



Toolkit - Resources for trainers

# Microproject - SDG Nr. 12

## The 5R strategy (The 5Rs)

### Learning Objectives

- Identify who you are targeting with this initiative in the local community
- Set up cooperation with the local community and local authorities
- Set up an information campaign and target to increase knowledge on sustainable strategies and clean energy initiatives

### Description

In times of dynamic technological progress, when the demand for all kinds of consumer goods is constantly growing, sustainable waste management, both by individuals and enterprises, becomes a major civilization challenge. Recycling plays a major role in the overall waste management process to reduce waste. However, recycling is not everything. The 5R strategy (The 5Rs) which consists of five individual principles (steps) plays a significant role in this challenge.

There are description of the five steps of the 5R strategy:

**REFUSE:** the first element of the 5 R's hierarchy. Learning to refuse waste can take some practice, but incorporating this step into your business' strategy is the most effective way to minimize waste.

**REDUCE:** Learning to the use of harmful, wasteful, and non-recyclable products. Reducing dependency on these kinds of products results in less waste materials ending up in landfill and the associated negative environmental impacts.

**REUSE:** This rule requires you to reuse products you already have. Single-use plastics have created a "throw-away" culture by normalizing consumer behavior of using materials once and then throwing them away. The rate at which we consume plastics has become unimaginable, and the plastic crisis has become one of the world's greatest environmental challenges. In an effort to reduce waste, reuse items throughout the workplace instead of buying new ones.

**REPURPOSE:** For every item that can't be refused, reduced, or reused, it can be try repurposing it. Many people in the green community refer to this method as upcycling.



**RECYCLE:** the last but definitely not least step of the 5Rs. Once you've gone through all of the other R's, recycling is the most environmentally friendly waste disposal method. If the business doesn't already, start collecting cardboard, mixed paper products, commingled materials (plastics, aluminum, glass) and organics. If the business doesn't already, it should start collecting cardboard, mixed paper products, commingled materials (plastics, aluminum, glass) and organics. Most companies are surprised by the amount of waste they reduce by establishing an effective recycling program.

The 5R strategy brings great benefits to the environment and entrepreneurs. Thanks to it, the Earth can become less polluted and most of the products can be recycled or reused.

### Possible roles of the trainees and skills needed

- Discuss with participants their understanding of the 5Rs and how to implement the 5Rs
- Discuss with participants the benefits of putting the 5Rs into practice at business.

<p><b>Theoretical activity</b></p>	<p>Applying the 5 R's to the business' waste management and recycling strategies can positively impact the outcome of the program by significantly reducing the amount of waste business generates. In the 5 R's hierarchy, it should remember that recycling is a last resort after attempting to refuse, reduce, reuse, or replace.</p>
<p><b>Creative activity</b></p>	<p>There are some practical examples of the implementation of the following steps of the 5Rs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>In case of REFUSE step:</u> Discuss with the procurement team in the enterprise about refusing to buy wasteful or non-recyclable products. When working with vendors, refuse unnecessary product packaging and request reusable or returnable containers. Making smarter purchasing decisions and setting standards and expectations early in the process makes it easier for organizations to “refuse” waste in the first place.</li> </ul>



## Creative activity

- In case of REDUCE step: It's recommend always using the minimum amount required to avoid unnecessary waste. For example, when printing a document, print double-sided to cut your waste output in half. Other commonly used items businesses can focus on reducing include single-use plastics, plastic packaging, organic waste, and Styrofoam cups.
- In case of REUSE step: Begin by focusing on one area of your business at a time, like the break room. Replace all of the single-use eating utensils, Styrofoam cups, water bottles, and paper plates with compostable or reusable alternatives. Once you master one area, prioritize reuse for other products in your enterprise like printer cartridges, cardboard boxes, food containers, and rechargeable batteries.
- In case of REPURPOSE step: There are many common office products serve more than one purpose. Sometimes it requires using some creativity, but the possibilities are endless. Try using wasted printer paper for scrap paper, cardboard boxes for storing supplies, binder clips to hold power cords and chargers in place, and even mason jars, coffee mugs, and tin cans for holding pens and pencils. Designate an area of your office as an Upcycle Station for collecting and storing supplies. Encourage your colleagues to add items to the station they no longer need and to check there before purchasing new supplies.
- In case of REPURPOSE step: Discuss with the team what kind of the materials used the company can be recycled. Start developing and establishing with the team an effective recycling program.



<b>Innovation activity</b>	According to the 5 R's, four actions should be taken, if possible, prior to 'recycling': refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, and then recycle. Incorporating the above methodology (5R strategy) into business' waste reduction and recycling efforts will minimize landfill waste and help take the recycling program to the next level.
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### Sustainability

To maintain the sustainability of the 5Rs program implementation in the social enterprise, it is worth to think about:

- The current waste and recycling strategies in the social enterprise
- Which of the 5 steps of the 5Rs strategy the company can focus on and improve them
- On which of the 5 steps of the 5Rs strategy coworkers individually can focus on and improve them

