



From Audit to Action: Enhancing Sustainability in Healthcare



Singapore Healthcare
Management 2024

Song Jiahui, Valmond Lai, Liang Ming Yan,
Low Peng Siang, Umadevi Letchemanan



Introduction

In line with the Singapore Green Plan 2030 and the nation's commitment to an environmentally sustainable future, enhancing sustainability within the healthcare sector is crucial. As a major driving force behind healthcare sustainability is staff behaviour, the implementation of regular, cross-institutional green audits in SingHealth can contribute towards maintaining high standards of environmentally sustainable behaviour amongst staff.

Objective

The green audit, titled "ECO-Checkup", aims to encourage environmentally sustainable behaviour and action amongst staff in SingHealth, through identifying and promoting standardized best practices and evaluating staff adherence to sustainability practices.

Methodology

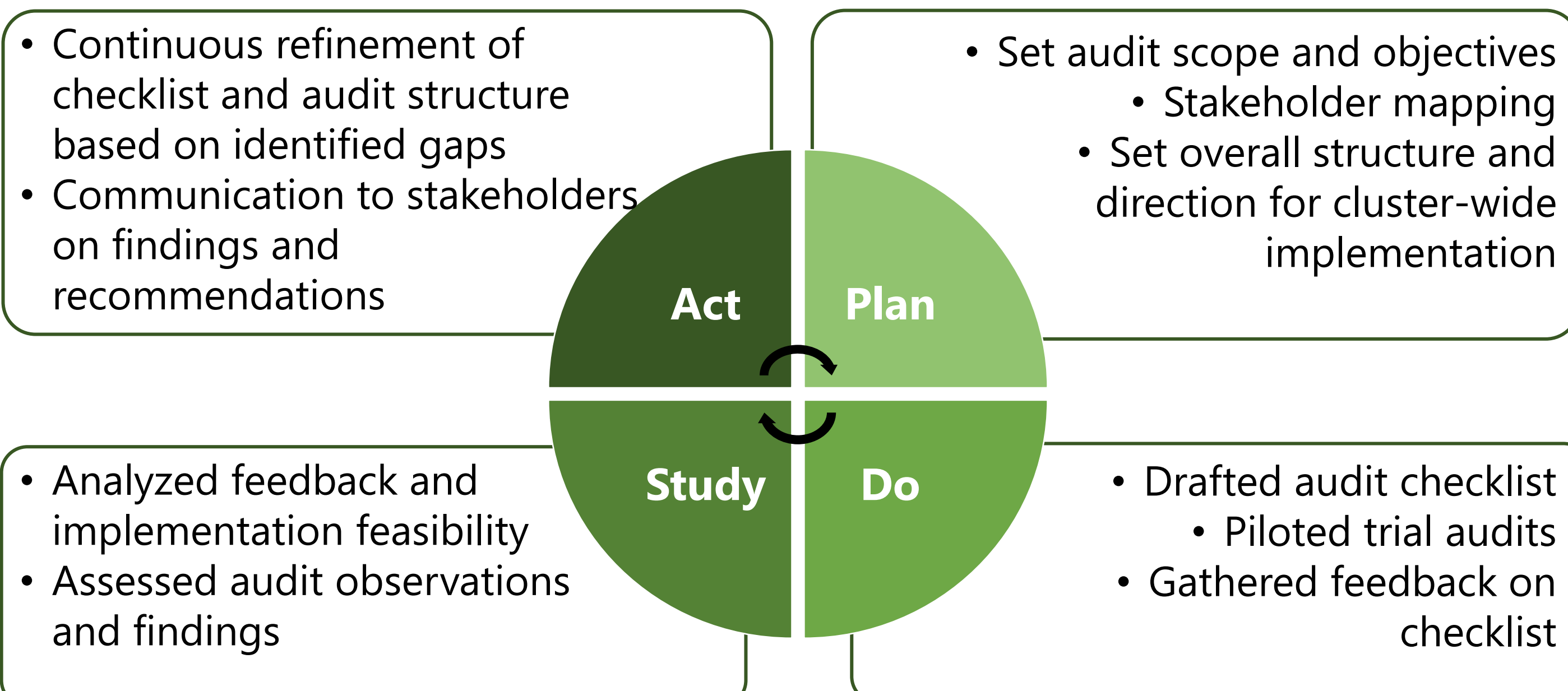
Guided by GreenGov.SG, PUB, NEA and MOH guidelines, the audit framework and green audit checklist were first developed.



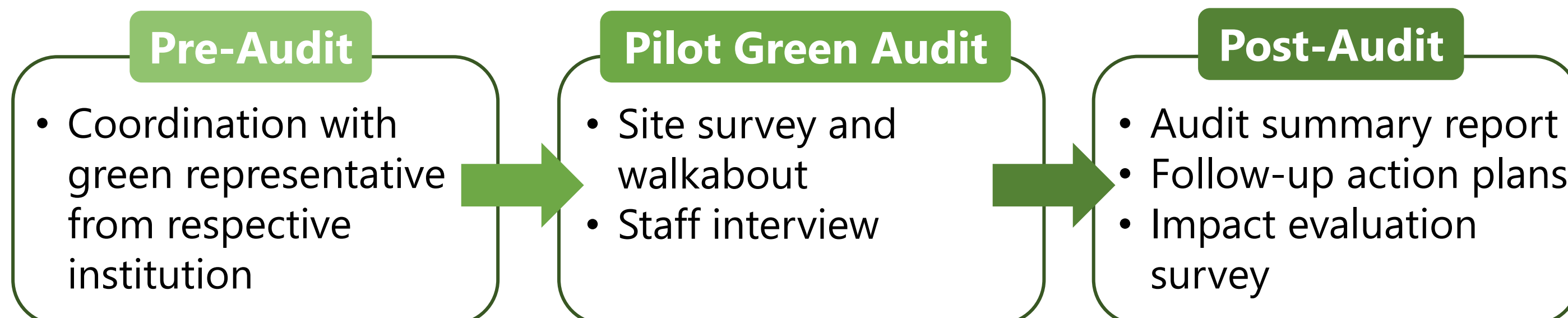
The checklist centred on the following 4 focus areas:



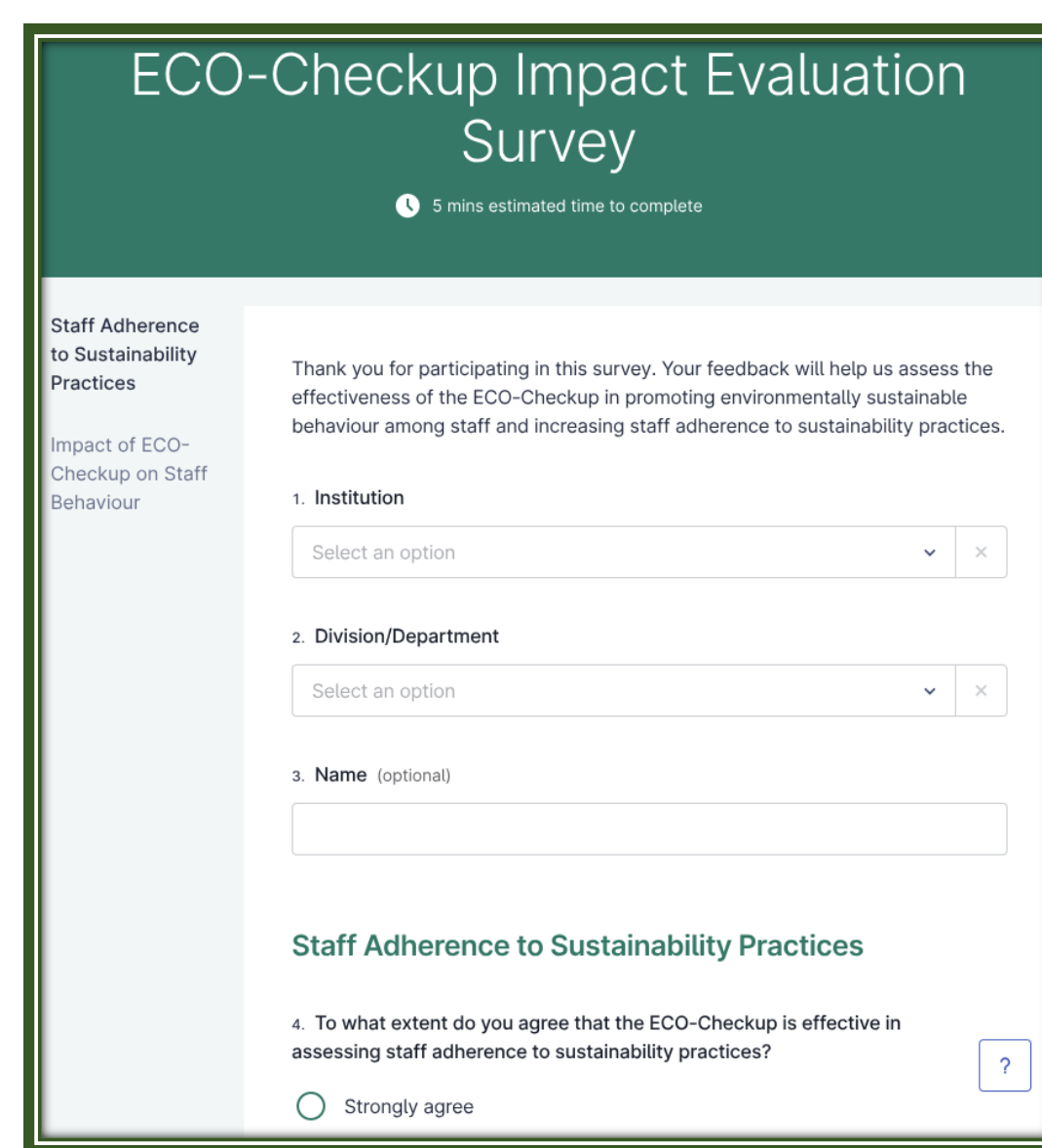
The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle served as a framework to develop, pilot and continually improve green audits in SCH, prior to cluster-wide implementation.



Pilot green audits were conducted by a team of 4 auditors at office and clinical areas in 2024, via the following process flow shown below:



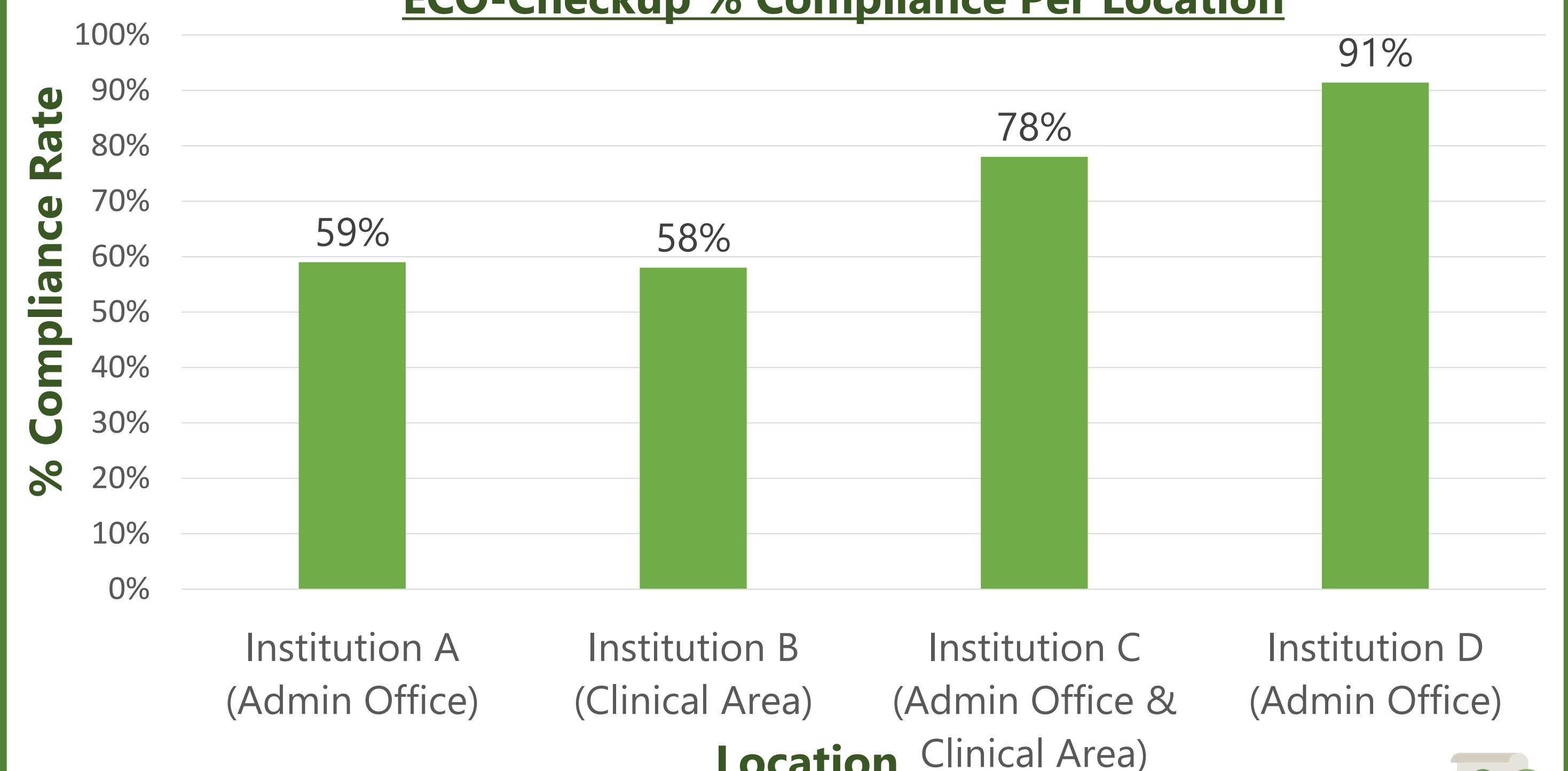
Audit results and areas for improvement were collated and shared with relevant staff to encourage a culture of accountability and continuous sustainable improvement. An **Impact Evaluation Survey** was also created on FormSG to assess the effectiveness of the audit as a tool to promote environmentally sustainable behaviour amongst staff and increase staff adherence to sustainability practices.



Results

Significant insights on staff behaviour in the context of sustainability were obtained via the 4 pilot audits conducted. Baseline compliance rate was identified from the average rate, **72%**.

ECO-Checkup % Compliance Per Location



Examples of **good practices** observed from the audits include:



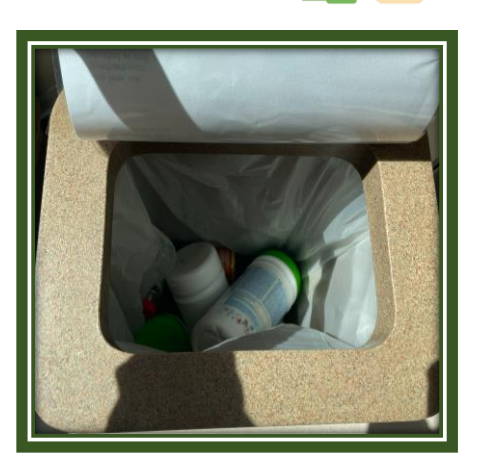
Repurposed Fruit Foam Nets as Decorative Materials



Share A Bag Initiative



Before & After: Recycling Bin for Plastics (Improved Disposal Techniques)



"I'm Not a Trash Bin" Poster above Recycling Bins



Shelves to Collect Pre-Loved Items from Staff

Some areas for improvement include:

- Reward systems to recognize green champions
- Staff education via Sustainability 101 series

Of the respondents from the **Impact Evaluation Survey**:

- 67%** and **22%** agree and **strongly agree** respectively that the ECO-Checkup is effective in assessing staff adherence to sustainability practices
- 44%** and **22%** believe to a **moderate** and **large extent** respectively that the ECO-Checkup motivates staff to incorporate sustainable practices into daily work routines
- 56%** and **11%** believe the ECO-Checkup can **significantly** and **very significantly** increase staff awareness of sustainability

Icons from Flaticon.com

Conclusion

The green audit shows great potential as a valuable tool to promote and enhance environmental sustainability in the workplace, by systematically assessing staff behaviour and practices alongside identifying gaps and areas for continuous improvement. Further developments include developing comprehensive training materials for structured training of new auditors. Integrating regular, cross-institutional green audits into routine operations using a standardised audit tool will thus foster a culture of sustainability and responsibility towards a greener SingHealth, in line with the national agenda to combat climate change and achieve a sustainable future.