

SUSTAINABILITY

What is sustainability?

Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends on our natural environment.

The planet's ecosystems are deteriorating so badly and the climate is changing too quickly, because we are consuming far too much. As a population we are already living far beyond the earth's capacity to support us- this is not sustainable.

Sustainability is basically meeting the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet its needs.

To sustain is to create and maintain the conditions, under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations.



The 6 R'S of sustainability

If you find it hard to memorise all of the above, then just think of the '6 R's of Sustainability'.

The 6 Rs are an important checklist. They are used by designers to reduce the environmental impact of products. They can also be used to evaluate the environmental impact of other products. The 6Rs stand for:

RETHINK – is there a better way to solve this problem, that is less damaging to the environment? This R we keep very important and so further in this material it will be involved in other 5Rs.

REDUCE - is it possible to reduce the amount of materials used? This will help to protect

valuable resources.

REFUSE – this means not accepting things, that are not the best option for the environment. For example, is the packaging really needed?

RECYCLE – could recycled materials be used, or is the product made from materials that are easy to recycle?

REUSE – could the product have another use? Could its parts be used in other products? Is this information clearly communicated on the product? This will extend its life.

REPAIR – is the product easy to repair? This will extend its life.