

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS NETWORK OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

Results Framework & Strategic Plan

2023-2025



Sustainable Business Network
of Greater Philadelphia

Introduction

Since our founding in 2001, SBN has helped thousands of local independent businesses in the Greater Philadelphia region to build profitable enterprises that serve the community, share wealth, and protect the environment.

Over the past 22+ years, SBN has undergone a significant transition. Several highlights, among others, include:

- Welcoming our new Executive Director, Devi Ramkissoo, in February of 2022 and our new Program and membership Coordinator, Rebecca Nichols Franqui.
- Recognizing Jared Michael Lowe's promotion to Associate Director.
- Celebrating our departing members of SBN's Board of Directors and welcoming in a new and diverse set of Board members.
- Announcing our first-ever recipient of the Triple Bottom Champion award: Bryan Szeliga of Fishtown Seafood.
- Identifying three industries that are making a significant impact on increasing climate resiliency: water, food, and energy.
- Diversifying our programming and events, education, advocacy, and community building opportunities to support businesses' sustainable growth.

Like many organizations, we are still experiencing the reverberations of Covid and have had to navigate significant disruptions to our operating and business model. The last few years have required SBN's leadership to focus on stabilizing SBN during a highly destabilizing time globally.

SBN is ready to chart the course for the next several years. This document is meant to refresh our previous strategic plan in order to guide our work through 2025. This vision is represented visually in our results framework below and will set our path toward our goal, which is ***a just, green and thriving economy for the greater Philadelphia region.***



Our Guiding Values

Underlying our strategic plan is a set of values that animate everything SBN does. They include:

- We believe businesses have the responsibility to positively impact people, planet, and profit, so we hold **sustainability and respect for the Earth** as core to our work.
- Independent and locally owned businesses are at the heart of the economy and **community self-reliance and cooperation** are critical for our survival.
- We stay relevant and sustainable when we honor our commitment to **diversity** when we ensure the full range of our communities' assets, perspectives and voices are represented in our work.
- To have a hopeful future, we must imagine it and maintain **optimism**.
- By operating with **authenticity and accountability** we are able to effectively implement our work and fulfill our mission.
- By being courageous and innovative we will serve as role models of **pioneering leadership** for other businesses and organizations.

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Belonging

SBN has identified Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging as a key priority for our work and while our commitment to DEIB requires on-going work, below are some of the actions we are undertaking in service of this priority.

Adjusting our membership fees to a lower flat fee, with special rates for new and GSI businesses, to be more affordable.

Addressing disparities in financing for minority-owned businesses and creating new funding models to address systemic failures in financing options.

Utilizing our current sector priorities to advance issues affecting communities that have experienced historical exclusion, such as working through our GSI programming to advance climate justice or tackling the issue of food deserts through our food-related programming.

Engaging in active outreach to minority-owned business owners through our partnerships to understand how SBN can best support them.



SBN's Results Framework

We have organized our work in the coming years within a Result Framework, which is:

A visual representation of SBN's strategy and the specific changes we will advance in service of our ultimate goal: Just, Green, Thriving Economy for the Greater Philadelphia Region

Our framework takes into account the following considerations:

- **SBN's current staffing and structures:** Without additional funding, we do not anticipate making any significant changes or additions to the staffing and structures that drive our day-to-day operations.
- **Prioritizing financial sustainability efforts:** Identifying new and recurring sources for funding are critical to SBN's future and a key priority for our organization.
- **This plan focuses on our external facing strategy:** SBN is committed to operational excellence and recognizes that our internal effectiveness drives our performance in the field. While this plan does not directly address our internal effectiveness, our commitment to operating effectively, efficiently, and in line with our values undergirds our strategy.



SBN's Results Framework

WHAT DOES OUR FRAMEWORK INCLUDE?

Goal: Our guiding star and the ultimate change we wish to achieve: Just, Green, Thriving Economy for the Greater Philadelphia Region.

Strategic Objective: Fundamental shifts in the enabling conditions within the triple bottom line ecosystem.

Intermediate Result: Changes in behaviors, systems, policies, and capacity that improves the sustainability of SBN members and key stakeholders.

Outputs: Immediate actions/changes that SBN members and stakeholders can feel and benefit from.

Metrics: Quantifiable measures to assess the depth and breadth of our outputs and targets for the year.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

SBN has identified two strategic objectives that we believe will catalyze key shifts in the enabling conditions within the TBL ecosystem. They are:

1. SBN members have access to the services they need to build profitable enterprises that serve community needs, share wealth, and protect the environment.
2. The enabling environment within the region actively promotes a TBL economy and the sustainability-minded businesses that are a part of it.

These priorities are not weighted or resourced equally across our work, so we anticipate allocating approximately 85% of time, resources and energy to strategic objective 1 and 15% to strategic objective 2

We explore each strategic objective in-depth on the following page.



GOAL: Just, Green, Thriving Economy for the Greater Philadelphia Region

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

SBN members have access to the services they need to build profitable enterprises that serve community needs, share wealth, and protect the environment (85%)

INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

Local and independent businesses' access to necessary financing improved

SBN members' capacity to achieve sustainability goals strengthened

OUTPUTS

Vetted and facilitated introductions to different sources of mission-aligned financing

SBN-developed financing model to support local and independent businesses, with an emphasis on businesses owned by marginalized communities

Networking and peer learning opportunities by marginalized communities

SBN-led trainings on member-identified topics

Access to resources via SBN platform and institutional partnerships

METRICS*

SBN shares vetted financing resources through communication channels and member orientation sessions.

SBN has signed MOUs with vetted, mission-aligned financing options

SBN hosts open houses

Pilot mini grant program in 2023

Explore or offer alternative financing for members, whether grant or MOU.

Embed networking in all SBN 2023 programming
Concept note for peer mentorship program

Years 1-3: Develop 4 workshops & socialize curriculum development w/ aligned partners.

Maintain existing benefits and explore access to additional benefits/resources (i.e. wholesale rates) where SBN secures commission.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

Enabling environment within region actively promotes a TBL economy and the sustainability-minded businesses that are a part of it (15%)

INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

Regulatory agencies and policy makers improve policies for TBL businesses to thrive

SBN members have deepened ability to inform policy decisions

OUTPUTS

SBN community develops a set of high ROI policy

SBN partners with similarly-minded orgs to advance shared policy agenda

SBN members regularly engage with policymakers

Opportunities for SBN members engage in collective action around policy priorities recommendations to improve regulatory environment

METRICS*

Develop community-vetted 2023-2024 policy priorities, inclusive of key policy levers where SBN can exert the most influence and a plan for implementation

Identify what tables/coalitions to join.
Identification of new strategy-aligned coalitions to join or ones to continue

Establish partnership opportunities with coalition members around shared policy recommendations

Quarterly gatherings with SBN members, stakeholders, and policymakers (esp outside of PHL) on member-identified topics.

2023-2024 Policy Agenda includes schedule of activation activities: lobby day, sign on letters; testimony, etc.

*Expanded metrics on following page.



GOAL: Just, Green, Thriving Economy for the Greater Philadelphia Region

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

EXPANDED METRICS

SBN shares vetted financing resources through communication channels and member orientation sessions.

- Share 5-10 opportunities with members per year via digital and in-person communications and events.

SBN has signed MOUs with vetted, mission-aligned financing options

- At least 1 new member benefit per year.

SBN hosts open houses

- 3-4 seasonal open houses
- At least 20% of membership attends open houses

Pilot mini grant program in 2023

- Regrant a minimum of \$1,500 to one member with intent to scale to \$5,000 to one small business in 2024.

Explore or offer alternative financing for members, whether grant or MOU.

- Understand the landscape of options (2023)
- Forge new partnerships (2024)
- Pilot new finance offerings (2025)

Embed networking in all SBN 2023 programming

- Host ~20-24 programs and events per year
- Achieve participation of an average of 15-20% of members throughout year

Concept note for peer mentorship program

- Gather data around member interest (2023)
- Draft and vet concept note with Board and membership (2024)
- Pilot (2025)

Years 1-3: Develop 4 workshops & socialize curriculum development w/ aligned partners.

- Identify partners by 2024
- Develop and vet curriculum by 2025

Year 3+ (next strategic plan)

- Re-launch Social Ventures Institute; or
- SBN & university-affiliated certification program

Maintain existing benefits and explore access to additional benefits/resources (i.e. wholesale rates) where SBN secures commission.

- Secure on-going discounts (point of sales software; Spot On) + (impact reports; Unit Co)
- Add an additional 1-2 ongoing benefits each year

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

EXPANDED METRICS

Develop community-vetted 2023-2024 policy priorities, inclusive of key policy levers where SBN can exert the most influence and a plan for implementation

- Articulate 4 policy priorities
- Develop roadmap toward phases of change
- Positive motion on all policy goals
- SBN members provide input on policy priorities

Identify what tables/coalitions to join.

- Identify tables/coalitions most relevant to our work

Identification of new strategy-aligned coalitions to join or ones to continue

- Establish participation with relevant coalitions based on policy priorities

Establish partnership opportunities with coalition members around shared policy recommendations

- Identify areas of collaboration
- Positive motion on common goals with coalition members through LTEs, sign on letters, joint lobbying efforts, and other relevant means

Quarterly gatherings with SBN members, stakeholders, and policymakers (esp outside of PHL) on member-identified topics.

- Participation by policymakers affiliated w/ policy priorities
- Participation of membership in gatherings
- Positive motion on all policy goals

2023-2024 Policy Agenda includes schedule of activation activities: lobby day, sign on letters; testimony, etc.

- Participation by membership in activation activities
- Positive motion on all policy goals



Assessing Our Impact

Having quantifiable measures to assess the depth and breadth of our outputs is essential to ensuring that we are moving towards our strategic objectives. While the table above outlines key metrics and targets for the year that we will capture to hold us accountable to our objectives, we will also be investing in and exploring additional ways to assess our impact in the coming years. This will include:



Surveying all renewing and expiring members about their experience as members



Continuing to capture qualitative data (such as member testimonies) to capture the less tangible aspects of our impact (i.e. multiplier effect of connections made at networking events, access and use of resources provided through institutional partners, etc.)



Conditions for Success

In order to realize our strategic objectives, we must ensure a sound decision-making process in determining what programming we pursue and how we implement and assess it. We believe the following conditions will best equip us to achieve our ultimate goal.

- We must keep our strategic objectives central to our day-to-day work, while maintaining agility to respond in real time to our members' needs and shifts in the political, economic, and social environment.
- We must implement a blend of sector agnostic and sector-specific programming while also ensuring that we preserve our ability to be relevant to businesses across a variety of sectors across our programming.
- Given our values, desire to maximize impact, and our organizational bandwidth, our approach is to use data to drive our decision-making related to programming and to pilot, learn, build a proof of concept, and adjust our programming as we grow.
- Any decisions we make must be in line with our values, have technical merit, be driven by member needs, and must have a direct connection to our financial health and stability.
- Providing shared services and services via our partnerships with values-aligned peers is a critical strategy to broadening our reach and deepening our offerings to our community.



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