - What have we **learned** from our mistakes and successes?
 - Are our activities **sustainable** (*can they be carried out in the long term*)?

Sharing the Results: *(In graphs, charts, pictures)*

The results of the monitoring exercises should be displayed for everyone in the school to see.

When targets are achieved, celebrate success loudly! Give students plenty of encouragement to keep the momentum going, and it will be a great opportunity to remind the school and the community why you have adopted these activities.

If there are areas needing improvement (if you did not meet your targets or have further ideas), let the school know in an encouraging way and do not point blame. Find a new way to promote the desired behaviour.





STEP 5: INTEGRATE INTO THE CURRICULUM

The Environment, Society, and the Economy - from books to life...

Environmental Education, also known as Education for Sustainable Development, can be explored in Science, Maths, IT, Languages, Social Studies, Arts - the entire curriculum! Connecting learning with the world around us, on which we depend, naturally helps us to think and live more sustainably. What is studied in class can influence the way the school operates.

Linking Eco-Schools to the curriculum helps the whole school get involved in the programme by raising their understanding and knowledge of sustainability. It helps bring the figures to life and allows students to learn from real situations and see how they can impact change. It also offers opportunities to address cross-curricular concepts of Citizenship, Sustainable Development, Family Life, Personal Health, Social Systems, Geography, Climate Change, and International Relations.

What is it?

- An opportunity to combine hands-on, experiential learning, with the outlined curricula by subject and as a whole
- An aid for students to gain comprehensive understanding and make connections across disciplines and content areas
- A way to engage students in learning that is meaningful to real-life situations



Eco-School Requirements for Step 5

We are aware of the effort that goes into teaching. Making the link between Eco-Schools work and the curriculum may be easier than you think. Many educators find that their classes are already doing work on topics that easily relate to environmental and social issues. This step does not mean to change your syllabus, but rather consider the pathway topic when looking for ways to apply content, assign special projects, or simply teach in another setting (i.e. in the garden). Remember, field trips to relevant sites around the island are an excellent way to expose students to practical applications of knowledge. Just ensure they bring that knowledge back to their school and integrate it into their lives. Eco-Schools is not an add-on or an aside, but a way of strengthening (and improving if necessary) what is taught in the school, in line with Bermudian standards and the international framework of action-oriented learning. For the school to achieve the Green Flag accreditation in this step, environmental topics must be integrated into the classroom at all grade levels and across disciplines at some point during the school year. Remember to document this process for review in your Eco-School portfolio. Save your lesson plan ideas and take pictures of your students' participation and work.

Examples:



Science: Observe natural habitats, and the plant and animal species living on school grounds - compare the various areas.



Math: Construct a bar chart on the school wall using actual plastic bottles—show the percentage plastic makes up in the trash each day.



IT: Compare results of your school's energy consumption graphically over time.



Languages: Write to a student in an Eco-School in another country (see page 6, ask BUEI for contact details) - find out what inspires them and if they have any advice.



Social Studies: Consider the impact of pollution on people's health in different historical periods using photographs, written documents, and other sources.



Arts: Go for a sensory walk and create artwork that explains how you feel using a variety of materials from the natural world



STEP 6: INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY

Once you start to see the difference you can make within the school, these ideas will start to rub off on everyone ... and that is how we change the world!

Your school is part of a wider community which includes students, teachers, administrators, facilities staff, parents. It also includes alumni, extended family members, neighbours, local stores, and clubs.

What it is?

- A method of raising public awareness of relevant environmental issues and the activities to address them.
- An invitation to as many people as possible to participate, support, and give input and feedback.
- A way to engage others in understanding the process the school has gone through and hopes to continue with.
- A validation for students to see their efforts are valued, appreciated, and supported by those around them.
- An opportunity for positive publicity for the school.
- A commitment to the “support and share” philosophy of Eco-Schools international - you can get ideas from other Eco-Schools around the world and you are requested to share your ideas back with the network.

How can it be done?

- Host an event or series of events at school or in the neighbourhood.
- Exhibit an informational display for the public to visit and interact with.
- Organize a community event - a clean-up, “stuff swap” (to reduce buying new), or a planting day.
- Represent Eco-Schools at an established community event - i.e. hosting a stall at the Agricultural Exhibition, or even a non-eco-related event like a sports tournament or the school play.
- Create a video or piece of art to present to the public.
- Record how Eco-School ideas were taken home and put into practice.

How to guarantee success?

- Make sure that as many people as possible are invited, encouraged, and have a chance to take part.
- Clearly convey which pathway you are addressing and make the event relevant to that issue.
- Focus on celebrating the school’s successes and what the future plans for continued improvement are.
- Propose a meaningful and achievable call to action that the community can commit to.
- Record the event in some way - photos, video, interview attendees, etc.
- Involve the local media and social media. BUEI can assist with drafting and distributing a press release.

Some ideas for along the way....

Here are possible opportunities for you to publicize your activities and involve both the school and the wider community. While “Inform and Involve” is the 6th step, you can collect evidence as you progress through each step of the programme to showcase it once you reach this point.

When you become involved in the Eco School Programme:

- announcement in school assemblies
- send letters home to parents
- articles in the school newsletter, or a newsletter at parents' place of employment

When you form the Eco-Committee:

- hold an election of pupil representatives
- present committee representative certificates
- publish article in local/school newsletter - seeking parent-nomination, invitation to neighborhood community members or businesses to join

When you undertake the sustainability audit:

- letters to the local authority/companies to work with you on the solutions
- letters to local businesses seeking resources for possible schemes
- surveys of the school and wider community to seek views and opinions

When you prepare your action plan:

- arrange visitors from outside organizations and businesses
- invite regular feedback through school assemblies
- extend the plan so that pupils can carry out environmental activities at home

When launching Eco-School projects:

- school-wide event to launch individual campaigns
- competition for the wording and design of the school Eco-Code
- central display of information

As part of the monitoring process:

- updates and encouragement at school assemblies
- invitation for others to help (during lunch, after school, as part of a class, or partner with another club)
- display results on Eco-School notice board

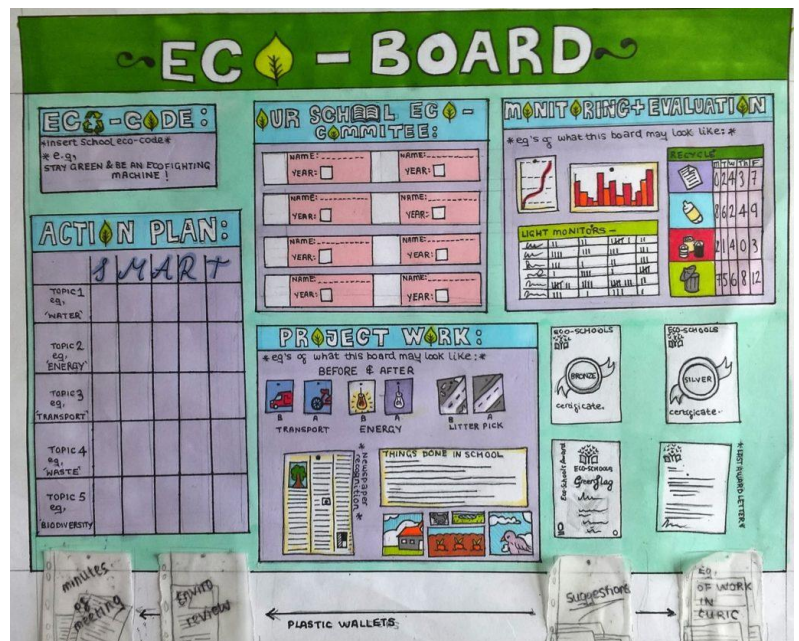
When celebrating success:

- events and activities to mark receiving the award

At each stage:

- press releases to local media - including online, TV, paper, and radio
- share video clips of each activity
- invite the community to assemblies

See this example Eco-Schools bulletin board from Eco-Schools USA.





STEP 7: ESTABLISH AN ECO CODE

This is your mission statement - your commitment to continuing improvement

What it is:

- A display of your commitment to the whole school and visitors.
- A clear list of the Action Plan's main objectives and goals.
- A creative way to ensure the commitment is memorable and familiar to everyone in the school.
- Created with students as key contributors, to give them a sense of ownership and buy in for the values it represents.

The format:

- Entirely up to the school. It could be a list of statements, a mural, a song/rap or poem, a video, etc.
- Appropriate for the age/ability of the students involved.
- Prominently displayed throughout the school, i.e. in every classroom, in communal areas, on Eco Boards and in the staff room.
- Inclusive of a date to review, to ensure that it continues to reflect the school's goals.

Examples:

Our Eco-Code

Walk to school

Only use what you need

Recycle and reuse

Lights out when not in use

Don't drop litter

Enjoy where we live

Never drop litter

Vandalising is out

Improve our environment

Recycle cans and paper

Our pond is brill!

Nature is for everyone

Make us think about the environment

Every bit counts

Now is the time

Trust us with the world

VPP Green Team Eco Code

Go Green Team!

Recycling is our thing.

Energy and water are cool, so save them in school.

Everybody pick up litter.

Never waste; it's such bad taste.

Take care of animals and trees, pretty please!

Eat well, stay well, keep fit.

Avoid the car, walking's better by far.

Make sure you do your bit.

