

Sustainability Policy 2026

1. Statement of Intent

The Ocean Conservation Trust (OCT) is committed to improving sustainability across all of its activities. Sustainability is fundamental to its purpose, operations, and role as an Ocean conservation charity, and that environmental stewardship and Ocean literacy are essential to achieving this. The OCT is committed to minimising its environmental impact, complying with all applicable environmental legislation, regulations, and relevant best-practice standards, and continually improving its environmental performance.

As an organisation dedicated to Ocean conservation, the OCT seeks to contribute to a measurable net positive impact for the Ocean, recognising that healthy marine ecosystems are fundamental to climate stability, biodiversity, and human wellbeing. We recognise that environmental responsibility and sustainability are closely connected but distinct: environmental responsibility focuses on understanding and reducing the direct environmental impacts of our activities, while sustainability takes a broader, long-term perspective, considering the environmental, social, and economic consequences of our decisions. The OCT will develop a range of processes to embed sustainability into organisational decision-making, policies, behaviours, and culture, seeking solutions that are environmentally responsible, socially equitable, economically viable. We will work collaboratively with our staff, trustees, partners, suppliers, contractors, visitors, and wider stakeholders to continually improve our performance and support positive change. Through this approach, the OCT aims not only to minimise its environmental footprint, but to use its influence, expertise, and operations to inspire action, strengthen Ocean literacy, and contribute to a healthier, more resilient Ocean for current and future generations.

2. Purpose and Vision

The purpose of the Sustainability Policy (policy) is to provide a framework for achieving and maintaining high standards of environmental and sustainability performance across all OCT activities, contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹. This policy includes the operations of the National Marine Aquarium, the delivery of conservation and restoration programmes, and our wider work in research, advocacy, and public engagement.

As a conservation charity, the OCT is committed to protecting and restoring the natural environment, specifically coastal and Ocean environments. This policy reflects that commitment by setting out how we will manage our environmental responsibilities, reduce our impacts, and embed sustainable practices throughout our operations and how the OCT aligns with the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) sustainability policy.

We recognise that our activities - including aquarium operations, fieldwork, and collaborative partnerships - have both direct and indirect environmental impacts. Through responsible management, staff engagement, and a culture of continual improvement, we are committed to minimising these impacts and enhancing and measuring our positive contribution to environmental sustainability.

Reviewed September 2026

1. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals acting on behalf of, or undertaking activities in the name of, the OCT. Every member of staff, volunteer, contractor, supplier, and partner shares responsibility for the policy and contributing to its delivery. Our policy encompasses:

- Legal and ethical compliance across all activities
- Climate and carbon management, including emissions tracking
- Resource and waste management, including material use and circularity
- Water stewardship in all facilities and fieldwork
- Biodiversity and ecosystem protection within conservation projects and partnerships
- Travel and transport, covering staff and logistics
- Procurement and supply chains, including sourcing and supplier practices
- Digital operations and data sustainability, including IT infrastructure and e-waste
- Environmental risk and emergency preparedness
- People and culture, including training, engagement, and community collaboration
- Monitoring and continuous improvement through performance indicators and reporting
- Adaptation to climate change, resilience and capacity building
- Governance of environmental responsibilities across all levels of the organisation

4. Our Sustainability Commitments

A. Ocean Environmental Stewardship

The OCT are committed to protecting and preserving the health of marine and coastal environments by minimising our environmental impact, supporting sustainable practices, and promoting responsible stewardship of Ocean resources for future generations. We will act as leaders of Ocean environmental stewardship through the promotion of an Ocean literate society, aiming to achieve net-zero carbon emissions, protection of marine and coastal ecosystems, prevention of marine pollution (plastics, chemicals, runoff), support, promote and recover blue carbon ecosystems (e.g. Seagrass) and ensure sustainable water use and quality.

B. Social Responsibility & Inclusion

As part of the OCT's commitment to sustainability, we recognise that social responsibility and inclusion are fundamental to creating positive, lasting impacts for our employees, stakeholders, and communities. We will achieve this through inclusive and accessible engagement with diverse communities, support Ocean literacy and public engagement to the Ocean at all levels, promote equity in access to nature and conservation and ensure fair, safe, and supportive workplaces.

C. Economic Sustainability

The OCT are committed to achieving long-term economic sustainability by managing our resources responsibly, supporting ethical and resilient business practices, and creating lasting value for our stakeholders, communities, and the environment. We will achieve this by ensuring long-term financial resilience, apply whole-life costing in projects, invest in sustainable infrastructure and innovation and support local and sustainable blue economies (e.g. fisheries, tourism).

5. Strategic Pillars

1. Climate & Blue Carbon (Links to SDG 13: Climate Action)

- Monitor and report our carbon footprint annually.
- Utilise science-based targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with the aim of transitioning to a net-zero position by 2050.
- Invest in renewable energy, energy-efficient technologies, and sustainable infrastructure.
- Offset unavoidable emissions through verified blue carbon and Ocean restoration projects where practicable.
- Support and invest in marine nature-based solutions that enhance carbon sequestration and ecosystem resilience.
- Integrate climate-related risks and opportunities into strategic decision-making, financial planning, and capital investment processes.

2. Sustainable Resource Use (Links to SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production)

- Seek to adopt circular economy principles to extend product life and avoid waste.
- Monitor and report on waste reduction performance.
- Apply the “reduce, reuse, recycle” hierarchy across all operations.
- Eliminate single-use plastics wherever feasible.
- Promote responsible waste disposal among staff and visitors.

- Implement digital-first workflows to significantly reduce paper usage (e.g., SharePoint systems)

3. Biodiversity & Ocean Health (Links to SDG 14: Life Below Water)

- Protect and restore:
 - Marine habitats
 - Native marine species
- Avoid companies and activities that are harmful to marine ecosystems
- Promote Ocean Literacy

4. Behaviour Change & Public Engagement (Links to SDG 4: Quality Education)

- Seek to inspire and educate visitors on sustainable lifestyle choices
- Through OCT activities, seek to promote:
 - Sustainable seafood
 - Ocean-friendly consumption
 - Reduced plastic use

5. Ethical Procurement & Supply Chains (Links to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth)

- Source sustainably and responsibly wherever possible
- Avoid doing business with organisations involved in:
 - Unsustainable fishing
 - Marine habitat destruction
 - Products and activities that pollute-the marine environment
- Work with suppliers to improve their sustainability performance

6. Travel & Operations (Links to SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities)

- Seek to reduce emissions from:
 - Staff travel
 - Logistics

7. Partnerships & Leadership (Links to SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals)

- Collaborate with:
 - Conservation organisations
 - Communities
 - Industry
- Share best practice across BIAZA network
- Act as a sector leader in marine sustainability

8. Governance and Accountability (Links to SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)

- The Sustainability Working Group, (chaired by a member of the Senior Management Team) is responsible for the oversight of the policy and reports progress to the board.
- Embed sustainability in:
 - Strategy
 - Business planning
 - Decision-making
 - Staff Objectives

9. Communication and Culture (Links to SDG 4: Quality Education)

- Engage visitors and communities
Provide regular staff training to promote a culture of sustainability leadership

10. Targets, Monitoring and Reporting (Links to SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)

- Set clear, measurable targets (carbon, waste, water, biodiversity) and track performance against such targets
- Publish progress annually

11. Continuous Improvement (Links to SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)

- Review the policy annually
- Adopt new technologies where they can help meet the policy goals
- Pursue certifications (e.g. ISO 14001, Green Tourism) where appropriate

OCT Strategic Pillar	1 NO POVERTY	2 ZERO HUNGER	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	5 GENDER EQUALITY	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	13 CLIMATE ACTION	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	15 LIFE ON LAND	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
1. Climate & Blue Carbon							✓		✓				✓	✓	✓		
2. Sustainable Resource Use	✓	✓				✓						✓	✓	✓			
3. Biodiversity & Ocean Health													✓	✓	✓		
4. Behaviour Change & Public Engagement				✓	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓			
5. Ethical Procurement & Supply Chains								✓				✓	✓	✓			
6. Travel & Operations			✓				✓				✓	✓	✓				
7. Partnerships & Leadership													✓	✓	✓		✓
8. Governance and Accountability											✓				✓	✓	
9. Communication and Culture				✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓				
10. Targets, Monitoring and Reporting											✓				✓	✓	
11. Continuous Improvement								✓			✓	✓					