

Fórsa Sustainability Policy

Fórsa represents members in the public service, as well as the commercial sector, state agencies, some private companies and in the community and voluntary sector. Fórsa is the second largest union on the island of Ireland and by far the largest trade union voice in the Irish civil and public service. We wish to use that voice in a positive manner for society. We recognise that there is a climate emergency and drastic action is required to save the planet. Concern for the environment and promoting a broader sustainability agenda are integral to Fórsa's professional activities and the management of the organisation. We have a duty to ensure we proactively manage all significant environmental impacts in a responsible and ethical manner. We do this through identifying all and putting processes into place to prevent, reduce and mitigate them in an innovative and practical manner. We aim to follow and to promote good sustainability practice, to reduce the environmental impacts of all our activities and to help our members, employers and partners to do the same.

Scope

This policy applies to all Fórsa employees and covers activities in all Fórsa buildings

Principles

Our Sustainability Policy is based upon the following principles:

- To comply with, and exceed where practicable, all applicable legislation, regulations and codes of practice.
- To integrate sustainability considerations into all our work practices.
- To ensure that all staff are fully aware of our Sustainability Policy and are committed to implementing and improving it.
- To minimise the impact on sustainability of all office and transportation activities.
- To make clients and suppliers aware of our Sustainability Policy, and encourage them to adopt sound sustainable management practices.
- To ensure our members are aware of our sustainability policy and to assist them in bringing it to their workplaces.
- To review, annually report, and to continually strive to improve our sustainability performance.

Practical steps

In order to put these principles into practice we will:

Purchase of equipment and consumption of resources

- Minimise our use of paper and other office consumables, for example by double-sideding all paper used, and identifying opportunities to reduce waste.
- As far as possible arrange for the reuse or recycling of office waste, including paper, computer supplies and redundant equipment.
- Reduce the energy consumption of office equipment by purchasing energy efficient equipment and good housekeeping.
- Seek to purchase electricity from a supplier committed to renewable energy.
- Seek to maximise the proportion from renewable energy sources, whilst also supporting investment in new renewable energy schemes.

- Ensure that timber furniture, and any other timber products, are recycled or from well-managed, sustainable sources and are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified.
- Purchase fair-trade and/or organic beverages.

Working practices and advice to members and partners

- Undertake voluntary work with the local community and / or environmental organisations.
- Ensure that any associates that we employ take account of sustainability issues in their contracted work.
- Include a copy of our Sustainability Policy in all our packs to new members.
- Publish our sustainability Policy on the Fórsa website.

Travel and meetings

- Encourage staff to walk, cycle and/or use public transport to attend meetings, site visits etc., apart from in exceptional circumstances where the alternatives are impractical and/or cost prohibitive.
- Include the full costs of more sustainable forms of transport in our financial proposals, rather than the least cost option which may involve travelling by car or air. Where the only practical alternative is to fly, we will include costs for full air fares rather than budget airlines in our financial proposals.
- Avoid physically travelling to meetings etc where alternatives are available and practical, such as using teleconferencing, video conferencing or web cams, and efficient timing of meetings to avoid multiple trips. These options are also often more time efficient, while not sacrificing the benefits of regular contact with clients and partners.
- Reduce the need for our staff to travel by supporting alternative working arrangements, including home and remote working (where pre-approved and service needs permit) and promote the use of public transport by locating our offices in accessible locations.
- Use an emissions recording scheme for business travel to monitor our impact.

Environmental aims

- We will create an energy management strategy to drive a programme of energy efficiency initiatives, including solar where possible
- We will carry out a monitoring and benchmarking exercise over the next year 2019 to understand water use and potential reduction opportunities in our buildings.
- We will ensure that new buildings and refurbishment projects comply with relevant building regulations and where possible are compatible with sustainability principals and best practices
- We will monitor energy usage in all buildings and implement progressive changes when possible.
- We will continue to create awareness and engage staff in new initiatives to help reduce our carbon footprint.

- Fórsa follows the waste hierarchy to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover where practically possible.

Reporting

- We commit to reporting annually on our progress on these aims
- Management reports will be conducted quarterly to the National Executive Committee