From Audit to Action: Enhancing Sustainability in Healthcare Singapore Healthcare Management 2024



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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.

Green Culture

The checklist centred on the following 4 focus areas: Water **S**

Energy 👺

Waste A 🔉 🗉

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.

- Continuous refinement of checklist and audit structure based on identified gaps Communication to stakeholders on findings and recommendations Act Plan
 - Set audit scope and objectives Stakeholder mapping Set overall structure and direction for cluster-wide implementation
- Analyzed feedback and implementation feasibility Assessed audit observations

and findings

 Drafted audit checklist Piloted trial audits Gathered feedback on

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:

Study

Do

Pre-Audit

 Coordination with green representative from respective institution

Pilot Green Audit

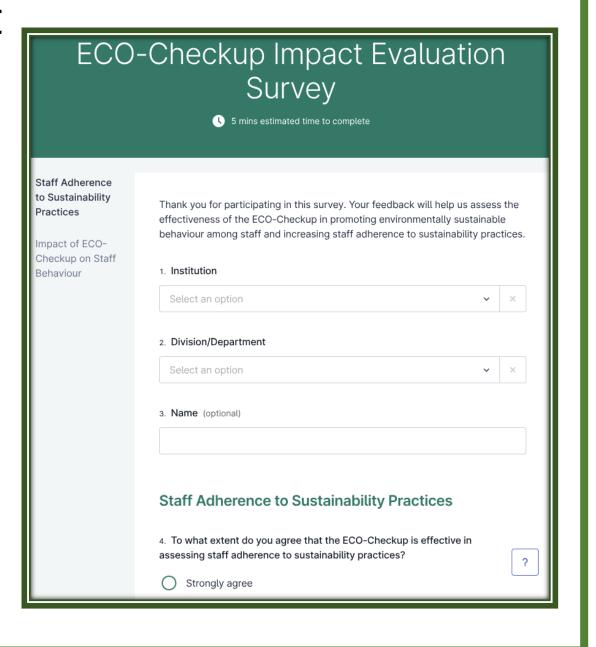
- Site survey and walkabout
- Staff interview

Post-Audit

checklist

 Audit summary report | Follow-up action plans Impact evaluation survey

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 100% 91% 78% 80% 59% 58% **2**0% Institution A Institution C Institution D Institution B (Admin Office) (Clinical Area) (Admin Office & (Admin Office)

Location Clinical Area) 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



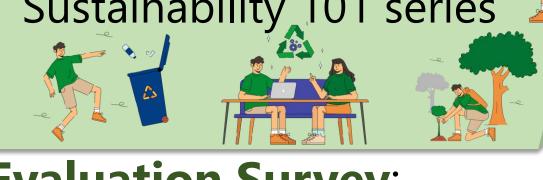
"I'm Not a Trash Bin" **Poster above Recycling Bins**



Shelves to Collect Pre-Loved Items from Staff

Techniques) 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

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, crossinstitutional 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.



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