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EcoMinds Trainer's Game Guide



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EcoMinds

“EcoMinds: Enhancing Climate Change Awareness and Solutions among Youth”

Duration: 01/05/2025 - 30/04/2026

Erasmus+ KA210-YOU - Small-scale partnerships in youth

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1. Introduction to EcoMinds

1.1 About the EcoMinds Game

EcoMinds is an educational simulation game developed within the EcoMinds project to help young people explore sustainability through practical decision-making. Rather than presenting environmental sustainability only as theoretical knowledge, the game places players in realistic situations where their choices have environmental, economic and social consequences.

In the game, players take responsibility for managing an office and are challenged to improve its sustainability performance. Throughout the simulation, they make decisions related to key areas such as **energy use, water consumption, waste management and transportation**, while also considering available financial resources and employee wellbeing.

The central challenge of EcoMinds is therefore not simply choosing the most environmentally friendly option. Players must learn to **balance environmental performance, budget constraints and employee morale**, reflecting the types of trade-offs that organisations may face when implementing sustainable practices.

1.2 Why EcoMinds Was Developed

EcoMinds was designed to transform environmental awareness into **active learning and decision-making**. The game provides a safe environment in which players can experiment with different choices, observe their consequences and reconsider their strategies without real-world risks.

Through this approach, EcoMinds aims to help participants understand that sustainability depends not only on awareness of environmental problems but also on the ability to:

- identify practical environmental actions;
- compare alternative solutions;
- understand the consequences of different choices;
- manage limited resources;
- recognise short- and long-term impacts;
- balance environmental, economic and social considerations; and
- connect individual and organisational decisions with wider sustainability objectives.

The game therefore supports the development of competences such as **critical thinking, problem solving, strategic decision-making, system thinking and environmental responsibility**.

1.3 Who Is the Game For?

EcoMinds is primarily designed for **young people aged 16–30**, including young people with fewer opportunities, in line with the target groups of the EcoMinds project. It can also be used by **youth workers, educators, trainers and other professionals working with young people** as a non-formal learning resource for environmental and sustainability education.



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The game can be used:

- individually for **self-directed learning**;
- in pairs or small groups;
- as part of a facilitated workshop or training course;
- as an introduction to environmental and sustainability topics; or
- as a practical activity supporting discussions about sustainable workplaces, green skills and responsible decision-making.

Importantly, the game is designed so that participants can also play **independently without the continuous presence of a trainer**. For this reason, this guide includes step-by-step instructions, explanations of the game screens, buttons and indicators, examples and troubleshooting guidance.

1.4 Purpose of This Guide

The **EcoMinds Trainer's Game Guide** has two complementary purposes.

First, it serves as a **practical game manual**, providing players and trainers with the information required to understand and use EcoMinds. The following sections explain the game interface, buttons and indicators, gameplay process, tasks, upgrades and the decisions players encounter during the simulation.

Second, it serves as an **educational and facilitation toolkit** for trainers, educators and youth workers. It provides methods for integrating EcoMinds into learning activities, adapting its use to different target groups, supporting accessibility and inclusion, facilitating reflection and evaluating learning outcomes.

The guide also contains practical assessment resources, including **pre- and post-test tools, an evaluation rubric and a trainer observation form**, enabling trainers to assess participants' learning, engagement and development of sustainability-related competences.

Ultimately, EcoMinds is intended not simply to teach players **what sustainability means**, but to encourage them to experience the challenges of **making sustainable decisions in practice**.





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2. Learning Objectives

EcoMinds uses simulation-based learning to help participants develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to understand and respond to environmental challenges. By managing a virtual workplace, players are encouraged to consider how everyday organisational decisions can influence **environmental performance, financial resources and employee wellbeing**.

The learning objectives are organised around three dimensions: **knowledge, skills and attitudes**.

2.1 Knowledge and Understanding

By completing the EcoMinds game and related learning activities, participants should be able to:

- understand how everyday workplace activities can affect the environment;
- identify environmental impacts associated with **energy use, water consumption, waste management and transportation**;
- recognise practical measures that organisations and individuals can take to reduce their environmental footprint;
- understand the importance of resource efficiency and responsible consumption;
- recognise the relationship between environmental sustainability, economic considerations and employee wellbeing;
- understand that sustainability measures may produce both **short-term and long-term effects**;
- recognise that environmental challenges often require a combination of individual action, organisational measures and broader policy responses.

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2.2 Skills Development

Through gameplay and reflection, participants are expected to develop and practise:

- **Decision-making** – selecting between different courses of action while considering their possible consequences.
- **Critical thinking** – examining available options rather than automatically selecting the most obvious solution.
- **Problem solving** – responding to environmental and organisational challenges presented during the game.
- **Systems thinking** – recognising that changes in one area may affect other aspects of an organisation.
- **Resource management** – making decisions within financial and operational constraints.
- **Strategic thinking** – balancing immediate needs with longer-term sustainability objectives.



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- **Prioritisation** – deciding which environmental interventions should be implemented when resources are limited.
- **Reflection** – reviewing the consequences of previous decisions and adapting future choices accordingly.

2.3 Attitudes and Environmental Responsibility

EcoMinds also aims to encourage participants to:

- develop a stronger sense of **environmental responsibility**;
- recognise that individual and collective actions can contribute to environmental improvement;
- become more willing to consider sustainability when making everyday decisions;
- appreciate the importance of responsible use of natural and organisational resources;
- understand the value of cooperation and shared responsibility in addressing environmental challenges;
- become more open to changing behaviours and practices when more sustainable alternatives are available.

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2.4 Learning Through Decision-Making

A central learning objective of EcoMinds is to demonstrate that sustainable decision-making often involves **trade-offs**.

Players are not simply asked to identify the environmentally preferable option. They must consider several dimensions simultaneously:

Environmental performance – How will the decision affect energy, water, waste, transportation or the overall environmental performance of the workplace?

Economic impact – Can the organisation afford the intervention, and how should limited resources be allocated?

Social impact – How might the decision affect employees and workplace morale?

Through repeated decisions and feedback from the game, participants can observe that a solution which performs well in one dimension may create challenges in another. This encourages a more realistic understanding of sustainability as a process of **balancing environmental, economic and social considerations**.

2.5 Expected Learning Outcomes

After completing the EcoMinds learning experience, participants should be able to:

1. **Identify** key environmental impacts associated with workplace activities.
2. **Recognise** practical measures for improving environmental performance.



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3. **Compare** different sustainability options and their potential consequences.
4. **Explain** how environmental, economic and social factors can interact in decision-making.
5. **Prioritise** sustainability measures when resources are limited.
6. **Evaluate** the results of their decisions and adjust their strategy accordingly.
7. **Apply** lessons from the simulation to environmental decisions in real workplaces and everyday life.
8. **Reflect** on their own role in contributing to more sustainable practices.

These learning outcomes also provide the basis for the **pre-test, post-test, evaluation rubric and trainer observation form** presented later in this guide, allowing the learning experience to be assessed in a structured and measurable way.





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3. Getting Started

This section provides the basic information needed to prepare for and start using the EcoMinds game. EcoMinds can be played **individually or as part of a facilitated learning activity**. Before beginning, trainers and participants should ensure that the game is accessible and that they understand its basic objective.

3.1 What You Need

To play EcoMinds, participants need:

- a compatible **smartphone or tablet**;
- the EcoMinds game installed on the device;
- sufficient battery power for the duration of the activity;
- an internet connection where required for installation or game functionality; and
- approximately **30–40 minutes** for gameplay when used as part of a training session.

No previous gaming experience or specialised knowledge of sustainability is required. The game is designed to introduce its sustainability challenges through gameplay and decision-making.

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3.2 Accessing the Game

EcoMinds is available as a mobile application. Before a training session, trainers should ensure that participants have sufficient time to install and open the game.

Recommended preparation:

1. Install EcoMinds on the device.
2. Open the application and ensure that it starts correctly.
3. Check that the game interface is displayed properly.
4. Make sure the device has sufficient battery power.
5. If playing in a training environment, complete these checks before the scheduled session to minimise delays.

Download the EcoMinds Mobile Game

Android:

[Download EcoMinds for Android](#)

iOS:

[Download EcoMinds from the Apple App Store](#)



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For trainers: Play the game at least once before facilitating a session. This will help you become familiar with the game flow, indicators, events, tasks and upgrades before supporting participants. This recommendation is also included in the existing Trainer Guide.

3.3 Before Starting the Game

Before participants begin, introduce the central challenge of EcoMinds.

In the game, the player takes the role of a **company/office manager** responsible for making decisions that influence the sustainability and operation of the workplace. The player needs to consider three interconnected dimensions:

- **Environmental impact**
- **Employee morale**
- **Financial resources**

The objective is not simply to spend as little money as possible or always select the option that appears most environmentally friendly. Successful gameplay requires participants to consider the **trade-offs between environmental, social and economic priorities**.

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3.4 Understanding the Basic Game Flow

According to the current game structure, one complete game lasts **five weeks (rounds)**. Each week follows three main phases:

1. Event Phase → 2. Planning Phase → 3. End-of-Week Results

During the **Event Phase**, a situation is presented and the player must decide how to respond.

During the **Planning Phase**, the player decides how to use the available actions, including short-term tasks and longer-term upgrades.

At the **End of the Week**, the game calculates the results of the player's decisions. The player can then observe changes in environmental performance, employee morale and available resources before continuing to the next week.

The same process is repeated until the five-week simulation is completed or a game-over condition is reached.

3.5 Playing Individually

EcoMinds can be used for **self-directed learning** without continuous trainer supervision.

When playing independently, participants should:

1. Read each event carefully before selecting an option.
2. Check the main indicators before making a decision.



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3. Consider both the immediate and potential longer-term consequences.
4. Review the available tasks and upgrades.
5. Use available actions strategically.
6. Observe how the indicators change at the end of each week.
7. Reflect on which decisions produced positive or negative consequences.
8. Adjust the strategy for the following week.

Participants should avoid rushing through the game. The educational value comes from considering **why one option might be preferable to another and what consequences each decision may create.**

3.6 Playing in Pairs or Small Groups

EcoMinds can also be played collaboratively. In this format, participants should discuss each major decision before selecting an option.

The trainer can ask groups to reach agreement by considering three questions:

What will this decision do to our environmental performance?

Can we afford it?

How could it affect our employees?

Group play can be particularly useful for developing communication, negotiation and collaborative decision-making skills.

3.7 Trainer Preparation Checklist

Before using EcoMinds in a training activity, trainers should check the following:

- ☐ I have played EcoMinds at least once.
- ☐ The game has been tested on the devices that will be used.
- ☐ Participants have access to the game.
- ☐ Devices are charged and ready.
- ☐ I understand the basic game flow.
- ☐ I am familiar with the main indicators.
- ☐ I have reviewed the learning objectives.
- ☐ I have prepared the pre-test, if it will be used.
- ☐ I have selected appropriate reflection/debriefing questions.
- ☐ I have prepared an alternative arrangement for participants who require additional support or do not have access to an individual device.





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4. Game Interface: Buttons, Icons and Indicators

The EcoMinds interface provides players with the information they need to manage their virtual workplace and make sustainability-related decisions. Understanding the main screens, buttons and indicators before starting makes it easier to play independently and to interpret the consequences of each decision.

4.1 Main Game Screen



The main game screen provides an overview of the player's current situation. Before making decisions, players should check the information displayed on this screen, particularly their environmental performance, employee morale, available budget and current stage of the game.

1. Environmental Impact / K Score



The K Score represents the overall environmental performance of the workplace. It is influenced by four main environmental areas:

- Energy
- Water
- Waste
- Transport

Lower K Score values indicate better environmental performance. Players should therefore consider how their decisions can reduce environmental impact over the course of the game.

Each week, K Score gets lower, so players need to keep up with the K score. The table below shows the K score for each week:



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Week No.	K Score
1	145
2	136
3	128
4	118
5	108

Players can keep track of the K score by checking the icon for it on the game screen. If one would like to do the math, K Score formula is as follows:

$$K = E + (0.5 \times W) + (1.2 \times Wa) + T$$

2. Employee Morale



This indicator shows the wellbeing and morale of employees. Decisions that negatively affect employees may reduce morale and can influence gameplay.

Players should avoid focusing exclusively on environmental performance or financial savings. Sustainable organisational decisions should also consider their effects on people.

Important: According to the current game rules documented in this guide, if employee morale falls below 40, the game ends.

3. Budget



The budget represents the financial resources available to the player. It is particularly important when purchasing upgrades.

Before selecting an upgrade, players should check whether they have sufficient resources and consider whether spending money immediately is preferable to saving resources for later stages of the game.

4. Available Actions



During the Planning Phase, players have a limited number of actions available. Players receive **two actions per week**, which can be used for upgrades or tasks.

Player Tip: Before taking an action, check all your indicators. A decision that improves one area may create a disadvantage in another.

5. Week / Round



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The game takes place over **five weeks (rounds)**. The week indicator helps players understand their progress through the simulation.

6. Settings



This button will take you to the settings page where you can adjust the sound, change app language, access game instructions through “How to play”, rewatch the intro video and exit the game.

7. Metrics



The player is expected to lower the points of Energy (E), Water (W), Waste (Wa) and Transport (T) as much as possible.

Metrics are affected by three main decision-making processes: Updates, Tasks and Events,.

8. Quick Actions



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Upgrades and Tasks are located on the main screen for easier access. Further detail is provided under the heading 5.4 Step 4 – Enter the Planning Phase.

4.2 Event Screen



At the beginning of each week, an event or situation is presented to the player. The player must review the situation and choose between the available responses.

① Event description

Read the situation carefully. The event presents a workplace challenge that requires a decision.

② Available options



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The player is presented with **two options** and must select one.

③ Selection button

Tap the preferred option to make the decision and continue.

Different choices may lead to different consequences for the workplace.

Before selecting an option, consider:

What could happen to the environmental indicators?

Could this decision affect employee morale?

What could be the financial consequence?

Is this decision beneficial only in the short term, or could it also have longer-term effects?

4.2.1 List of the Events and their effects

The events and their effects on the metrics are given in the table below.

Excessive Overtime		
Options	Impact 1	Impact 2
A) Continue Overtime	Transport -5%	Morale -6
B) Limit Overtime	Morale +3	Energy +8%
Heatwave		
Options	Impact 1	Impact 2
A) Turn on the air conditioning	Energy +8%	Morale +3
B) Activate saving mode	Energy -4%	Morale -4
Transportation Crisis		
Options	Impact 1	Impact 2
A) Allow private car use	Transport +10	Morale +3
B) Encourage public transportation	Transport -5	Morale +3
Environment Week		
Options	Impact 1	Impact 2
A) Run awareness campaign	Waste -5%	Morale -3
B) Do nothing	Morale +3	Energy +8%





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4.3 Planning Screen



After responding to the week's event, the player enters the **Planning Phase**.

This is where the player decides how to use the available actions and can choose between **Tasks** and **Upgrades**.

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4.3.1 Tasks



Tasks represent short-term operational measures:

- tasks do not require budget expenditure;
- their effect lasts for one week;



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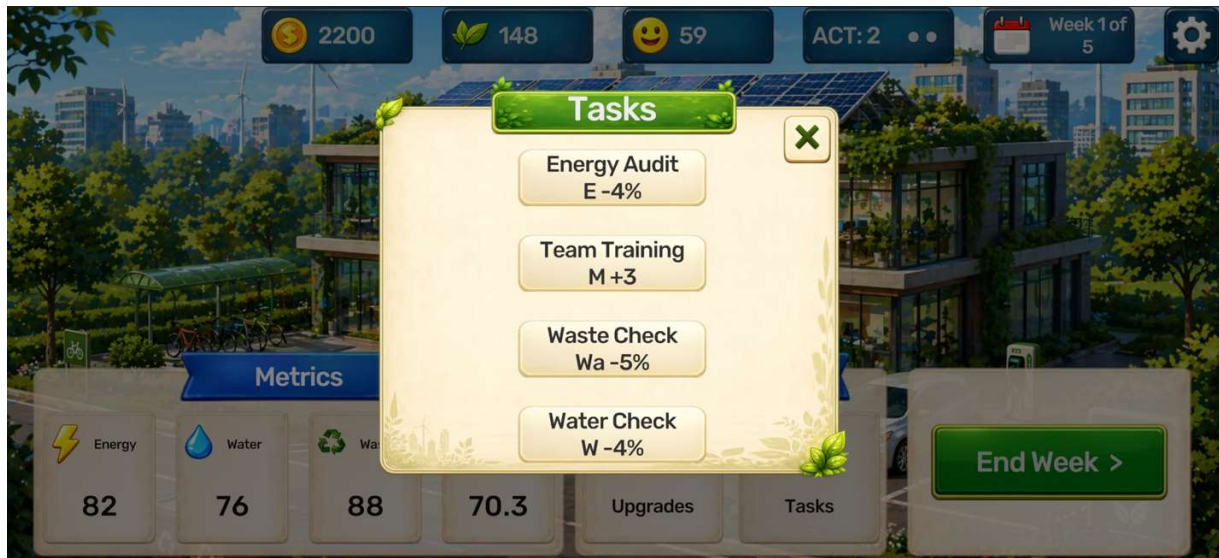
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- two tasks correspond to one action.



Before selecting a task, consider whether it addresses an immediate problem and how it may influence the week's environmental performance.

4.3.1.1 List of Tasks and their effects

Tasks only affect the week during which they are selected. Do not forget that one action point equals two tasks.

Task Name	Impact
Energy Audit	Energy -4%
Team Training	Morale +3
Waste Check	Waste -5%
Water Check	Water -4%

4.3.2 Upgrades



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Upgrades represent longer-term investments in workplace sustainability:

- upgrades require financial resources;
- they have a permanent effect;
- they produce stronger long-term impacts.

Before purchasing an upgrade, check:

Cost → Expected effect → Available budget → Remaining weeks

Strategy Tip: Tasks can help address immediate needs, while upgrades can create longer-term improvements. Effective gameplay requires balancing both approaches.





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4.4 Environmental Indicators



EcoMinds tracks environmental performance across four operational areas:

-  **Energy** – represents the environmental impact associated with workplace energy use.
-  **Water** – represents the impact associated with water consumption.
-  **Waste** – represents the impact associated with waste generation and management.
-  **Transport** – represents the impact associated with transportation.

The player's choices, tasks and upgrades can influence these areas and consequently affect overall environmental performance.

Important: The different environmental factors do not necessarily have the same influence on the K Score. Players should therefore consider the combined effect of their decisions across Energy, Water, Waste and Transport rather than assuming that all factors contribute equally.

4.4.1 Upgrade lists and their effects on environmental indicators

Each upgrade has an impact on at least one metric. All upgrades are categorized and their effects are given below:

Metric	Upgrade	Cost	Impact on				Morale
			Energy	Water	Waste	Transport	
Energy	Smart Plug	600	-5	-	-	-	-
	Smart Thermostat	1000	-8	-	-	-	+2



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	Led	500	-5	-	-	-	+1
	Solar Panel	1800	-12	-	-	-	-
	Timer Air Conditioner	1100	-8	-3	-	-	-
Water	Grey Water Mini System	1200	-	-8	-	-	-
	Aerator & Sensor	500	-	-5	-	-	-
Waste	Separation Station	1000	-	-	-8	-	-
Transport	Bike Incentive Programme	900	-	-	-	-8	+2
	Public Transport Support	1100	-	-	-	-10	-
	EV Charging Stations	2000	-	-	-	-12	+2

4.5 Tasks and Upgrades: Temporary vs Permanent Effects

One of the most important distinctions in EcoMinds is between **Tasks** and **Upgrades**.

Feature	Tasks	Upgrades
Purpose	Short-term operational intervention	Longer-term improvement
Budget cost	No budget cost according to current guide	Requires budget
Duration	One week	Permanent
Action use	2 tasks = 1 action	1 upgrade = 1 action
Strategic role	Address immediate needs	Create longer-term benefits

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This distinction encourages players to consider **short-term versus long-term decision-making**.

4.6 End-of-Week Results Screen



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At the end of each week, the game calculates the consequences of the player's decisions automatically.

Use this screen to examine what changed during the week.

Players should review:

- ① **Environmental performance** – Did the environmental impact improve or worsen?
- ② **Employee morale** – How did the decisions affect employees?
- ③ **Your reward** – How much money are you awarded?
- ④ **Overall result / K score** – Did the selected strategy produce the expected outcome?

Do not immediately continue to the next week. Take a few moments to consider:

What changed? Why did it change? Which of my decisions probably caused this result? What should I do differently next week?

This short reflection is an important part of the learning process.

4.7 Understanding Buttons and Icons

Button / Icon	Name	What it means	What the player should do
	Budget	Available financial resources	Check before purchasing an upgrade
	Morale	Employee wellbeing	Avoid allowing morale to fall too low
	K Score	Overall environmental impact	Aim to improve environmental performance
	Energy	Energy-related environmental impact	Monitor changes after decisions
	Water	Water-related environmental impact	Monitor changes after decisions
	Waste	Waste-related environmental impact	Monitor changes after decisions
	Transport	Transport-related environmental impact	Monitor changes after decisions
	Tasks	Opens available short-term actions	Select appropriate temporary measures
	Upgrades	Opens available long-term investments	Compare cost and expected effect



End Week

Moves to the next stage

Use after reviewing the current
screen

4.8 Quick Reference Table

Indicator Resource	What it represents	Player objective
K Score	Overall environmental performance	Keep/reduce it as effectively as possible; lower is better
Energy	Energy-related environmental impact	Improve through appropriate decisions
Water	Water-related environmental impact	Improve through appropriate decisions
Waste	Waste-related environmental impact	Improve through appropriate decisions
Transport	Transport-related environmental impact	Improve through appropriate decisions
Employee Morale	Employee wellbeing/social impact	Maintain it; avoid falling below the game-over threshold
Budget	Available financial resources	Spend strategically
Actions	Number of interventions available	Prioritise carefully
Week	Progress through the simulation	Adapt strategy according to remaining time

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4.9 The Three Indicators to Check Before Every Decision

To make the game easier to play without an instructor, the guide can include a highlighted reminder:

Before making a decision, remember:



ENVIRONMENT

Will this choice improve or worsen environmental performance?



PEOPLE



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How could it affect employee morale?

BUDGET

Can the organisation afford it, and is this the best use of available resources?

A successful EcoMinds strategy considers all three.





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5. How to Play EcoMinds – Step by Step

This section explains the complete EcoMinds gameplay process in a simple sequence so that participants can play the game independently, even without continuous trainer support.

One complete game lasts **five weeks (rounds)**. Each week follows the same basic cycle:

Event → Decision → Planning → Tasks/Upgrades → End-of-Week Results → Next Week

5.1 Step 1 – Start the Game

Open EcoMinds on your mobile device, complete the tutorial and begin a new game.



Before continuing, make sure you understand the main objective:

Manage the workplace for five weeks while balancing environmental performance, employee morale and available budget.

If the game provides a tutorial or introductory screen, read it before starting.

5.2 Step 2 – Read the Weekly Event

Each week begins with an **Event Phase**.

A workplace situation appears on the screen.



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Read the event carefully before making a decision. The event may present an environmental, organisational or financial challenge.

Before you select one, ask yourself:

- What is the main problem?
- Which indicators could be affected?
- Is there an immediate risk?
- Could the decision have longer-term consequences?

5.3 Step 3 – Check Your Situation

At the beginning of the game, review the main indicators shown on the screen.



Check:



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- **Environmental/K Score**
- **Employee Morale**
- **Budget**
- **Current Week**
- **Available Actions**

These indicators help you understand your current situation and should be reviewed before making important decisions.

Tip: Do not focus on only one indicator. A strong EcoMinds strategy considers the environment, employees and finances together.

5.4 Step 4 – Enter the Planning Phase

After the event decision, the game moves to the **Planning Phase**.

During this phase, you decide how to use your available actions.

According to the current game structure, each week provides **two actions**.

You can use these actions for:

- **Upgrades** – longer-term investments;
- **Tasks** – short-term operational measures.

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Before selecting anything, check your budget and think about which area needs the most attention.

5.5 Step 5 – Decide Whether to Use Tasks

Tasks are short-term measures that help manage immediate problems.

According to the current game guide:

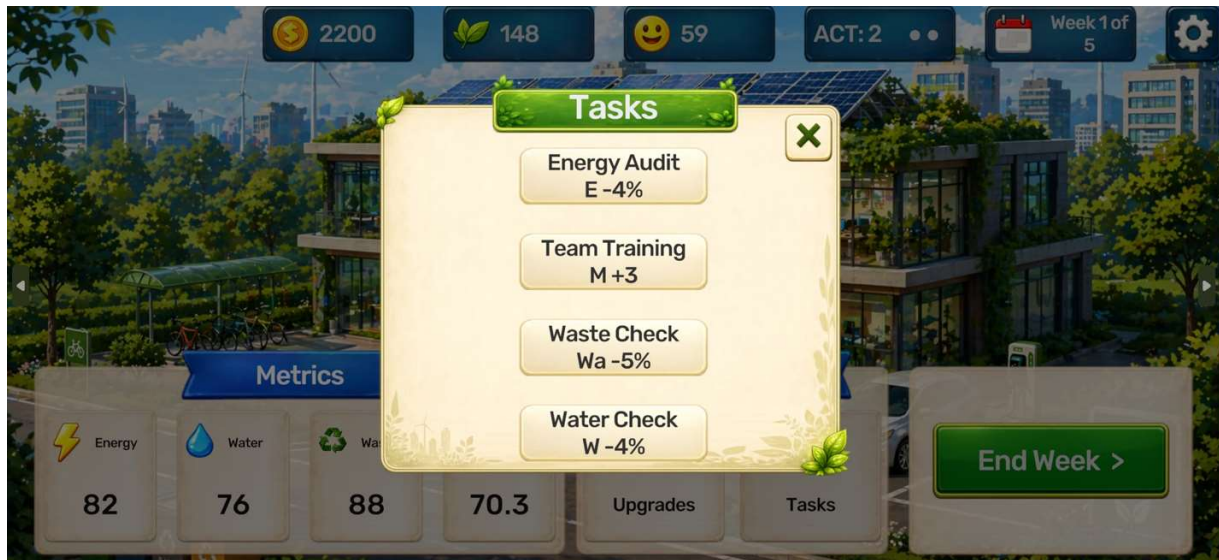
- tasks are free;



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- their effects last for one week;
- **two tasks use one action.**



To select tasks:

1. Open the **Tasks** section.
2. Review the available options.
3. Read the effect of each task.
4. Select the task or tasks that best support your strategy.
5. Check how many actions remain.

Tasks can be particularly useful when:

- your budget is limited;
- you need an immediate improvement;
- you want to respond to a short-term problem;
- you want to preserve financial resources for a later upgrade.

Strategy Tip: Tasks can help stabilise a difficult situation, but their effects are temporary.

5.6 Step 6 – Decide Whether to Purchase an Upgrade

Upgrades represent longer-term sustainability investments:

- upgrades require budget;
- their effects are permanent;
- they can create stronger long-term improvements.

Before purchasing an upgrade:

1. Review the available upgrades.
2. Check the **cost**.



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3. Check the expected **effect**.
4. Compare the cost with your available budget.
5. Consider how many weeks remain in the game.
6. Select the upgrade if it fits your strategy.

Strategy Tip: *An expensive upgrade may reduce your available budget now but provide benefits over several weeks. Consider the long-term value of the investment.*

The full **Upgrade Cost and Effect Table** is provided above in this guide.

5.7 Step 7 – Use Your Available Actions Strategically

You do not need to use the same strategy every week.

Depending on the situation, you may choose to:

- prioritise a long-term upgrade;
- use temporary tasks to address an immediate issue;
- combine short-term and long-term measures;
- conserve budget for later weeks.

The important question is not:

“Which option gives the biggest immediate improvement?”

but rather:

“Which combination of decisions gives me the strongest overall strategy across the five-week game?”

5.8 Step 8 – Complete the Week

When you have finished selecting your planning actions, continue to the **End-of-Week Results**.





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The game calculates the effects of:

- the weekly event decision;
- selected tasks;
- purchased upgrades;
- other game conditions.

5.9 Step 9 – Review the End-of-Week Results

At the end of the week, review how your situation has changed.



Compare your current indicators with the previous week:

- Did the environmental/K Score improve?



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- Did employee morale rise or fall?
- How much budget remains?
- Did your chosen strategy produce the expected result?

Take a moment before continuing.

Ask yourself:

Which decision had the greatest effect this week?

Was the result what I expected?

What should I change next week?

This reflection helps you improve your strategy as the game progresses.

5.10 Step 10 – Continue to the Next Week

After reviewing the results, continue to the next week.

The same gameplay cycle begins again:

Event → Decision → Planning → Tasks/Upgrades → Results

Use what you learned from the previous week when making your next decisions.

As the game progresses, pay attention to:

- cumulative environmental effects;
- remaining financial resources;
- employee morale;
- whether earlier upgrades are producing benefits;
- how much time remains before Week 5.

5.11 Step 11– Complete All Five Weeks

The aim is to successfully manage the workplace through all **five weeks**.

According to the existing game guide, the player successfully completes the game by reaching the end of Week 5.

However,

- employee morale must also be protected. If morale falls below **40**, the game ends,
- if the K score is higher than the target for 2 weeks, the game ends.

This means that environmental improvement cannot be pursued without considering its social consequences.

5.12 Quick Gameplay Summary

For participants who need a quick reminder:

1. Read the event & Choose a response

↓

2. Check your status



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↓

3. Enter the Planning Phase

↓

4. Select tasks and/or upgrades

↓

5. Complete the week

↓

6. Review the results

↓

7. Adjust your strategy

↓

8. Repeat until Week 5

5.13 If You Are Playing Without a Trainer

If you are using EcoMinds independently:

- take time to read every event and option;
- use this guide whenever a button or indicator is unclear;
- check the **Upgrade Cost and Effect Table** and **Task Impact Table** before choosing;
- review the end-of-week results rather than immediately continuing;
- if the game does not behave as expected, consult the **Troubleshooting** section;
- use the **FAQ** section for common gameplay questions.

The objective is not simply to finish the game as quickly as possible. The learning comes from understanding **why your decisions produce particular environmental, financial and social consequences**.

Key Learning Point

EcoMinds is not about maximising one indicator. Effective gameplay requires players to manage interconnected environmental, social, financial and time-related factors. Decisions should therefore be evaluated according to their overall consequences rather than their effect on a single score.





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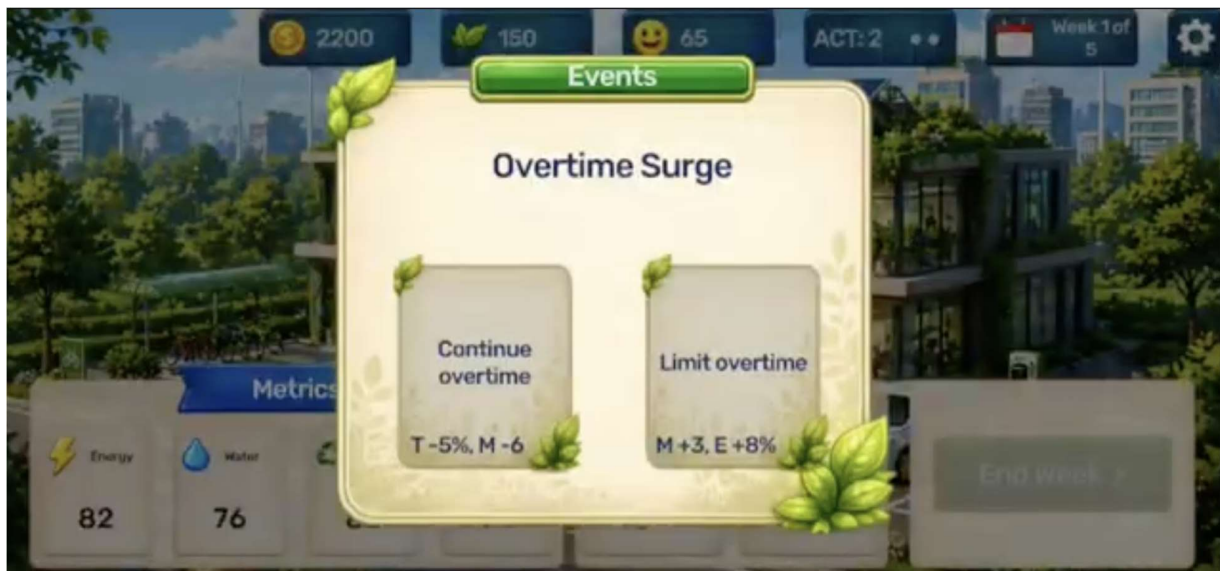


6. Example: One Complete Game Week

This section provides a practical example of how one week in EcoMinds can be played. Its purpose is to help participants understand the sequence of actions and the reasoning process they should follow when making decisions.

This section provides a practical example of how one complete week in EcoMinds can be played. It demonstrates the sequence of actions and the decision-making process players can follow when responding to an event, planning their actions and reviewing the results.

Let's start.



We're trying to lower the environmental impact as much as possible. Let's explore the options together.

We see that employee morale is high (at 65), so it can handle the -6 points if we select "Continue overtime". It also lowers transport impact by -5%.

On the other hand, if we select "Limit overtime" option, our employees will be happier by +3. However, the energy costs will go up by +8%, which could lead to failure in the long run.

So we select "Continue Overtime" option and lower Transport by 5%, and Morale by -6. We choose to make our employees happier some other time.





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We have 2200 coins, a K score of 148, personnel morale is at 59. We have two action points.

Our goal is to lower the environmental impact as much as possible. We can end the week here and still be close to the targeted K score. We can also purchase some upgrades or do some tasks and get a lower K score, which would grant us with more coins at the end of the week. Let's do some upgrades.

We click on upgrades.



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We could lower the Energy by -8, and increase the personnel morale by +2 points if we purchase a Smart Thermostat for 1000 coins. We will use one Action Point for this purchase.

Let's click buy, and see how it affects our status.



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We now have 1200 coins, a K score of 144, personnel morale is at 61.

We have one action point left.

Let's choose not to spend any more coins.

We can choose not to use our last action point and end the week here, or we can do some tasks, which will lower the K score even further, but the effect will only last for this week.

Let's click on Tasks and select two tasks to complete for this week.

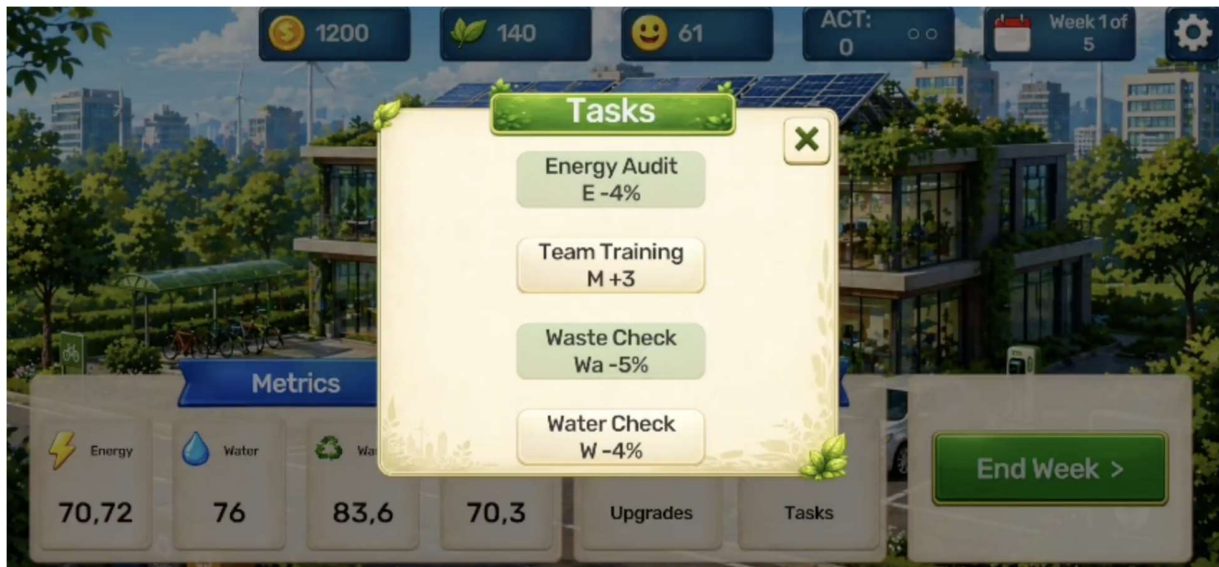


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We selected Energy Audit and Waste Check. Now let's see how these affected our status.



Our K Score is 140. Under metrics, Energy has gone down from 74 to 70,72 and Waste has gone down from 88 to 83,6.

We have no more action points left. Let's end the week here and see how we did.



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Since our K score is below the target, we received +300 coins. This means we now have 1500 coins to spend on upgrades for the following 4 weeks.

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Whether we choose to spend it all at once, spend it carefully or not buying any upgrades next week is our decision to make.

Do not forget, each decision has a consequence. Good luck!



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7. How to Use EcoMinds in Training

EcoMinds can be used as a **non-formal learning activity** to introduce and explore environmental sustainability, green skills and responsible decision-making. The game can be integrated into workshops, youth activities, training courses or other educational settings and can be played individually, in pairs or in small groups.

The role of the trainer is not to tell participants which decisions to make, but to **facilitate the learning process**, encourage participants to explain their choices and help them connect their experiences in the game with real-life sustainability challenges.

7.1 Recommended Training Structure

A complete EcoMinds learning activity can be organised in three phases:

Phase	Suggested duration	Purpose
1. Introduction and preparation	10–15 min	Introduce sustainability concepts and explain the activity
2. EcoMinds gameplay	30–40 min	Experience sustainability decision-making through the simulation
3. Reflection and debriefing	20–30 min	Analyse decisions and connect gameplay with real-life situations

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The duration can be adapted according to the characteristics of the group and the training context.

7.2 Phase 1 – Introduction and Preparation

Before starting the game, briefly introduce the purpose of the activity. Participants should understand that EcoMinds is not only about achieving a good game score but about exploring how different decisions can affect the **environment, employees and available financial resources**.

The trainer can begin with questions such as:

- What makes a workplace environmentally sustainable?
- Which everyday workplace activities have an environmental impact?
- Can an environmentally beneficial decision also have a financial or social cost?
- What kinds of decisions can organisations make to reduce their environmental footprint?

Avoid explaining the “best” game strategy in advance. Participants should have the opportunity to experiment and develop their own approaches.

If the **pre-test** included later in this guide is being used, participants should complete it before receiving detailed information about the game.



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7.3 Phase 2 – Gameplay

Participants then play EcoMinds individually, in pairs or in small groups.

During gameplay, trainers should primarily act as **facilitators and observers**. They can provide technical assistance when necessary but should avoid directing participants towards particular choices.

Useful prompts include:

“Why are you considering that option?”

“Which indicator are you prioritising?”

“What might be the longer-term consequence of that decision?”

“Is there another option you could consider?”

“How are you balancing environmental impact, budget and employee morale?”

These questions encourage reflection without revealing a preferred strategy.

When participants play in groups, encourage them to discuss and justify their decisions before selecting an option. This adds elements of **communication, negotiation and collaborative problem solving** to the activity.

7.4 Trainer Observation During Gameplay

The trainer should pay attention not only to the final game result but also to **how participants make decisions**.

Observe whether participants:

- consider environmental consequences;
- take budget limitations into account;
- consider employee morale;
- compare Tasks and Upgrades;
- distinguish between short-term and long-term effects;
- explain or justify their choices;
- adapt their strategy after receiving feedback from the game;
- collaborate effectively when playing in groups.

These observations can later be recorded using the **Trainer Observation Form** included in this guide.

7.5 Phase 3 – Reflection and Debriefing

The debriefing is an essential part of the EcoMinds learning process. Gameplay provides the experience; reflection helps participants transform that experience into learning.

Begin by asking participants to describe what happened:

- What was your overall strategy?





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- Which decisions were the most difficult?
- Which Tasks or Upgrades did you prioritise?
- What happened to your environmental performance?
- How did your decisions affect your budget and employee morale?
- Did you change your strategy during the game?

Then move from the game to broader sustainability questions:

- Was it always possible to choose the most environmentally beneficial option?
- What trade-offs did you encounter?
- Were short-term actions or long-term investments more useful?
- What does the game suggest about the relationship between sustainability and financial resources?
- Why should employee wellbeing be considered when introducing environmental changes?

Finally, connect the experience to real life:

- Which situations in EcoMinds could also occur in a real workplace?
- Which actions from the game could realistically be implemented in a school, organisation or company?
- What barriers might organisations face when trying to become more sustainable?
- What could employees themselves do to support environmental improvements?
- What is one sustainable action you could apply in your own daily, educational or professional environment?

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7.6 Comparing Strategies

When several participants or groups play simultaneously, their results can be compared as a learning activity.

Rather than focusing only on **who achieved the best result**, compare the strategies used.

For example:

Group	Main strategy	Environmental outcome	Budget management	Morale	Key lesson
Group A					
Group B					
Group C					

Ask participants why different strategies produced different outcomes.

This reinforces an important EcoMinds principle: sustainability involves **reasoned decision-making and balancing competing priorities**, rather than simply identifying one universally correct solution.



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7.7 Linking Gameplay to Learning Outcomes

At the end of the session, trainers should explicitly connect the gameplay experience with the learning objectives presented in Section 2.

For example:

Gameplay experience	Learning connection
Choosing between different responses	Decision-making and critical thinking
Managing limited budget	Resource management and prioritisation
Choosing Tasks and Upgrades	Short- versus long-term planning
Monitoring environmental indicators	Environmental awareness and systems thinking
Managing employee morale	Understanding the social dimension of sustainability
Responding to weekly events	Problem solving and adaptability
Reviewing weekly results	Reflection and evidence-based decision-making
Discussing decisions with others	Communication and collaborative problem solving

7.8 Closing the Activity

At the end of the debriefing, participants can complete the **post-test** provided later in this guide. Comparing pre-test and post-test responses provides a simple way to identify changes in participants' knowledge, confidence and understanding of sustainability-related decision-making. The trainer may conclude by asking each participant to identify:

One thing I learned: _____

One decision I would make differently: _____

One sustainable action I could apply in real life: _____

This final step helps transfer learning from the virtual EcoMinds environment to participants' everyday, educational or professional contexts.

Trainer Principle: The purpose of EcoMinds is not simply to complete the five-week simulation. The educational value comes from **making decisions, observing their consequences, reflecting on the results and transferring the lessons to real-life sustainability challenges.**



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8. Methods for Different Target Groups

EcoMinds can be used with participants who differ in age, educational background, digital experience and familiarity with environmental topics. The learning objectives can remain broadly consistent, while the **level of facilitation, complexity of discussion, mode of play and supporting materials** can be adapted to the needs of each group.

The adaptations below allow trainers to maintain the core learning experience while making participation appropriate and meaningful for different learners.

8.1 Young People Aged 16–18

For younger participants, EcoMinds should emphasise **experiential learning, practical examples and collaborative discussion**. Technical environmental terminology should be explained in clear and accessible language.

Recommended method:

- Play in pairs or small groups where appropriate.
- Provide a brief demonstration of the interface before starting.
- Allow additional time to become familiar with the indicators, Tasks and Upgrades.
- Encourage participants to discuss decisions before selecting an option.
- Use examples connected to familiar environments such as school, home, transport and everyday consumption.
- Focus the debriefing on practical environmental actions and the consequences of everyday choices.

Useful trainer question:

“Could a similar sustainability decision be made in your school, home or community?”

8.2 Young Adults Aged 19–30

Young adults can be encouraged to engage more independently with the simulation and examine the **strategic and organisational dimensions of sustainability**.

Recommended method:

- Individual, pair or small-group gameplay can be used.
- Allow participants to develop their own strategy with limited trainer intervention.
- Encourage comparison of short-term Tasks with longer-term Upgrades.
- Discuss trade-offs between environmental benefits, financial resources and employee wellbeing.
- Connect game situations with workplaces, entrepreneurship, professional environments and green skills.
- Ask participants to justify their decisions using evidence from the game results.





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Useful trainer question:

“If you were responsible for sustainability in a real organisation, would you make the same decision? Why?”

8.3 Participants with Limited Environmental Knowledge

No advanced environmental knowledge should be assumed before gameplay. Participants who are less familiar with sustainability concepts may benefit from a short introductory activity.

Before playing, trainers can briefly introduce:

- environmental sustainability;
- energy and water consumption;
- waste reduction and management;
- sustainable transport;
- resource efficiency;
- the relationship between environmental, economic and social considerations.

Avoid providing participants with the “best” decisions in advance. The purpose is to give them enough background to understand the choices while allowing them to **learn through experimentation and consequences**.

During the debriefing, clarify concepts that participants found difficult and connect them with examples from the game.

8.4 Participants with Limited Digital or Gaming Experience

Some participants may understand environmental topics well but have limited experience with mobile games or digital applications.

For these participants:

- demonstrate how to navigate the main screen before gameplay;
- explain the principal buttons, icons and indicators;
- allow a few minutes for participants to explore the interface;
- use the screenshots and step-by-step instructions provided in this guide;
- consider pair-based gameplay, combining participants with different levels of digital confidence;
- provide additional time where necessary.

The trainer should support **navigation rather than decision-making**. Assistance with using the application should not become advice about which sustainability choices to make.



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8.5 Participants with Fewer Opportunities

EcoMinds can be adapted to support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities. Adaptations should respond to the **actual needs of participants rather than assumptions about their abilities or backgrounds**.

Depending on the group, trainers may:

- use pair or small-group gameplay;
- provide instructions in smaller steps;
- use screenshots and visual examples;
- explain unfamiliar terminology;
- provide additional time;
- repeat instructions where necessary;
- use peer support;
- allow participants to discuss choices before making decisions;
- connect environmental issues with participants' everyday experiences.

Where access to individual devices is limited, EcoMinds can be used collaboratively, with a group sharing a device and making decisions together.

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8.6 Individual Self-Directed Learners

EcoMinds can also be played independently without a trainer. This is particularly important because the game and this guide are intended to support **self-directed learning**.

Independent players should be encouraged to:

1. Review Sections 3–7 before or during their first game.
2. Use the screenshots and icon explanations when needed.
3. Read each event carefully.
4. Compare Tasks and Upgrades before making decisions.
5. Monitor environmental performance, morale and budget.
6. Review the results at the end of each week.
7. Reflect on why their decisions produced particular outcomes.
8. Complete the reflection and self-assessment activities after gameplay.

The **Troubleshooting** and **Frequently Asked Questions** sections can provide additional support when a trainer is not available.

8.7 Pair and Small-Group Learning

Collaborative gameplay can transform EcoMinds into a **discussion and negotiation exercise**.

Rather than allowing one participant to control all decisions, trainers can assign roles such as:

- **Environmental perspective** – considers environmental consequences;



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- **Financial perspective** – monitors budget and investment;
- **Employee perspective** – considers morale and social consequences;
- **Decision coordinator** – summarises the arguments and facilitates the final choice.

Participants should discuss each important decision and reach a common choice.

The roles are intended to structure discussion, not to encourage participants to maximise only their assigned indicator. The final decision should consider **all dimensions together**.

8.8 Youth Workers, Trainers and Educators

When EcoMinds is used with youth workers, trainers or educators, the learning activity can have two dimensions:

1. Experiencing EcoMinds as learners

Participants play the game and reflect on sustainability decision-making.

2. Exploring EcoMinds as facilitators

Participants consider how they could use the game with their own learners.

After gameplay, ask:

- Which learning objectives could you address using EcoMinds?
- Which parts of the game would require facilitation with your target group?
- How would you adapt the debriefing?
- Could the game complement an existing environmental or green-skills activity?
- What additional support might your learners require?

This approach supports the transfer of EcoMinds into different youth work and educational contexts.

8.9 Suggested Adaptation Matrix

Target group / context	Mode of play	Level of trainer support	Main emphasis
Young people 16–18	Pairs / small groups	Moderate	Practical environmental awareness and decision-making
Young adults 19–30	Individual / pairs / groups	Low–moderate	Strategy, trade-offs, green skills and workplace application



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Limited environmental knowledge	Pairs / supported individual	Moderate	Environmental concepts and practical examples
Limited digital experience	Pairs / guided individual	Moderate–high initially	Navigation and understanding game mechanics
Participants with fewer opportunities	Flexible / collaborative	Adapted to identified needs	Inclusive participation and accessible learning
Independent learners	Individual	None	Self-directed experimentation and reflection
Youth workers / trainers	Individual + group reflection	Low	Facilitation methodology and transfer to educational practice

8.10 Choosing the Appropriate Method

Before delivering an EcoMinds activity, trainers should consider:

- participants' age and learning needs;
- previous environmental knowledge;
- digital confidence;
- available devices;
- group size;
- available training time;
- language needs;
- accessibility requirements; and
- whether the primary objective is **environmental awareness, competence development, teamwork, green-skills development or facilitator training**.

The same game can therefore support different learning contexts without changing its core mechanics. The adaptation should primarily concern **how the activity is introduced, supported, discussed and evaluated**.

Key Principle: Adapt the learning method, not the learning opportunity. All participants should have a meaningful opportunity to make decisions, understand their consequences, express their reasoning and connect the EcoMinds experience with real-life sustainability.





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9. Troubleshooting

This section provides practical solutions to common difficulties that participants or trainers may encounter when accessing or playing EcoMinds. It is intended to support both **facilitated and independent use of the game**, particularly when a trainer is not available.

Because technical behaviour may vary depending on the device, operating system and game version, the recommendations below focus on general troubleshooting. Game-specific error messages should only be added if they have been verified in the current version of EcoMinds.

9.1 Installation and Access Problems

Problem	Possible cause	Recommended action
The game cannot be installed	Device compatibility, insufficient storage or connection problem	Check the device's available storage and internet connection. Confirm that the application is available for the device's operating system.
The game does not open	Temporary application or device issue	Close the application completely and reopen it. If the problem continues, restart the device.
The game freezes or stops responding	Temporary application/device performance issue	Wait a few seconds. If the game remains unresponsive, close and reopen the application.
The game closes unexpectedly	Device or application issue	Reopen the game. If the issue occurs repeatedly, restart the device and check whether an updated version of EcoMinds is available.
The game cannot be downloaded	Internet or app-store connection issue	Check the internet connection and try again.

9.2 Gameplay Problems

Problem	What to check / do
I do not know what to do next	Review the current screen carefully and consult Section 5 – How to Play EcoMinds: Step by Step .
I do not understand an icon or indicator	Consult Section 4 – Game Interface: Buttons, Icons and Indicators
I cannot purchase an Upgrade	Check whether you have sufficient budget and available actions. Review the Upgrade's requirements before selecting it.





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I cannot select more Tasks or Upgrades	Check your remaining actions for the current week. The number of interventions available during the Planning Phase is limited.
My budget has decreased	Review the Upgrades purchased during the current and previous weeks. Upgrades require financial resources.
My environmental performance became worse	Review the event response, Tasks and Upgrades selected during the week. Not every decision produces the same environmental effect. Use the results to adapt your next strategy.
Employee morale is decreasing	Consider whether recent decisions may have had negative social consequences. Future decisions should balance environmental objectives with employee wellbeing.
The game ended before Week 5	Check the final indicators and game-over information. Employee morale falling below the required threshold can end the game.
I am unsure whether to choose a Task or an Upgrade	Tasks are intended as short-term measures, while Upgrades provide longer-term effects. Consider the current problem, available budget and number of weeks remaining.

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9.3 Understanding Unexpected Results

EcoMinds is designed around **consequences and trade-offs**. A result that appears negative does not necessarily mean that the game is malfunctioning.

For example, a decision may:

- improve one environmental area while placing pressure on another resource;
- require an immediate financial investment to achieve a longer-term benefit;
- improve environmental performance while affecting employee morale;
- provide only a temporary benefit;
- produce effects that become more relevant over subsequent weeks.

When a result is unexpected, participants should first ask:

What did I choose? → What changed? → Why might it have changed? → What could I do differently next week?

Learning from unexpected outcomes is part of the EcoMinds learning experience.

9.4 Problems During Group Activities

Situation	Recommended response
Not every participant has a device	Organise participants into pairs or small groups and use collaborative decision-making.
One participant makes all the decisions	Assign roles or require the group to discuss each major decision before confirming it.



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Participants disagree about a decision	Encourage each participant to explain their reasoning using environmental impact, budget and employee morale as criteria.
Some participants progress much faster than others	Allow faster participants to review their strategy or reflection questions while others complete the game.
A participant has difficulty navigating the application	Provide technical support or pair the participant with someone more confident with digital tools. Do not make the sustainability decisions on their behalf.
Participants focus only on winning	During debriefing, shift attention towards the reasoning behind decisions, trade-offs and lessons that can be transferred to real life.

9.5 Before Reporting a Technical Problem

If a technical problem persists, record as much information as possible before reporting it. This makes the issue easier to identify.

Record:

- device type;
- operating system;
- EcoMinds application version, if visible;
- screen or stage where the problem occurred;
- action taken immediately before the problem;
- error message, if any; and
- a screenshot of the problem where possible.

Do not include personal or sensitive information in screenshots or technical reports.

9.6 Quick Troubleshooting Checklist

If EcoMinds is not working as expected:

1. **Check** the current screen and instructions.
2. **Check** the available budget and actions if an option cannot be selected.
3. **Consult** the relevant section of this guide.
4. **Close and reopen** the application if it becomes unresponsive.
5. **Restart the device** if the technical problem continues.
6. **Check for an updated version** of EcoMinds.
7. If the problem persists, **record the issue and report it to the project/game support contact.**





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10. Frequently Asked Questions

This section provides answers to common questions from participants, trainers and youth workers about using EcoMinds. It complements the step-by-step gameplay instructions and troubleshooting guidance and supports both facilitated and independent use of the game.

10.1 Do I need previous knowledge about sustainability to play EcoMinds?

No. EcoMinds is designed as an educational game through which participants can develop their understanding of environmental sustainability while playing. Previous specialised knowledge is not required.

Players learn by **making decisions, observing their consequences and reflecting on the results.**

10.2 Do I need previous gaming experience?

No. Previous gaming experience is not required. Participants who are less confident using mobile applications can consult **Section 4 – Game Interface** and **Section 5 – How to Play EcoMinds: Step by Step** before starting.

10.3 Can I play EcoMinds without a trainer?

Yes. EcoMinds can be used for **self-directed learning**. This guide provides step-by-step instructions, explanations of the screens and indicators, an example game week, information about Tasks and Upgrades, and troubleshooting support.

When playing independently, take time to review the results at the end of each week and consider why your decisions produced particular consequences.

10.4 How long does one game last?

One complete EcoMinds game consists of **five weeks (rounds)**.

When EcoMinds is used as part of a training activity, approximately **30–40 minutes** can be allocated to gameplay, with additional time for introduction and reflection. Actual completion time may vary depending on the participant and whether decisions are discussed individually or in groups.

10.5 What is the main objective of the game?

The player manages a virtual workplace and makes decisions that influence its sustainability and operation.

The challenge is to balance:

- **environmental performance;**



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- **employee morale;** and
- **available financial resources.**

The educational objective is not simply to finish the game, but to understand the consequences and trade-offs associated with sustainability-related decisions.

10.6 What is the K Score?

The **K Score** represents the overall environmental performance of the virtual workplace and is influenced by environmental factors including **Energy, Water, Waste and Transport**.

According to the current EcoMinds guide, a **lower K Score represents better environmental performance**.

10.7 What is Employee Morale?

Employee Morale represents the social and human dimension of workplace management.

Some decisions may produce environmental or financial benefits while having consequences for employees. Players therefore need to consider employee wellbeing alongside environmental and economic objectives.

According to the current game guide, if morale falls below **40**, the game ends.

10.8 What is the difference between a Task and an Upgrade?

Tasks represent short-term actions, while **Upgrades** represent longer-term investments.

Tasks	Upgrades
Short-term intervention	Long-term investment
Temporary effect	Permanent effect
No budget expenditure	Require budget
2 Tasks = 1 action	1 Upgrade = 1 action

Players should consider which type of intervention is most appropriate according to the current situation, available resources and number of weeks remaining.

10.9 Should I always choose an Upgrade instead of a Task?

No. The two mechanisms serve different purposes.

An Upgrade may provide a longer-term benefit but requires financial resources. A Task may help address an immediate need without requiring the same type of investment.

The appropriate choice depends on your **current indicators, available budget, remaining actions and overall strategy**.





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10.10 Is there always one correct decision?

Not necessarily. EcoMinds is designed around **decision-making and trade-offs**.

Different decisions may have different environmental, financial or social consequences. Players should compare the available alternatives and be able to explain why they selected a particular option.

This is an important part of the learning process.

10.11 What happens if I make a poor decision?

Continue playing and observe the consequences.

An unexpected or negative result is also a learning opportunity. Consider:

What decision did I make?

What changed?

Why might this have happened?

What could I do differently next week?

EcoMinds allows participants to experiment with sustainability decisions in a simulated environment where strategies can be reviewed and adapted.

10.12 Can I replay the game?

Participants are encouraged to **play again and try a different strategy**. Replay can be particularly useful educationally. During a second playthrough, participants can test whether different event responses, Tasks, Upgrades or investment priorities lead to different outcomes.

10.13 Can EcoMinds be played in groups?

Yes. EcoMinds can be integrated into pair or small-group learning activities.

Participants can discuss the available choices and agree on decisions together. Trainers may also assign perspectives such as:

- environmental impact;
- financial resources;
- employee wellbeing.

This approach can support **communication, negotiation, critical thinking and collaborative decision-making**.

10.14 What should I do if my group disagrees?

Disagreement can be used as part of the learning process.

Ask each participant to explain their preferred option using evidence from the game. The group can then compare:



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Environmental impact → Financial impact → Employee impact → Short-/long-term effect

The objective is not simply to agree quickly, but to practise making and justifying informed decisions.

10.15 What happens if I cannot purchase an Upgrade?

First check:

- your available budget;
- your remaining actions;
- any requirements displayed by the game.

If the problem appears technical rather than gameplay-related, consult **Section 9 – Troubleshooting**.

10.16 What should I focus on while playing?

Before each important decision, consider four questions:

ENVIRONMENT: What environmental effect could this have?

PEOPLE: How could employees be affected?

BUDGET: Can I afford this decision?

TIME: Is the effect temporary or long-term?

This simple framework can help participants make more informed decisions.

10.17 Is the highest environmental performance the only measure of success?

No. EcoMinds is intended to demonstrate that sustainability involves interconnected **environmental, economic and social considerations**.

A strategy that improves environmental performance but creates serious financial or employee-related problems may not represent a balanced approach.

10.18 How can trainers assess what participants learned?

This guide provides three complementary assessment tools:

- a **Pre-Test and Post-Test** to identify changes in participants' knowledge and confidence;
- an **Evaluation Rubric** to assess sustainability-related competences; and
- a **Trainer Observation Form** to record engagement, decision-making, collaboration and reflection during gameplay.

These tools are presented in the following sections.





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10.19 What should I do after completing the game?

Do not end the learning activity immediately after the final screen.

Reflect on:

- the strategy you followed;
- your most difficult decision;
- the consequences of your choices;
- what you would do differently;
- what you learned about sustainability; and
- how the lessons from EcoMinds could be applied in a real workplace or everyday life.

When EcoMinds is used within a facilitated activity, these questions can form the basis of the group debriefing.

10.20 Where can I get help if the game does not work?

First consult **Section 9 – Troubleshooting** and check that the application and device are functioning correctly.

If the problem persists, record the device, operating system, application version, stage at which the problem occurred and any error message displayed.

Technical support/contact:

info@damasistem.com

Quick Reminder: EcoMinds is a learning simulation. The aim is not only to complete the game, but to **experiment, make informed decisions, observe consequences and connect those experiences with real-world sustainability challenges.**





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11. Pre-Test and Post-Test

To assess the learning outcomes of the EcoMinds activity in a measurable and consistent way, trainers are encouraged to administer a short **Pre-Test before gameplay and a Post-Test after gameplay and debriefing**.

The same core statements are used in both tests. This makes it possible to compare participants' responses before and after the activity and identify changes in their **knowledge, understanding and confidence related to sustainable decision-making**.

The assessment is intended as a **learning evaluation tool**, not as a formal examination. Participants should be informed that there are no consequences for giving low scores and that they should answer according to their actual level of understanding.

11.1 Instructions for Participants

Please indicate how much you agree with each statement.

Score	Response
1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neither agree nor disagree
4	Agree
5	Strongly agree



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11.2 Pre-Test

Participant code (optional): _____

Date: _____

Please complete this questionnaire before playing EcoMinds.

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I understand how everyday workplace activities can affect the environment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	I can identify practical actions that can reduce energy, water use, waste and transport-related environmental impacts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	I understand how sustainable workplace decisions can involve environmental, economic and social considerations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	I can compare different solutions to an environmental problem and consider their possible consequences.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	I understand the difference between short-term environmental actions and longer-term sustainability investments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	I can prioritise environmental actions when financial or other resources are limited.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	I feel confident making decisions that balance environmental benefits with financial and social considerations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	I can identify sustainable practices that could realistically be applied in a workplace, school or organisation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Pre-Test Total Score: _____ / 40

This tool can be administered digitally (e.g. through an online form) or, where appropriate, in printed format.



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11.3 Post-Test

Participant code (optional): _____

Date: _____

Please complete this questionnaire after playing EcoMinds and participating in the reflection/debriefing activity.

To measure change consistently, participants answer the **same eight statements**.

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I understand how everyday workplace activities can affect the environment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	I can identify practical actions that can reduce energy, water use, waste and transport-related environmental impacts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	I understand how sustainable workplace decisions can involve environmental, economic and social considerations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	I can compare different solutions to an environmental problem and consider their possible consequences.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	I understand the difference between short-term environmental actions and longer-term sustainability investments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	I can prioritise environmental actions when financial or other resources are limited.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	I feel confident making decisions that balance environmental benefits with financial and social considerations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	I can identify sustainable practices that could realistically be applied in a workplace, school or organisation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Post-Test Total Score: _____ / 40

This tool can be administered digitally (e.g. through an online form) or, where appropriate, in printed format.





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11.4 Additional Post-Test Reflection Questions

The Post-Test can include three additional questions that are **not part of the pre/post numerical comparison**:

1. What is the most important thing you learned from EcoMinds?
2. Which decision or situation in the game made you think differently about sustainability?
3. Name one sustainable action that you could apply in your everyday, educational or professional environment.

These open questions provide qualitative information that complements the numerical results.

11.5 Measuring Learning Progress

Each of the eight statements is scored from **1 to 5**, giving a maximum total score of **40 points**.

For each participant:

Learning Gain = Post-Test Score – Pre-Test Score

For example:

	Score
Pre-Test	26/40
Post-Test	34/40
Learning Gain	+8 points

A positive difference indicates an increase in the participant's **self-reported knowledge, understanding and confidence** following the EcoMinds learning experience.

Importantly, this should be described as a **self-assessment measure**. It does not, by itself, objectively demonstrate that a participant has mastered a competence. For this reason, it should be complemented by the **Evaluation Rubric** and **Trainer Observation Form** presented in the following sections.

11.6 Group-Level Evaluation

When EcoMinds is used with a group, trainers can also calculate the average Pre-Test and Post-Test scores.

Average Pre-Test Score = Sum of all Pre-Test scores ÷ Number of participants

Average Post-Test Score = Sum of all Post-Test scores ÷ Number of participants

The difference between the two averages provides a simple indicator of the overall change reported by the group.



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Results can also be compared **item by item**. This is particularly useful for identifying which learning areas showed the greatest improvement.

For example:

Learning area	Pre-Test average	Post-Test average	Change
Understanding environmental impacts	3.1	4.2	+1.1
Understanding sustainability trade-offs	2.8	4.0	+1.2
Strategic decision-making	2.9	3.9	+1.0
Applying sustainability to real life	3.2	4.3	+1.1

The figures above are illustrative only and should be replaced by actual participant results.

11.7 Recommended Administration

For more reliable comparison:

- administer the Pre-Test **immediately before** the EcoMinds activity;
- administer the Post-Test **after gameplay and debriefing**;
- use exactly the same eight core statements in both tests;
- provide the same instructions and 1–5 scale;
- allow participants to respond independently;
- do not suggest preferred answers;
- where individual change is being analysed, use an **anonymous participant code** rather than participants' names;
- report results in aggregate where possible.

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11.8 Data Protection and Ethical Use

Participation in the evaluation should be **voluntary**, and participants should be informed about why the information is being collected and how it will be used.

Only information necessary for evaluating the learning activity should be collected. Trainers should avoid collecting unnecessary personal data and should follow the applicable data-protection procedures of their organisation and the EcoMinds project.

For participants under 18, trainers should follow the relevant organisational and national requirements concerning information, consent and participation in educational evaluation activities.

Evaluation Principle: The Pre-Test and Post-Test measure participants' perceived development before and after EcoMinds. They should be used together with observation and reflection to provide a more complete picture of the learning experience.

12. Participant Evaluation Rubric

The **Participant Evaluation Rubric** provides trainers with a structured tool for assessing the competences demonstrated by participants during and after the EcoMinds learning activity. It complements the Pre-Test and Post-Test by focusing on **observable learning outcomes**, rather than only participants' self-reported perceptions.

The rubric can be completed by the trainer following gameplay and the debriefing session. It may be used for individual participants or, when EcoMinds is played collaboratively, for a pair or group.

12.1 Assessment Criteria

Participants are assessed across five areas directly related to the EcoMinds learning objectives:

1. **Understanding of environmental impacts**
2. **Sustainable decision-making**
3. **Understanding of trade-offs**
4. **Problem solving and strategic thinking**
5. **Transfer of learning to real-life contexts**

Each criterion is assessed using four performance levels:

1 – Beginning | 2 – Developing | 3 – Competent | 4 – Advanced

12.2 Evaluation Rubric

Criterion	1 – Beginning	2 – Developing	3 – Competent	4 – Advanced
Understanding of environmental impacts	Shows limited understanding of how workplace activities affect the environment.	Identifies some environmental impacts related to energy, water, waste or transport.	Explains several environmental impacts and identifies appropriate actions to address them.	Connects different environmental impacts and explains how organisational decisions can influence overall environmental performance.
Sustainable decision-making	Makes choices with little consideration of their consequences.	Considers some environmental consequences when making decisions.	Makes reasoned decisions considering environmental, financial and social factors.	Systematically compares alternatives and justifies decisions using multiple sustainability considerations.



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Understanding of trade-offs	Shows limited awareness that sustainability decisions may involve competing priorities.	Recognises basic trade-offs between environmental and other considerations.	Explains trade-offs between environmental performance, budget and employee wellbeing.	Critically evaluates competing priorities and proposes balanced responses.
Problem solving and strategic thinking	Requires substantial support to respond to challenges.	Identifies basic solutions but considers mainly immediate effects.	Selects appropriate responses and considers both short- and longer-term consequences.	Adapts strategy based on previous results and demonstrates effective prioritisation of limited resources.
Transfer to real-life contexts	Has difficulty connecting the game with real-life sustainability.	Identifies a general connection between the game and everyday life.	Identifies realistic sustainability actions applicable to a workplace, school or organisation.	Proposes and justifies practical sustainability measures and explains how they could be implemented in a real setting.

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12.3 Scoring

For each criterion, the trainer assigns a score from **1 to 4**.

With five assessment criteria, the maximum score is **20 points**.

Total Score	Performance Level	Interpretation
5–9	Beginning	Participant demonstrates an initial understanding but requires further support and learning opportunities.
10–13	Developing	Participant demonstrates emerging understanding and can apply some sustainability concepts with support.
14–17	Competent	Participant demonstrates a good understanding and can apply sustainability concepts to decision-making.
18–20	Advanced	Participant demonstrates strong understanding, strategic thinking and the ability to transfer learning to real-life contexts.



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The total score should be interpreted as a **formative indication of demonstrated competence**, rather than as a formal qualification or certification result.

12.4 Participant Assessment Form

Participant/Group Code: _____

Date: _____

Trainer: _____

Assessment criterion	Score (1–4)	Evidence / Comments
Understanding of environmental impacts	_____	_____
Sustainable decision-making	_____	_____
Understanding of trade-offs	_____	_____
Problem solving and strategic thinking	_____	_____
Transfer to real-life contexts	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____ / 20	

Overall performance level:

- ☐ Beginning
- ☐ Developing
- ☐ Competent
- ☐ Advanced

Main strengths demonstrated:

.

Areas for further development:

.

This tool can be administered digitally (e.g. through an online form) or, where appropriate, in printed format.

12.5 Evidence for Assessment

Trainers should base their assessment on evidence observed throughout the learning activity, including:

- decisions made during gameplay;
- explanations provided for those decisions;
- responses to changing game conditions;



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- management of environmental performance, budget and employee morale;
- selection and prioritisation of Tasks and Upgrades;
- contributions to group discussions;
- responses during the debriefing; and
- ability to connect game experiences with real-life sustainability challenges.

The rubric should therefore assess the **learning process and demonstrated understanding**, not simply the participant's final game score.

Assessment Principle: A high game score does not automatically demonstrate a high level of learning. Participants should be assessed on their ability to **understand environmental impacts, justify decisions, recognise trade-offs, adapt their strategy and transfer learning to real-life situations**.





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13. Trainer Observation Form

The **Trainer Observation Form** is designed to help trainers systematically record participants' **engagement, decision-making processes and demonstrated learning** while using EcoMinds.

Unlike the Participant Evaluation Rubric, which provides an overall assessment of competence, the Observation Form focuses on **behaviours demonstrated during the learning activity**. It can therefore provide useful evidence to support the final evaluation.

The form may be used for an **individual participant, pair or small group**, depending on how EcoMinds is implemented.

13.1 Instructions for Trainers

Observe participants during gameplay and, where appropriate, during the group discussion and debriefing. Assess each behaviour using the following scale:

Score	Observation
1	Not observed
2	Emerging / demonstrated with support
3	Demonstrated independently
4	Strongly and consistently demonstrated

Trainers should avoid intervening simply to produce a higher score. The purpose is to record how participants naturally approach the activity and where additional learning support may be useful.





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13.2 Observation Form

Participant / Group Code: _____

Date: _____

Trainer: _____

Mode _____ **of** _____ **participation:**

☐ Individual ☐ Pair ☐ Small group

Observation criterion	1	2	3	4	Notes / Evidence
Engages actively with the game and learning activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Identifies environmental consequences of decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Considers budget and resource limitations when making decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Considers the possible impact of decisions on employee morale	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Compares different options before making a decision	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Distinguishes between short-term Tasks and longer-term Upgrades	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Explains or justifies decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Adapts strategy in response to game results	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Participates constructively in discussion and collaborative decision-making*	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Connects gameplay with real-life sustainability situations	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____

**For individual self-directed gameplay, this criterion may be marked N/A.*

This tool can be administered digitally (e.g. through an online form) or, where appropriate, in printed format.





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13.3 Overall Observation

What strengths did the participant/group demonstrate?

.

Which aspects required additional support?

.

Example of a decision or behaviour demonstrating learning:

.

Additional trainer comments:

.

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This tool can be administered digitally (e.g. through an online form) or, where appropriate, in printed format.

13.4 Using the Observation Results

The Observation Form is primarily a **formative assessment tool**. Its purpose is to help trainers identify how participants engage with sustainability-related decision-making and which competences may require further development.

The results can be considered together with:

- the **Pre-Test and Post-Test** results;
- the **Participant Evaluation Rubric**;
- participants' explanations during gameplay;
- responses during the debriefing; and
- participants' final reflections.

Using these complementary tools provides a broader picture of the learning experience than relying only on the final game result.



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13.5 Relationship Between the Three Assessment Tools

The three assessment tools included in this guide have different but complementary purposes. Used together, they provide a more comprehensive picture of participants' learning, engagement and demonstrated sustainability-related competences.

Tool	What it measures	When it is used
Pre-Test / Post-Test	Change in participants' self-reported knowledge, understanding and confidence	Before and after the activity
Trainer Observation Form	Observable engagement and behaviours during the learning process	During gameplay and debriefing
Participant Evaluation Rubric	Overall demonstrated sustainability-related competences	After gameplay and debriefing

Assessment Principle: EcoMinds evaluation should focus not only on the participant's final result in the game, but also on **how decisions are made, how consequences are interpreted, how strategies are adapted and how learning is transferred to real-life sustainability contexts.**





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14. Debriefing and Reflection

Debriefing is a key part of the EcoMinds learning process. Gameplay gives participants the opportunity to **experience sustainability-related decision-making**, while reflection helps them understand what happened, why it happened and how the lessons can be transferred to real-life situations.

The debriefing should therefore focus not only on the final game result, but on the **decisions, trade-offs, strategies and consequences** experienced throughout the simulation.

The existing EcoMinds guide proposes four useful levels of reflection—**Descriptive, Analytical, Transfer and Action**—which can be developed into the structured approach below.

14.1 Recommended Debriefing Structure

A debriefing session can take approximately **20–30 minutes** and follow four stages:

WHAT? → WHY? → SO WHAT? → NOW WHAT?

Stage	Purpose	Main focus
1. What happened?	Describe the experience	Decisions and results
2. Why did it happen?	Analyse choices	Reasoning and trade-offs
3. What does it mean?	Identify learning	Sustainability principles
4. What can we do?	Transfer learning	Real-life application

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14.2 Stage 1 – What Happened?

Begin with descriptive questions that allow participants to reconstruct their experience.

Suggested questions:

- What was your overall strategy?
- Which environmental areas did you prioritise?
- Which Tasks did you use most frequently?
- Which Upgrades did you choose?
- Which event was the most difficult to respond to?
- What happened to your environmental performance?
- What happened to your budget?
- What happened to employee morale?
- Did your strategy change during the five weeks?
- What result surprised you most?

At this stage, trainers should encourage participants to describe their experience without immediately judging whether their decisions were good or bad.



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14.3 Stage 2 – Why Did It Happen?

The second stage moves from description to **analysis and reasoning**.

Suggested questions:

- Why did you choose particular Tasks or Upgrades?
- What factors influenced your decisions?
- Did you prioritise environmental performance, budget or employee morale?
- Were there situations where these priorities conflicted?
- Which decisions produced the greatest benefits?
- Did any decision produce an unexpected negative consequence?
- Did you prioritise short-term actions or longer-term investments? Why?
- How did limited financial resources affect your choices?
- How did the number of remaining weeks influence your strategy?
- If you played again, which decision would you change?

The trainer should encourage participants to explain **why** they made particular choices rather than simply reporting what they selected.

14.4 Stage 3 – What Does This Tell Us About Sustainability?

Participants now move beyond the game and identify the broader sustainability lessons represented by the simulation.

Suggested questions:

- What did EcoMinds teach you about environmental decision-making?
- Is the most environmentally beneficial option always the easiest to implement?
- Why might sustainable changes require financial investment?
- Why are short-term actions and long-term investments both important?
- Why should employee wellbeing be considered when introducing environmental changes?
- What happens when organisations have several environmental priorities but limited resources?
- Why is it important to consider the consequences of decisions across different areas?
- What does the game tell us about the relationship between environmental, economic and social sustainability?

A central point for discussion is that sustainability often requires **balancing interconnected priorities rather than maximising a single indicator**.

14.5 Stage 4 – From the Game to Real Life

The final stage encourages participants to transfer what they learned to their own lives, workplaces, schools, organisations or communities.





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Suggested questions:

- Which situations in EcoMinds could also occur in a real workplace?
- Which Tasks or Upgrades have equivalents in real organisations?
- What environmental improvements could be introduced in your school, workplace or organisation?
- Which improvements could be implemented immediately?
- Which would require financial investment or organisational planning?
- What barriers could prevent an organisation from implementing sustainable practices?
- Who should be involved in environmental decision-making in a workplace?
- How could employees contribute to improving environmental performance?
- What could you personally do differently after this activity?

14.6 Comparing Different Strategies

When EcoMinds is played by several participants or groups, comparing strategies can enrich the reflection process.

The trainer can ask participants to briefly present:

Discussion point	Group/Participant response
Main strategy	_____
Most important Upgrade	_____
Most useful Task	_____
Most difficult decision	_____
Biggest trade-off encountered	_____
Decision they would change	_____
Main sustainability lesson	_____

Participants should then compare their approaches.

The purpose is **not to identify a single “correct” strategy**, but to examine why different choices produced different consequences and what can be learned from them.

14.7 Connecting EcoMinds to Green Skills

During the debriefing, trainers can explicitly highlight the competences participants practised through gameplay.

These may include:

- environmental awareness;
- critical thinking;
- problem solving;
- decision-making;



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- strategic thinking;
- systems thinking;
- prioritisation;
- resource management;
- adaptability;
- communication and teamwork.

Ask participants:

Which of these skills did you use most during EcoMinds?

Follow with:

Where could this skill be useful in your future education, employment or everyday life?

This helps participants recognise that the learning experience concerns not only environmental knowledge but also **transferable competences relevant to sustainability and the green transition**.

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14.8 Individual Reflection Activity

After the group discussion, participants can complete a short individual reflection.

My EcoMinds Reflection

1. The most important thing I learned was:

.

2. The most difficult decision I made was:

.

3. I made this decision because:

.

4. One decision I would change if I played again is:

.

5. One example of a sustainability trade-off I experienced was:

.



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6. One sustainable action I could apply in real life is:

.

14.9 From Reflection to Action

To conclude the activity, ask each participant to formulate one realistic sustainability action.

My EcoMinds Action:

After this activity, one action I can take to contribute to sustainability is:

.

Where appropriate, participants can share their commitments with the group and discuss what would be required to implement them.

14.10 Guidance for Trainers

During debriefing:

- create an environment where different strategies can be discussed openly;
- avoid presenting unsuccessful game decisions as personal failures;
- ask participants to provide reasons for their conclusions;
- encourage comparison between different approaches;
- connect game mechanics with realistic environmental challenges;
- allow participants to identify both successful and unsuccessful aspects of their strategy;
- encourage participants to propose practical alternatives;
- adapt questions to participants' age, experience and level of environmental knowledge.

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The debriefing should ultimately move participants through the complete experiential learning process:

EXPERIENCE → REFLECT → UNDERSTAND → APPLY

Key Learning Point

EcoMinds becomes most educational when participants move beyond asking “Did I succeed in the game?” and begin asking “Why did my decisions produce these results, what does this teach me about sustainability, and how can I apply this learning in real life?”



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