Listing your five most significant sustainability impacts

As a department or team, identifying your most significant sustainability impacts will help you address issues that are specific to your area and will help prioritise the actions you'll take in future. You can use the template on page 2 to record your impacts. Remember that sustainability isn't just environmental – think about the Sustainable Development Goals that cover a breadth of sustainability issues including health and wellbeing, inequalities and communities.

Firstly, start with your **positive impacts**. Perhaps you play an educational function, or your research helps achieve sustainability goals, or you help others with their sustainability improvements, or work with your local community. You may want to think about how you could expand, share, and celebrate these positive impacts further. Think about what your team does on a day-to-day basis – what your core functions are, what products you buy, how you travel etc.

Then think about your biggest **negative impacts**. The impacts could relate to energy use, waste produced, air travel by staff, car travel by visitors, the printing of publications etc.

Positive impacts

Positive Impact	Reason for its significance	Suggestions for ways to share good practice or increase your positive impact
1. Research	Research related to the environment, nature, or sustainability can have a positive impact	Share research outputs on social media or in the press, and promote its environmental impact
2. Digital workflow	Using a digital workflow can avoid many of the less sustainable aspects of wet lab research	Keeping in mind ways to make our digital work as sustainable and efficient as possible
3. Eco-minded data centres	A majority of our work is on the Viking 2 HPC facility, hosted at the eco-minded EcoDataCenter in Sweden	Promoting our more eco-minded HPC work when talking about our research
4. Hybrid working	The nature of our work allows hybrid working, which cuts down on commuting and its associated emissions	Making new group members aware of the ability for hybrid working, providing it is in line with the University's policies
5. Efficient data management	Inefficient data storage or duplicated data can be a significant wastage in terms of resources	Regular data audits and educating our group on best practices in data management and the methods we have in place to mitigate this

Negative impacts

Negative Impact	Reason for its significance	Suggestions for ways to reduce your negative impact
1. Digital carbon footprint	The purely digital workflow we use is a significant source of emissions – from electricity, to the manufacture of electronic devices, and the use of cloud computing resources	Being aware of energy-saving strategies, ways to prolong the life of our devices, and how to properly recycle and/or dispose of our devices. Use of eco-minded data centres and cloud services.
2. Travel	Business-related travel (commuting, or travel to meetings/conferences) is a significant source of emissions, especially when going by car or air travel	Attending meetings virtually, where possible, or using less impactful modes of transport like rail travel. Avoiding commuting through hybrid working, or using public transport when commuting.
3. Personal carbon footprint	The energy we consume in the office through heating and lighting, the food and drink we consume, and other resources we use all have an associated carbon footprint	Being mindful of the use of natural light when possible, appropriate heating and ventilation levels, and consuming responsibly sourced and traded food and drink
4. AI (Artificial Intelligence)	We recognise that AI-related technologies are a significant and growing source of emissions, from electricity to water used for cooling	We make use of these technologies to make our work more efficient, but be mindful of their environmental impacts, and not become reliant upon them
5. Waste	We produce waste on a daily basis – food waste, electronic waste, and more	Keep in mind “reduce, reuse, and recycle”, by reducing our waste was much as possible, reusing what we can, and recycling where possible and in the correct way