Garden Workbook:
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Introduction

While public gardens are traditionally cherished for their environmental, aesthetic, and cultural value, they are of significant economic importance as well. Public gardens are valued both by locals and visitors, representing both a significant source of economic growth within the local economy and a major component of the region’s tourism industry. The Local/Regional Economic Health Attribute concentrates on the recurring economic impact that public gardens can have on their surrounding area. Whether through capital projects on site and in their communities that create jobs, partnerships that draw tourists to other environmental and cultural institutions, or collaborations with local businesses in a variety of industries, public gardens generate economic impact annually. Through internal operations, education, and programming, public gardens can also promote plant conservation, decrease air pollution, conserve water and energy, and dispose of waste and materials sustainably to improve human well-being and the environment, and ensure that negative environmental externalities do not destabilize the local economy.

This document lists the goals and key performance indicators that have been identified as standards for gardens to better address this attribute in their policy and practice. Please refer to this document as a workbook for what items gardens should try to prioritize (as it makes sense for your gardens needs).

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The Public Gardens Sustainability Index is intended to share examples of how gardens are contributing to specific SDG goals and to inspire gardens to advance their own garden programs to further the mission of their institution while connecting to local, national, and global sustainability efforts. This Index is a first step guide on how to “get started” with implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from 2015. It aims to help gardens of all sizes and governance models understand the SDG Agenda, to start an inclusive dialogue on SDG implementation, and to prepare SDG-based local or national development strategies (or align existing plans and strategies with the goals).

Despite the fact that the global poverty rate has been halved since 2000, intensified efforts are required to boost the incomes, alleviate the suffering and build the resilience of those individuals still living in extreme poverty.

Public gardens have the opportunity to be more conscious about promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Increasing labor productivity, reducing the unemployment rate, especially for young people, and improving access to financial services and benefits are essential components of sustained and inclusive economic growth.
Progress of SDGs 1 & 8

END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

THE WORLD WAS OFF TRACK TO END POVERTY BY 2030

COVID-19 CAUSES THE FIRST INCREASE IN GLOBAL POVERTY IN DECADES

+71 MILLION PEOPLE ARE PUSHED INTO EXTREME POVERTY IN 2020

$23.6 BILLION DIRECT ECONOMIC LOSSES (FROM 63 COUNTRIES IN 2018)

LOCAL & REGIONAL ECONOMIC HEALTH

YOUNG WORKERS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY AS ADULT WORKERS (2019)

NATURAL DISASTERS EXACERBATE POVERTY
Progress of SDGs 1 & 8

**8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.**

**Before COVID-19**

**Global Economic Growth Was Slowing Down**

- 2.0% GDP per capita growth (2010-2018)
- 1.5% GDP per capita growth (2019)

**COVID-19 Implications**

- The world faces the worst economic recession since the Great Depression
- GDP per capita expected to decline by 4.2% in 2020
- **Tourism is facing unprecedented challenges**

- **International tourist arrivals** with COVID-19 2020 scenarios
  - -950 million
  - +140 million

**COVID-19 could cause the equivalent of 400 million job losses in second quarter of 2020**
Local/Regional Goal 1: Capital investments, marketing, and branding enhance the region’s tourism and draw visitors, creating economic spillover to other cultural institutions and industries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicator (KPI)</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Garden invests social and financial capital to enhance their social standing and increase recognition in their region.</td>
<td>a. Garden invests in print materials with logo and partner logos/branding at local Chamber of Commerce/public forum, garden has staff/volunteer responsible for increasing online presence to better engage community, garden has approached local businesses to establish relationships, garden staff attend in person local/regional events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Garden tracks earned revenue that is redistributed back to the community for the public good.</td>
<td>b. Garden tracks this information or plans to do so in the next year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Garden evaluates visitation in a broader context of other economic drivers in the area.</td>
<td>c. Garden conducts a survey that asks visitors for demographics/geographic information and main reason for visit, or not.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Garden hosts social/cultural events on site. Cultural events are an avenue for understanding the culture of a nation, people, or group through the arts, beliefs, customs, practices, values, and social behaviors.</td>
<td>d. Garden associates with local faith, multi-cultural, holiday, cultural, art-based, environment/plant/food related events.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Suggested Strategies

Cross-promote and collaborate with other cultural institutions, public gardens, and local businesses online and with printed materials for workshops, events, galas, notable speakers, etc., that can provide innovative research and a learning experience that is multi-disciplinary and is relevant to horticulture and conservation practices and enhances the power to attract visitation to your region (Economics.1.a).

Invest in promotional/informational brochures that can be distributed to the local Chamber of Commerce or similar outlets (e.g., Visitor’s Bureau) and in marketing/branding for national campaigns that strengthen commitment to mission and draw attention to local/regional commitment to a national issue (e.g., National Pollinator Garden Network, forest stewardship council) (Economics.1.a).

Conduct an economic impact study that your garden can promote and present to your board and stakeholders using the Association benchmarking platform or through collaboration with a nearby business school. For example, the Dallas Arboretum and Botanic Garden had the Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University complete a study in 2012-2013, which they’ve been able to use to engage new stakeholders. These studies can be completed via consultants or your local university/college to better understand your visitors and what has been effective in getting them to your garden (Economics.1.b).
Local/Regional Goal 1: Capital investments, marketing, and branding enhance the region’s tourism and draw visitors, creating economic spillover to other cultural institutions and industries.

Suggested Strategies Continued

Use IMPLAN or other softwares to model the economic impact from direct expenditures associated with both organizational operations and visitor spending. (Economics.1.b).

Consider collaborating with your local government, a consultant, or other regional gardens to adopt and standardize best practices for surveying visitor motivations. Online and in person survey questions should be constantly revised, distributed, and analyzed regularly based on busiest times of year. This data and information is invaluable to understand the guest experience and what the garden can do differently in the future to improve that experience. Those questions can be tailored to specific programs, events, and demographics so your garden can constantly evaluate what needs to improve (e.g., programs that the community rates highly in terms of career advancement). (Economics.1.c).

Determine through surveys what visitors are spending their money on during their trip to the garden such as: Admission, food on-site, gift shop purchases, plants, a specific garden program, membership, etc. A good economic impact analysis will also include questions on whether the garden was one of several stops on their visit to the area or the only planned destination. Data gleaned from the visitor intercept and member surveys can be utilized to develop an estimate of the proportion of garden visitors that generate new spending in the regional economy and include those visitors who likely would not have come to the region absent the presence of the garden. This is a powerful statement that can be made to board members and future partners and can help establish relationships with the local Chamber of Commerce and Visitor’s Bureau. (Economics.1.c).

To learn more about where they are coming from and what motivated their visit, your garden should collect the following information from visitors:
- Satisfaction level
- Reason for visiting
- If garden was only destination/stop on their trip to the area
- Distance traveled to garden (miles)
- Garden mission awareness level
(Economics.1.c).

Invest in promotional/informational brochures that can be distributed to the local Chamber of Commerce or similar outlets (e.g., Visitor’s Bureau) and in marketing/branding for national campaigns that strengthen commitment to mission and draw attention to local/regional commitment to a national issue (e.g., National Pollinator Garden Network, forest stewardship council). 3) Communicate special interest stories, events, programs, projects. In particular, highlight and promote special guest speakers or renowned figures regionally, nationally, or internationally. (Economics.1.d).

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Local/Regional Goal 1: Capital investments, marketing, and branding enhance the region’s tourism and draw visitors, creating economic spillover to other cultural institutions and industries.

Suggested Strategies Continued

Account for all externalities. A key component of garden management is social responsibility. Your budget should factor in both positive and negative externalities. While initial costs for local materials and labor may be high in investing in proven green infrastructure standards and natural processes as opposed to traditional modes, they can also save your institution money long term and help spur positive local economic growth in environmentally friendly ways. For example, building a green roof with local stakeholders is a good way to both collaborate with local businesses and entities but also adds an attraction site for visitors (Economics.1.b).

Annually track aggregate garden attendance and visitor information. Many gardens are ticketed and can easily define their attendance on an annualized basis. For others, attendance is more challenging to project, either because the gardens are not ticketed or tracked, or because the gardens are a component of a larger institution of attraction such that garden visitation is not separately segmented. In such cases, those gardens should use volunteers at visitor centers, cameras, and technology (electronic or infrared counters in parking lots and trails) to determine visitation numbers (Economics.1.c).

Determine average visitor demographic in survey respondents. For example, “the average age of survey respondents was 45 years old, had at least a bachelor’s degree, and had an annual income of $80,000.” In addition, analyze whether visitors who completed the survey were primarily local to the area. Respondents should be asked if they lived within one hour of the garden. Those who respond “yes” should be considered to be from the region.

Understand whether visitors are from another state or country to analyze percentage of local versus non-local visitors and if there are trends at different times of year.

Another important metric to consider is whether non-local visitors are visiting the region on a day trip or for multiple days. These out of town visitors are particularly relevant from an economic impact standpoint because they bring new dollars into a region (as opposed to local spending that may be shifted from another sector). The majority of overnight visitors may report staying in paid accommodations, which benefits the local hospitality industry. (Economics.1.c).

Invest in promotional/informational brochures that can be distributed to the local Chamber of Commerce or similar outlets (e.g., Visitor’s Bureau) and in marketing/branding for national campaigns that strengthen commitment to mission and draw attention to local/regional commitment to a national issue (e.g., National Pollinator Garden Network, forest stewardship council). (Economics.1.d).
Local/Regional Goal 2: Garden positively influences human behavior and thinking towards conserving natural resources helping spread sustainable practices and infrastructure at corporate and individual levels.

### Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

a. Garden follows best practices for local/regional issues and businesses it chooses to support.

b. Garden includes educational interpretive components on local/regional sourcing.

### Outcomes

a. Garden has internal guidelines or an advocacy policy that guide decision-making for procurement, garden develops sponsorships that align with local/regional supports and recognizes partners, garden forms strategic partnership that support projects that align with mission.

b. Garden has displays/panels that include information about waste management and the reuse of materials/waste like composting, garden has displays/panels on renovated or new buildings that utilize local/regional sourcing for construction/design, garden includes some signage on plant sourcing and native plants community members can grow, garden restaurants or cafes include information on food sourcing.

### Suggested Strategies

Include through various communication channels and on-site via panels, interpretation, or other informational signage the multi-disciplinary role gardens play (positive social, environmental, and economic impacts). List and name local sustainably responsible organizations or entities that the garden collaborates with or partners with. This might include native plant sources at local nurseries that visitors might want to buy from for their own businesses or homes (Economics.2.a).

Promote and use local sustainably certified products and materials that are harvested and extracted in sustainable ways to raise awareness and education about destructive harvesting processes and to control the chain of command for goods and services. This helps improve the local/regional economy by creating more visibility for those products and services. Additionally, advertising and collaborating with for example, landscape architecture companies and other green design and construction companies, can further enhance your mission while benefitting local businesses and services (Economics.2.a).

Spaces of Opportunity, Desert Botanical Garden’s new incubator farm in South Phoenix came to fruition through strategic partnerships with the Roosevelt School District No.66, TigerMountain Foundation, the Orchard Community Learning Center, and Unlimited Potential. It is supported by foundations, health insurance providers, and government agencies such as Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona, ArtPlace America, Cigna, Newman’s Own Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts: Our Town, USDA Local Food Promotion Program, Vitalyst Health Foundation, and Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation.
Local/Regional Goal 3: Garden forms a mutually beneficial relationship with the municipality that positively impacts the local economy through project collaborations, improving the quality of life and environmental benefits for local residents.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

a. Garden collaborates with local/regional external organizations/agencies on issues that are both germane to the garden’s mission and positively impact the local economy such as businesses, foundations, government agencies, or nearby colleges/universities.

Outcomes

a. Garden collaborations work on issues and projects such as: fundraising campaigns/capital investment for programs on or off-site, diverting waste from landfills, green certification programs, sourcing local food, sourcing local building materials, creating jobs, or health concerns in the community.

Suggested Strategies Continued

The garden advocates on behalf of local products, equipment, materials, and food that are affordable and obtainable to diverse demographics (Economics.3.a).

Moore Farms Botanical Garden draws over 8,000 visitors each year through its whimsical designs, educational programming, and southern hospitality. This “very public private garden” has been a powerhouse of change both within the garden gates and beyond, growing new initiatives through community revitalization every day. For a private garden, Moore Farms is no stranger to the public. Beyond the garden gates, Moore Farms’ reach extends throughout nearby Lake City, Ms. Moore’s hometown. Educational programming has been specifically designed to fit into local grade school curricula so that teachers are able to easily coordinate with the garden. Additionally, Moore Farms’ generosity can be seen throughout the community in any number of public landscapes including the Village Green, over 50 containers, and many other pro bono consulting projects completed for local businesses. As a private garden, Moore Farms is able to give back to the community because it directs all monetary returns from events and programs back into other local groups and organizations.

The garden collaborates with local city officials (office of sustainability/environment/energy) and government agencies to fund capital investment projects/programs (ecological design standards and principles, certifications, etc.) (Economics.3.a).

Account for all externalities. A key component of garden management is social responsibility. Your budget should factor in both positive and negative externalities. While initial costs for materials and labor may be high in investing in proven green infrastructure standards and natural processes as opposed to traditional modes, they can also save your institution money long term and help spur positive economic growth in environmentally friendly ways. Research, plan, and then design ways to keep negative externalities such as water pollution run-off on site. For example, building a green roof with local stakeholders is a good way to both collaborate with local businesses and entities but also adds an attraction site for visitors (Economics.3.a).
Local/Regional Goal 4: Garden generates economic impact through professional development and job creation.

### Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

- a. Garden offers and tracks the results of educational training programs.

### Outcomes

- a. Garden offers a variety of training programs for free/reduced cost/or at cost and follows up by tracking participants external job placements, or also gives participants a certificate of completion, or conducts a post-evaluation to improve program.

### Suggested Strategies

#### Make your space available to other agents of positive environmental and social change.

For example, partner with or let other organizations whose mission aligns with yours, use your space for a conference, workshop, or other training and learning opportunities. Mutually beneficial collaborations with K-12 schools, college/university programs, and community organizations can help develop job skills for horticulture professions and generate interest in environmental professions at an early age. Communicate through all relevant channels career advancement opportunities for volunteers and visitors (trainings, workshops, internships, certifications, etc.). Your garden is then directly contributing to reducing unemployment rates in your region (Economics.4.a).

#### Report online through newsletters, e-blasts, magazines, social media platforms, new projects/programs outside your garden walls that are providing jobs and income to local residents and institutions. Spotlight individuals who through programming, volunteer work, or an internship is now a full-time employee either at your garden or another (Climate.3.a).
FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the sustainability index attribute pages for more case studies, resources, and a self-assessment!

Go To: https://www.publicgardens.org/sustainability-index/attributes/localregional-economic-health