

Partnering for Change work group process guide



Partnering for Change work groups are about rural and urban businesses sharing responsibility for the changes that need to be made to reduce our impact on the environment.

Farmers can feel attacked by a person-blame approach to the protection and regeneration of our environment. They feel the burden to change business practices to reduce the country's environmental impact disproportionately falls on them. Farms are, first and foremost, businesses and making significant system changes can be scary.

By working in small groups, rural and urban businesses can better understand each other, their sustainability efforts, and their motives and barriers to practice change.

Based on a pilot conducted in 2022 with four rural and four urban businesses from across Aotearoa, we found this approach can:

- Give businesses “new to them” concepts which inform sustainability thinking and planning.
- Help businesses better understand the value of approaching sustainability as a diverse group.
- Allow businesses to learn from each other to increase awareness and knowledge, and create mutual understandings and respect by connecting over a shared vision in a supportive environment.
- Make rural businesses feel more connected to others outside of the rural sector, resulting in them feeling less alone and lowering the pressure to reduce their environmental impact.
- Increase urban businesses support of farmers and growers .

This guide details how to start a Partnering for Change work group in your region. It details the key steps to starting, maintaining and replicating a work group, all the tools you'll need and some tips and tricks!

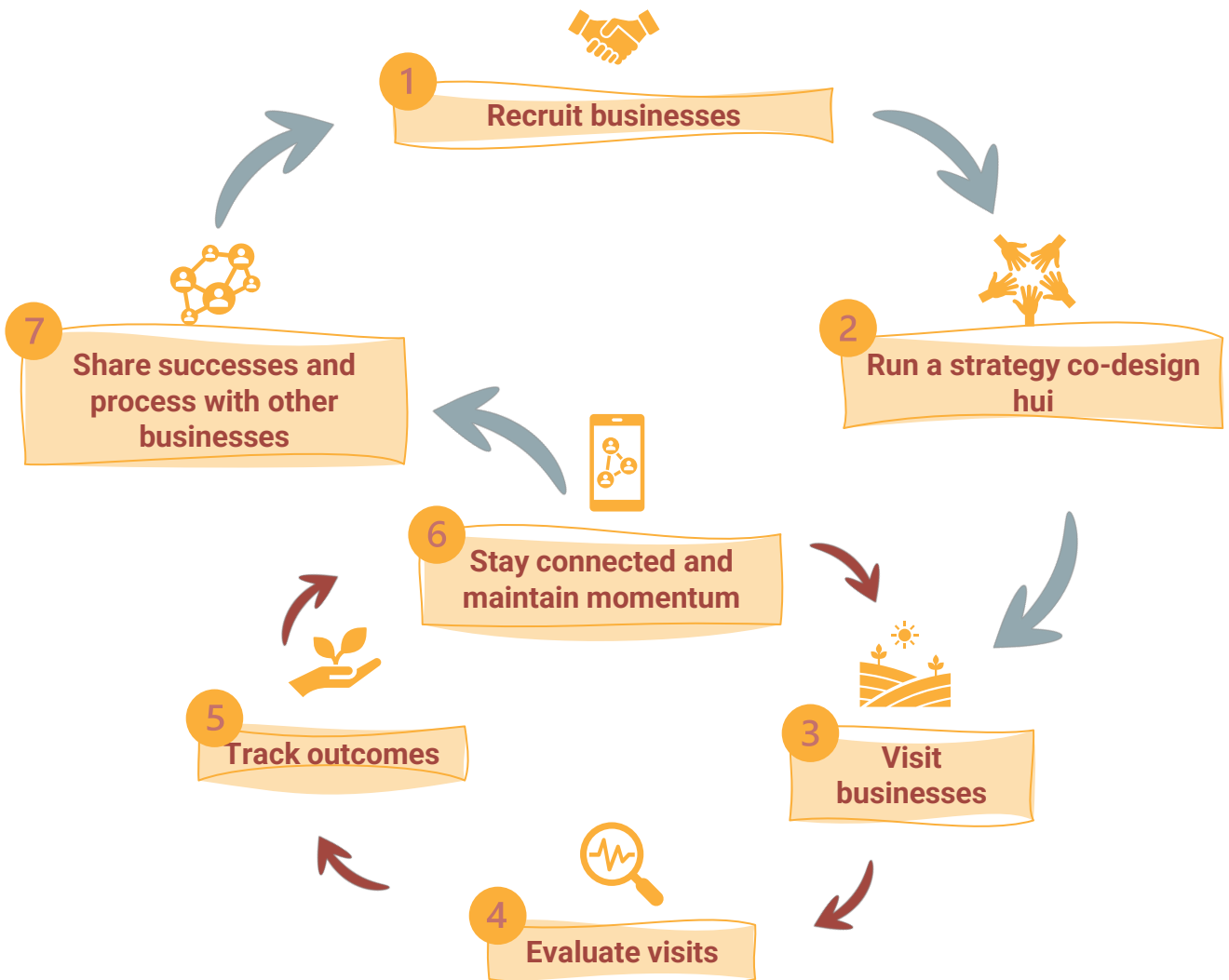


Partnering for Change work group process guide

This guide details how to start a Partnering for Change work group in your region. It details:

1. Key steps to starting, maintaining and replicating a work group
2. All the tools you'll need
3. Some tips and tricks!

Partnering for Change process



Partnering for Change work group process guide

1



Recruit businesses

Finding the right people to join a Partnering for Change work group will be the most time-consuming step. But it is also the most important for making sure you have a committed and motivated group!

Starting with businesses you already have connections with is easiest. From there, see if those businesses have connections to others that you do not. Emails and phone calls are easy recruitment methods for businesses you don't know. But heading to businesses to meet them face-to-face or attending community events can also be effective recruitment methods.

Businesses need to be

- Be interested in sustainability
- Have realistic and aligned sustainability motivations
- Understand time commitments and be able to make 80% of activities
- Be diverse but have a common thread (e.g., region, issue, value chain).



6-10 businesses, half rural and half urban, is ideal for diverse perspectives.

2

Run a strategy co-design hui

Get the participating businesses together face-to-face for a minimum of 4-hours. The objectives of this hui are to:

- Allow the businesses to meet
- Understand what each business does and where they are on their sustainability journeys
- Agree on a common vision and approaches to achieve it
- Create a plan for visiting each business
- Understand and manage each person's expectations of the group.

Everyone should leave the hui with a clear understanding of how the group is going to work together and a timeline of events – the businesses will be busy, so it's important to lock in their time early.

3



Visit businesses

Understanding what each business' day-to-day activities look like and what they are already doing in the sustainability space is most easily understood by visiting each of them in-person.

Allocating about half a day for each business allows them to show off what they do in-depth and leaves enough time for group questions and discussions. On the day, businesses could:

- Share goals, challenges, successes
- Show people the unique and interesting aspects of the business
- Show examples of changes made before the group and since being part of the group
- Explain planned changes.

They could achieve the above by:

- Presenting about what they do via a PowerPoint
- Showing others around their business
- Taking others to different sites that they work at.

4



Get people's feedback

Understanding whether the visits are interesting and worth other businesses time is essential – you want to do everything you can to make sure they are hitting the mark!

Running evaluations at the end of each visit will allow the group to change its approach and make sure the visits are successful.

Reporting the results back to the group is good practice so they can see how the approach is resonating amongst them.



Partnering for Change work group process guide

5

Stay connected and maintain momentum

Between visiting businesses, it is important the work group stays in contact to maintain their sense of unity and momentum. Having a group chat on a messaging platform can be helpful – it lets the work group share updates, ask questions and share interesting articles. Having interim online hui can also be beneficial.

To keep the work group engaged, send them articles or videos related to sustainability, they could also think of things they want to learn about and someone could go away and find the answer, or send them the findings of one of the 'Sustainability topics' in the toolkit to pique their interests.



6

Track outcomes

Seeing the impact the work group is having on the businesses is essential. Regularly have discussions about what changes the businesses are making because of the work group and the barriers and issues they are facing so the group can inform and help each other. Also encourage each business to set short-, medium- and long-term sustainability activity goals.

Sharing the changes businesses have made is important for keeping the work group motivated and connected. Sharing the commitments means the businesses can support and hold each other accountable.



7

Share success and process with other businesses

Once all businesses have been visited, each business should share the work group's process, successes and their experiences with other businesses in their region and / or network.

The most effective way to do this is for each business to run a hui that details the above. The hope is that the businesses at these hui are interested in starting a Partnering for Change work group with the other businesses in attendance, starting the project cycle over again.

Partnering for Change work group: toolkit

1
Recruit businesses
Recruitment flyer

2
Run a strategy co-design hui
Initial hui slide deck
Initial hui evaluation form
Possible changes template

3
Visit businesses
Agenda template and objective guide

4
Evaluate visits
On-site hui evaluation form

5
Stay connected and maintain momentum
Sustainability topics

6
Track outcomes
Changes and commitments template

7
Share successes and process with other businesses
Sharing the approach slide deck
Sharing the approach evaluation form

Partnering for Change work group: tips and tricks

Align your approach to commitment and accountability with the work group's needs

Some groups will choose organic approaches, and some will want more regulated approaches depending on what they decide at first hui. Make sure to maintain this approach and revisit it with the work group to see if it is still what they want.

Be understanding

It is important for businesses to commit and share changes but be understanding if they cannot make a visit. Businesses will go through busy times. Create a compassionate and friendly environment within the work group and keep content succinct and meaningful so you don't waste businesses time.

Stay in regular contact

Don't go more than a month without some kind of communication with the work group. Also use a variety of ways to keep in touch (e.g., emails, texts, group chats, check-in calls, online meetings, on-site meetings).

Funding the work group

Obtaining funding for administrative costs, compensation, travel or external facilitators could be beneficial to increase participation and motivation.

Ensure there is one clear leader

There needs to be one person that leads the work group. They could be external or part of the group. This one leader is key to the entire group, and they must be well resourced (time, support and / or money). It's okay if this person is supported by others and delegates, but the buck must stop with them.

Keep the businesses within a region or neighbouring regions

This is important for:

- Creating more efficient networking.
- Creating stronger bonds. While businesses might be different, challenges will be more similar within a region, creating new perspectives and more relatability.
- Keeping travel costs down.
- Minimising excessive time commitments.