

# Telling Your Sustainability Story – The importance of environmental KPIs

By: Dr. Calvin Lakhan  
Waste Wiki @ EUC



# What are environmental KPIs?

- Environmental Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are measurable parameters that track an organization's environmental performance
- KPIs are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the environmental management system and monitor the organization's progress towards its environmental goals.
- Environmental KPIs can help organizations to identify areas of improvement and take corrective actions to reduce environmental impacts

# Examples of Environmental KPIs

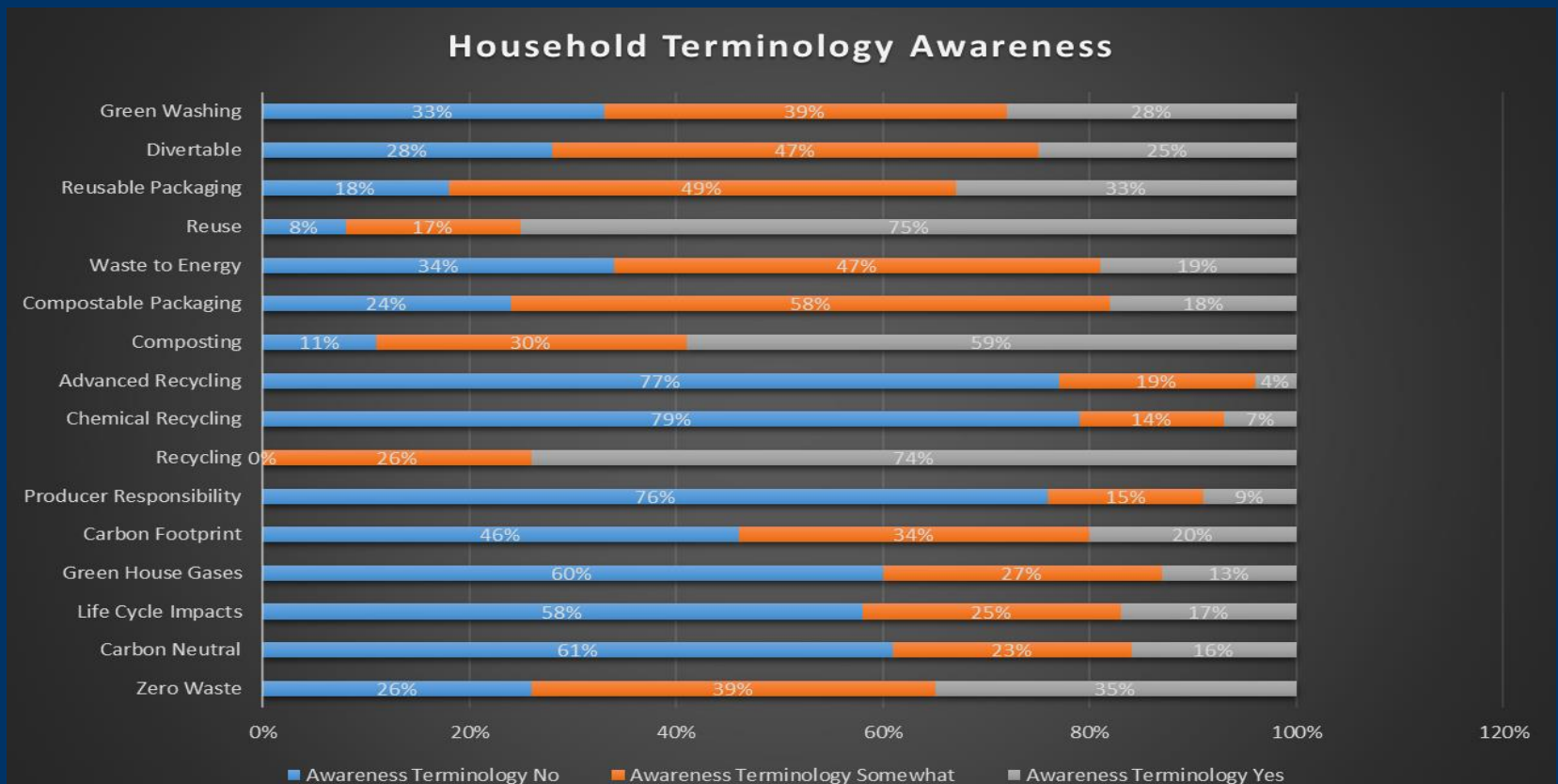
- **Energy consumption:** This KPI measures the amount of energy used by an organization in its operations. It includes electricity, natural gas, fuel oil, and other forms of energy.
- **Greenhouse gas emissions:** This KPI measures the amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted by an organization. GHGs include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases.
- **Water usage:** This KPI measures the amount of water used by an organization in its operations. It includes all types of water, such as freshwater, seawater, and recycled water.
- **Waste generation/diversion:** This KPI measures the amount of waste generated/recycled by an organization in its operations. It includes all types of waste, such as hazardous waste, non-hazardous waste, and recyclable waste.

# Examples of Environmental KPIs Continued

- Biodiversity conservation: This KPI measures an organization's efforts to protect and enhance biodiversity. It includes initiatives such as habitat restoration, conservation of endangered species, and ecosystem management.
- Sustainable procurement: This KPI measures an organization's efforts to source sustainable materials and products. It includes initiatives such as responsible sourcing, eco-labeling, and sustainable supply chain management.
- Environmental compliance: This KPI measures an organization's compliance with environmental regulations and standards. It includes initiatives such as environmental audits, compliance tracking, and reporting.

# Issues with KPIs

- KPIs in and of themselves do not tell a story
- Data points without consideration of context or the intended audience is meaningless



# Telling your sustainability story

**“Telling a sustainability story is all about communicating the positive impact that your organization is having on the environment and society”**

- Identify your sustainability goals: Before you can tell your sustainability story, you need to know what your goals are. Identify the specific sustainability goals your organization is working towards, such as reducing carbon emissions or improving water efficiency. **(Aspirational vs. Realistic Goals)**
- Gather data and metrics: Collect data and metrics that demonstrate progress towards your sustainability goals. Use quantitative measures such as energy savings or waste reduction to demonstrate the impact of your sustainability initiatives **(Measuring Waste Reduction? Attributional vs. Exogenous Change)**

# Telling your sustainability story cont'

- Choose a narrative: Decide on a narrative that will guide your sustainability story. This could be a story about how your organization is reducing its environmental impact, improving the lives of its employees and customers, or contributing to a more sustainable future (**A narrative should be fluid**)
- A picture is worth a thousand words: Use visual aids such as graphs, charts, and infographics to help illustrate your sustainability story. This will make your story more engaging and help your audience understand the impact of your sustainability initiatives.
- Know your audience! There is no universal language of sustainability, and how you should craft your sustainability story will depend on who your intended audience is

# Telling your sustainability story: A practical example

- LCA Waste Audit Worksheet
- Textile KPI Calculator
- Online Tools:
  - <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator#results>
  - <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gases-equivalencies-calculator-calculations-and-references>