

# The IRIS Project

Halsall Associates was seeking a way to organize our many sustainability initiatives into one comprehensive program. We were looking to develop a full-scale, strategic initiative that formalized the corporate sustainability culture that had developed at our company over the prior decade. We wanted the program to address recruitment, internal operations and client service.

**With this in mind, in 2008 we launched *The IRIS Project*, one of the earliest sustainability programs developed by any Canadian engineering company. We wanted to clearly demonstrate to all stakeholders that we “Walk the Talk.”**

The intent of *The IRIS Project* was to maximize the impact of our employees’ efforts by providing focus and clear communication. *The IRIS Project* drove us to set aspirational sustainability targets across multiple categories, and it promoted employee-led, innovative sustainability initiatives. As an ongoing program, it enables us to track and report on our sustainability progress to both internal and external audiences according to a set of strategic sustainability indicators.

The originality and innovation of *The IRIS Project* lies in its employee engagement, its comprehensiveness, its structured incorporation of and reliance on data, and its interactive reporting tool.

**Organizationally, the program involves a large number of employees who each contribute to the program’s initiatives.** *The IRIS Project* team is led by a Project Manager who oversees a group of almost 30 employees drawn from offices across the country. These members are grouped together in one of six official Category Teams. The Category Teams are supported by Office Liaisons at each office location.

In addition to the formal team, resources from across the company support *The IRIS Project* efforts. For example, Finance collects performance data for reporting purposes (even when it is not financial), and the Market Communications team provides guidance on communicating IRIS achievements. Loop Initiatives, Halsall’s management consulting arm, assists with research, implementation and change management. Finally, the company’s Executive Committee oversees *The IRIS Project* by providing guidance on strategic direction and funding approvals.

**As a comprehensive program, the project is structured into six Categories.** These define the impacts that we are trying to change. Within them are 13 Sustainability Indicators, which specify what we will monitor. For example, in the category “Carbon Footprint,” we track two Sustainability Indicators - “Building Emissions” and “Travel Emissions.”

***The IRIS Project* is entirely data-based.** When we launched the program in 2008, we measured each of the 13 Sustainability Indicators and researched where the best companies were at. This provided us with benchmarks against which we could define our targets. We also performed a comprehensive greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory so we could report our emissions and set targets and reduction strategies in this critical area.

**One of the most innovative aspects of *The IRIS Project* is the IRIS reporting tool itself.** The IRIS, which stands for “Integrated Rating Indicator for Sustainability,” was developed by Loop Initiatives to provide a dynamic, graphical and transparent method of reporting on sustainability progress.

Available on both our company intranet and our external website, the IRIS provides anyone and everyone with a clear view of each of the 13 Sustainability Indicators. An online “index card” displays the specific Indicator’s targets, milestones, strategies, actions and score, including where Halsall sits relative to our industry peers.

The IRIS is a living, breathing application that is updated on a continuous basis as we move along our sustainability journey. It also allows for two-way dialogue with both internal and external stakeholders.

## The IRIS Project (cont'd)

*The IRIS Project* **has created positive change in the business** in the following key areas: it has integrated sustainability into Halsall's business metrics; it has reduced our corporate environmental footprint; it has enabled us to make deeper connections with the communities where we work; it has paved the way for stronger branding and market differentiation; it has enhanced our green service delivery; and it has given us a more powerful ability to attract and retain top employees. It is also supporting business growth (our revenue has grown 46% since its introduction) and has enabled Halsall to deliver leading-edge sustainability services across all business lines.

As an example of environmental impact, in 2010, we lowered our building GHG emissions to 1.1tCO<sub>2</sub>e/FTE, a 12% reduction from our 2008 baseline. According to our benchmarking study, this is one of the lowest reported building emissions per person in the industry.

As well, *The IRIS Project* has driven us to reduce our lighting energy by more than 60% through smart fixture placement, occupancy sensors and daylight responsiveness. Our IT energy-saving initiatives have reduced our energy consumption by approximately 200,000 kWh per year, resulting in annual savings of approximately \$24,000 and recognition from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In 2011, we also reduced waste output to 67kg per employee, down from almost 20kg per employee in 2008.

By raising the profile of our commitment to the communities where we work and live, and by officially allocating 7.5 hours of company-funded time per person to community endeavours, the IRIS Project helped us to increase our employees' community investment time by over 60% (or over 2000 hours). We also raised over \$300,000 for not-for-profit organizations in 2011.

**By focusing on sustainability, we have differentiated ourselves in the market and created a unique value proposition that is distinct from our competitors.** Our volume of Green services delivered has seen a growth rate of about 50 per cent per year since 2008. As well, with 30% of our employees directly involved in The IRIS Project, we are able to offer a growing range of eco-literate engineering services which not only benefits our clients but provides opportunities for employee career growth.

**In fact, *The IRIS Project* has been key to enhancing our ability to attract and retain employees.** Working for an organization that seeks to make a positive difference both internally and with its service delivery coincides with the personal values of many Halsall employees and gives them a sense of accomplishment. *The IRIS Project* has contributed to Halsall's positive culture and morale and has been a factor in the firm being ranked as one of Canada's "Best Workplace" by The Great Place to Work® Institute for six consecutive years, from 2007 to 2012.

In 2010, Halsall became the building engineering division of Parsons Brinckerhoff's Canadian operating company. As a result of this merger, as of December 31, 2011, Halsall's IRIS Project reached the end of a phase. Since we are now part of a global engineering firm, The IRIS Project is no longer confined to Halsall alone. Since 2011, Halsall has been responsible for leading the development of Parsons Brinckerhoff's global sustainability program, reaching a total of 15,000 employees worldwide, and starting January 1, 2012, *The IRIS Project* has been officially part of that global effort.

**We strive to be a catalyst for change within an industry that is not always associated with progressive social and environmental leadership.** Leading by example, we encourage our employees, clients and vendors to consider sustainability an important factor when making choices. *The IRIS Project* has been instrumental in our ambition to make a difference.



# The IRIS Project

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Submitted by Halsall Associates  
May 8, 2012



# The IRIS Project

## BENEFITS TO THE FIRM

### Introduction

*The IRIS Project* is a formal, comprehensive sustainability program. It was one of the earliest sustainability programs developed by any Canadian engineering company to formalize the corporate sustainability culture that had developed at our company over the prior decade. We wanted to clearly demonstrate to all stakeholders that we “Walk the Talk.”

The specific goals of *The IRIS Project* goals are to reduce our environmental footprint, maximize our employees’ efforts and drive continual change.

Formally launched in 2008, *The IRIS Project* was the next step along our company’s sustainability journey. That journey began in 1996 with a single focus, “Let’s be a company we would be proud to have our kids aspire to work at.”

From there we adopted a formal Sustainability Commitment by which we declare our belief that it is our moral obligation to find a way to protect the planet’s capital and live off its interest only, support the well-being of our employees, and positively contribute to our communities. Our full Sustainability Commitment is outlined in the poster below.

*The IRIS Project* is driving us to set aspirational sustainability targets across multiple categories. It allows us to implement employee-led, innovative sustainability initiatives. Finally, it enables us to track and report on our sustainability progress to both internal and external audiences according to a set of 13 strategic sustainability indicators.

The project has brought five key benefits to the firm:

- Quantifiable reductions in our environmental footprint
- Deeper connections to the communities where we work
- Stronger branding and market differentiation
- Enhanced green service delivery
- More powerful ability to attract, retain and engage top employees

| TBL Culture   | Energy & Atmosphere   | Human Well-Being  | Materials & Consumables  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Employees</b><br>Employee Awareness (% employees)<br>Practicing Sustainability (% employees) | <b>Carbon Footprint</b><br>Building Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> /FTE)<br>Travel Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> /FTE) | <b>Employee Well-Being</b><br>Workplace Engagement (% employees)                            | <b>Facilities</b><br>Green Office Space (% sq. ft.)                              |
|   | <b>Carbon Reduction</b><br>Carbon Offsets (% reduced)   | <b>Community Investment</b><br>Volunteerism (h/FTE)<br>Charitable Contributions (% revenue) | <b>Procurement</b><br>Paper Consumption (kg/FTE)<br>Eco-Purchasing (% spend)     |
|   |   |   | <b>Waste</b><br>Waste Output (kg/FTE)<br>Waste Diversion from Landfill (% waste) |

Category and indicators chart

### Reductions in our environmental footprint

The results we have realized in reducing our environmental footprint are listed on pages 3 - 4. For each category, we provide the Sustainability Indicator, our 2012 target, and our status for the latest reporting period. These sustainability measures are now integrated into our business metrics.

## SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENT

We believe it is our moral obligation to find a way to protect the planet's capital and live off its interest, support the well-being of our employees and positively contribute to our communities.

We promise to our clients, employees and future generations that we will:

- continuously reduce our environmental footprint in our internal operations and in delivering client services;
- provide advice, designs and insights that incorporate the most progressive thinking in sustainability; and
- track our performance using economic, environmental and social indicators, and use these to guide continuous improvement.

We will strive to achieve positive change in the fastest feasible way, which will be the foundation for enduring careers and relationships.



**Category:** Carbon Footprint

**Indicator:** Building Emissions

**Target:** 20% reduction in greenhouse gas building emissions, measured in CO<sub>2</sub>e/full time employee equivalent (FTE) or 1.0 tCO<sub>2</sub>e/FTE (for the offices we occupy, primarily space heating/cooling and equipment usage).

- In 2010, we reduced our building emissions to 1.1tCO<sub>2</sub>e/FTE, a 12% reduction from our 2008 baseline. Building emission reductions for 2011 are currently being calculated.
- We have adopted the use of newer, more energy-efficient LED monitors, which use 28% less energy than the old ones.
- Our total IT energy-saving initiatives have reduced our energy consumption by approximately 200,000 kWh per year, resulting in a 40 tonne reduction of carbon emissions and annual savings of approximately \$24,000. These changes have earned us recognition from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency since 2008 as part of their Energy Star Low Carbon IT Campaign.

**Indicator:** Travel Emissions

**Target:** 40% reduction in greenhouse gas travel emissions, measured as CO<sub>2</sub>e/FTE or 2 tCO<sub>2</sub>e/FTE (accumulated from business air and automotive travel, and employee commuting).

- In 2010, each PB Halsall employee emitted on average 2.1tCO<sub>2</sub>e/FTE through business and commuting travel vs 2.5tCO<sub>2</sub>e/FTE in 2008, representing a 16% decrease in travel emissions per person.

**Category:** Carbon Reduction

**Indicator:** Carbon Offsets

**Target:** Carbon offsets to cover 100% of annual GHG emissions.

Since 2008, we have procured certified green electricity for all electricity consumption in our offices through Bullfrog power, equivalent to 1.2 tCO<sub>2</sub>e/FTE or 25% of total carbon emissions. Parts of our company offset their emissions and we are in the process of researching how the entire enterprise could become carbon neutral.

**Category:** Facilities

**Indicator:** Green Office Space

**Target:** 80% of leased office space to be certified to any LEED Standard.

- 58% of our offices are certified to a LEED Standard (pending certification of the Calgary office). 56% of leased office floor area is designed and built to LEED CI Silver or higher, incorporating innovative green features. We use our offices as living laboratories to test new technologies so we can verify the effectiveness prior to making energy saving recommendations.
- Our Ottawa office earned Ontario's first LEED Canada Commercial Interior (CI) Platinum certification. LEED certification of other Halsall offices include:
  - Toronto – LEED CI Gold
  - Calgary – LEED CI Gold (Pending)
  - Vancouver – LEED CI Silver

**Category:** Procurement

**Indicator:** Paper Consumption

**Target:** 30% reduction in the total average weight of all paper consumed (purchased) by each full time employee.

- Through continued efforts to encourage paper reduction we have decreased total paper consumption per employee by 23% to 20.7 kg/FTE in 2011.

**Indicator:** Eco-Purchasing

**Target:** 90% of actual purchases (e.g. office space, furnishings, benefits, equipment and office supplies) sourced from suppliers classified as “responsible vendors” according to a green vendor questionnaire and evaluation.

- For 2011, 58% of our vendors were classified as “responsible.”

**Category:** Waste

**Indicator:** Waste Output

**Target:** 15% waste reduction, measured in average annual weight of waste produced per full time employee.

- We have reached this target by reducing waste to 67 Kg/FTE, below our target of 71kg/FTE (15% reduction) by 2012.

**Indicator:** Waste Diversion

**Target:** 95% waste diversion, measured by the percentage of recycled and composted waste (office, kitchen and electronic waste) in relation to total waste output.

- Halsall increased waste diversion from 58% in 2008 to 78% in 2011.

### **Deeper connections to the communities where we work**

Community investment is an important component of *The IRIS Project* and is rewarding to employees. Each full time employee is granted 7.5 hours per year of company-funded time to volunteer with not-for-profit organizations. In 2011, 75% of our internal work teams participated in community volunteering initiatives. Between 2010 and 2011, we increased employee community investment hours by 63%. In addition, in 2011, we contributed 0.57% of our annual net revenue to charitable organizations. Our target is 1%.

Through community investment and outreach, *The IRIS Project* has enabled Halsall to establish stronger connections to the communities where we live and work. Our clients recognize that we “walk the talk” and that sustainability and community involvement is clearly a core value. We have created very strong connections with some of our clients as a result of our internal activities.

Below is a selected list of our community investment involvement and achievements:

- In 2011, we raised over \$310,000 for not-for-profit organizations and completed over 2190 hours of volunteering.
- In 2011, our employees participated in numerous charitable events through team-building exercises, including: Vancouver’s Race for Shelter, WWF CN Tower Stair Climb, CANstruction, tree planting, Kiwanis Ottawa’s Bedzzz Race, Movember, community and park clean-up events, and Relay for Life.
- In November 2011, Halsall ranked 123<sup>rd</sup> among thousands of teams across Canada’s list for Movember – a global campaign that raises awareness and funds for prostate cancer. Halsall helped raised over \$18,765 for the leading cancer affecting men.



Left to right: Ottawa Bed Race, Bike To Work Week Vancouver, Bike To Work Week Toronto.



- Halsall's Toronto and Vancouver offices are participating in the 2012 Canstruction competition to raise awareness of difficulties many people have with access to food and to provide meals to those in need.
- We are a Canadian Blood Services 'Partner for Life' member, committing to an annual donation of 20 units of blood.
- In 2006, Halsall became a sustaining sponsor of Engineers without Borders with a commitment of \$25,000 over 5 years.
- Since 2005, Halsall has raised over \$220,000 for Dixon Hall's Music for Life program which provides low-cost music lessons to children in high risk Toronto neighbourhoods.
- Pro Bono Haiti Schools Rebuilding Project: Halsall spearheaded the efforts of four Canadian engineering firms to rebuild 12 schools in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. Working with a Finnish NGO, the four firms provided over 3500 hours of pro bono engineering consulting services to design and rebuild schools. The project has also incorporated a training plan to grow the capacity of local engineers and contractors. Our efforts have been recognized with the Engineer Advocate Award from WoodWORKS (November 2011) and a 2012 Consulting Engineers of Ontario Award.

### **Stronger branding and market differentiation**

The internal values that we foster at Halsall have benefited our financial bottom line. By focusing on sustainability, we have differentiated ourselves in the market and created a unique value proposition that is distinct from our competitors. Halsall's values make us a desirable partner for organizations that are making environmentally-preferred choices a priority.

### **Enhanced green service delivery**

Our volume of Green services has grown by about 50% per year since 2008. Halsall's green building team is a recognized facilitator for integrated design and green building development. Halsall's team of 40 professionals (engineers, energy specialists, architects and planners) have provided green planning and design advice on more than 400 green building projects. The experts on the Green team have pursued green building rating system certifications (LEED, BOMA BEST, Green Globes) for close to 300 buildings, energy plans and sustainability frameworks for 15 communities across Canada and green building standards for 13 municipalities throughout Ontario.

Halsall's experience and dedication to green building has led to increased influence, including the responsibility for developing the LEED®



*Halsall employees participate in a community clean-up.*





Canada Standard for Existing Buildings Operation and Maintenance (EB OM) for the Canada Green Building Council. Halsall is a founding member of the Canada Green Building Council. We are also recognized industry experts in delivering LEED projects. Halsall professionals have been selected by the CaGBC to act on several technical advisory, training, LEED reviewer and document expert groups.

With 30% of our employees directly involved in *The IRIS Project*, we are developing even greater green expertise. The lessons we have learned through our own internal sustainability journey are being applied to projects, enabling us to offer a growing range of green services to our clients.

For example, in the Restoration service area, we are able to extend our analysis beyond structural deterioration and repair issues to include options for components that are not traditionally considered within a “restoration” scope. By using a “Net Present Value” approach to estimate carbon investments and savings, we are shifting the focus towards “renewal.” We recently used the tool to enable a client’s holistic decision-making process with respect to renewal options for a parking structure evaluation.

Through Triple Bottom Line (TBL) reporting, we encourage clients to consider environmental and social factors together with financial factors in decision making. TBL reporting provides life cycle analysis for projects including insight into key issues such as energy consumption, carbon impacts, operation and maintenance costs, social responsibility concerns, occupant health and comfort, tenant disruption and aesthetics. To help clients choose sustainable building management solutions, we present TBL solutions using a simple multi-criteria decision-making framework.

Since material for a building’s structure is the single largest carbon expenditure in the construction stage of a project, we also

developed the Carbon Load Tool to raise our clients’ awareness about the impact of design decisions. The Carbon Load Tool calculates the carbon emissions associated with various structural framing and material options.

Finally, working together with our sister company, Loop Initiatives (sustainability and management consultants), we are sharing the knowledge and experience we have gained from *The IRIS Project* with clients and the broader community. Since 2009, we have worked with Delta Hotels across Canada to engage 350,000 guests and 8,000 employees in creating green habits. We also helped WWF Canada actively engage 125 new companies, representing thousands of employees, in its “Living Planet @Work” program. For WWF’s program, we developed more than 30 tools, which have been downloaded hundreds of times each.

### **More powerful ability to attract and retain top employees**

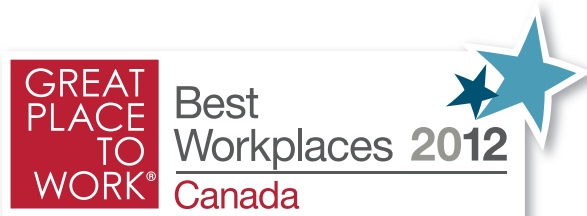
As a part of our employer brand efforts, we promote our commitment to sustainability and continuously strive to offer vibrant, fulfilling careers that balance work, family and community ambitions.

*The IRIS Project* is highlighted in our recruitment process as well as in our outreach activities (for example, information sessions on university campuses). The program highlights that we are a different kind of engineering firm – one that considers the impact of our triple bottom line in decision-making. These values resonate particularly with younger generations; this is especially important since new and recent graduates account for approximately 30% of our annual hires.

In addition, in 2011, we had eight employees return to Halsall after working elsewhere. In every case, the employee cited our corporate culture as the reason for their return. One employee in particular commented that the investment the company puts into initiatives like *The IRIS Project* reinforced her decision.

Halsall's unique "Triple Bottom Line philosophy" resonates with employees because it sends the clear message that Halsall takes its impact on employees and its impact on the world at large seriously. On the whole, the company's values represent something that employees can believe in. Engineering is not typically an industry that is associated with progressive social and environmental leadership, so it is especially exciting for employees who are enthusiastic about combining their passion for engineering with conservation.

*The IRIS Project* has helped drive efficiencies in everything we do. We have a mindset of performing work in a conscientious manner that is constantly ecologically-aware. Whether it is designing a building that will be an asset to generations to come or reducing our paper usage internally, Halsall employees enthusiastically strive for conservation. The result of this effort is that the company operates in a well-organized and efficient manner.



There is also a sense of personal satisfaction that comes from working in a company that is committed to sustainability. Seeing the impact of daily work activities, whether it be through project work, internal carbon savings or helping clients choose green upgrades, gives our employees a sense of accomplishment. We believe *The IRIS Project* has been a major factor in Halsall being ranked as one of Canada's "Best Workplaces" by The Great Place to Work® Institute for six consecutive years now, from 2007 to 2012. This ranking is based primarily on a confidential employee survey, which revealed that 86% of Halsall

employees agree that the company is a "great place to work." In addition, Halsall's Ottawa office was honoured with the Ottawa Business Journal's 2010-2011 Employees' Choice Award (ECA), which recognizes organizations within Canada's National Capital Region that value their employees as their greatest asset.

## ORIGINALITY/INNOVATION

The originality and innovation of *The IRIS Project* lies in its employee engagement, its comprehensiveness, its incorporation of and reliance on data, and its interactive reporting tool.

## Employee Engagement

Organizationally, *The IRIS Project* involves a large number of employees who each contribute to the program's initiatives. The team is led by a designated Project Manager who oversees a group of 28 employees drawn from offices across the country. These members are grouped together in one of six official Category Teams. The Category Teams are supported by Office Liaisons and are accountable to *The IRIS Project* Manager.

The Category Teams' role is to provide ideas, research, support and outreach to implement actions. Their responsibilities are to: recommend and prioritize strategies and actions, recommend policy revisions, build business cases for strategies and actions requiring investment, communicate internally, lead training sessions, drive momentum on actions and coordinate with office liaisons.

In addition to the formal team, resources from across the country support *The IRIS Project* efforts. For example, Finance provides support for the collection of performance data for reporting purposes (even when it is not financial), and the Market Communications team provides guidance on communicating IRIS achievements. Loop Initiatives, Halsall's sustainability and management consulting arm, assists with research, implementation and change management. Finally, the company's

Executive Committee oversees *The IRIS Project* by providing guidance on strategic direction and funding approvals.

In addition to the formal *IRIS Project* team, the project engages employees across all offices, at every level, from seasoned veterans to those fresh out of school. In 2011, 98 per cent of respondents in our annual Triple Bottom Line Culture engagement survey indicated that they are familiar with *The IRIS Project*. Some 93% of survey respondents knew that the primary purpose of the project is to reduce our corporate impact on the environment, up from 85% in 2010.

### **Comprehensiveness**

As shown on the chart on page 1, *The IRIS Project* is a comprehensive program. It is structured around six Categories: Employees, Carbon Footprint, Carbon Reduction, Employee Well-Being, Community Investment, Facilities, Procurement and Waste. The six Categories are measured by a total of 13 Sustainability Indicators.

The 13 Indicators are:

- Building emissions
- Travel emissions
- Carbon offsets
- Green office space
- Paper consumption
- Eco-purchasing
- Waste output
- Waste diversion
- Employee awareness (of our TBL culture)
- Employees practicing sustainability
- Charitable contributions
- Volunteerism
- Workplace engagement

### **Data-based**

*The IRIS Project* is entirely data-based. Hard data allows us to know exactly how we are tracking and how far we need to go.

When we launched the program in 2008, we measured each of the 13 Sustainability Indicators; this provided us with a baseline against which we would track our progress towards our defined targets. We also performed a comprehensive greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory so we could report our emissions and set targets and reduction strategies in this critical area. Finally, we undertook a benchmarking study of fourteen industry peers to uncover industry leaders and assess our performance against these leaders as well as those performing at industry standard.

### **Measurement**

On the IRIS reporting tool, zero represents the baseline. The goal is ten, and getting from zero to ten is a linear progression. For indicators where Halsall's performance is above observed industry benchmarks (e.g., carbon footprint and paper consumption) a higher score may be given. Our scores for each of the 13 Sustainability Indicators are available for anyone to see.

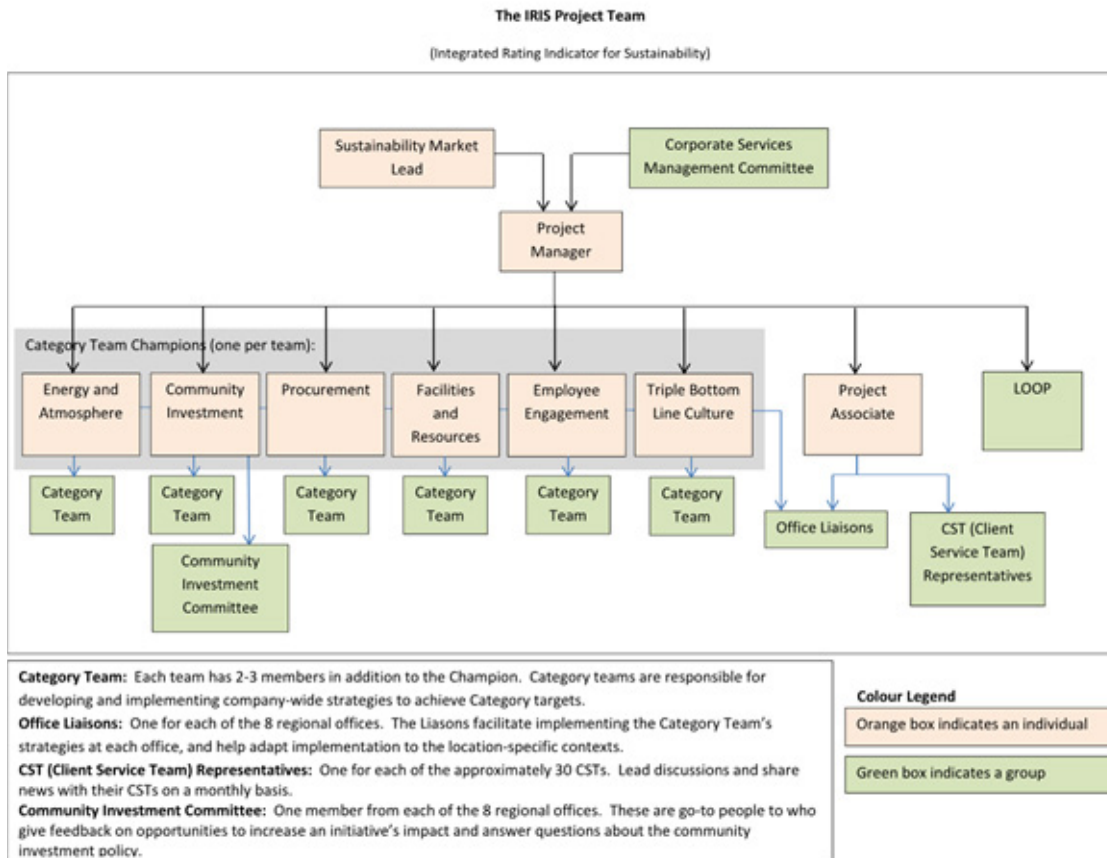
### **Ongoing benchmarking**

We include benchmarking information within the IRIS reporting tool to provide a comprehensive overview of the sustainability practices of our industry peers. We use benchmarking results to drive innovation and excellence to run best-in-class internal operations and deliver best-in-service projects.

We use benchmarking to understand current market expectations, to document how sustainability reporting is progressing, to identify opportunities for further improvements, and to encourage our teams to set market-leading aspirational targets that require effort and focused management.

To benchmark against the best, we identify sustainability leaders amongst our competitors in professional services and across other industries with advanced voluntary sustainability practices. We link our initial IRIS scoring to observed





Project Team chart

industry performance. And we revisit our benchmarking every three years as we evolve our sustainability program by adding new indicators, and setting higher targets.

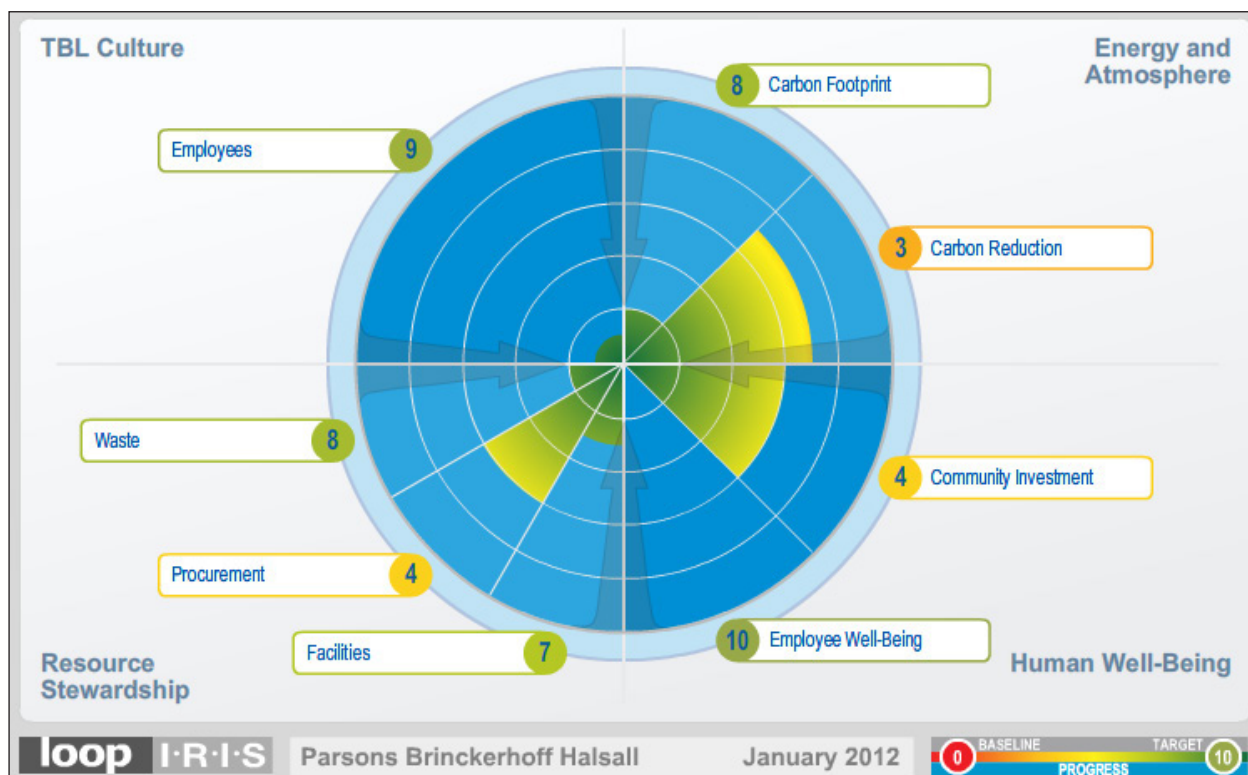
During our most recent benchmarking in spring 2012, we found that we are ahead of the curve within consulting engineering professional services: the majority of our competitors still do not disclose sustainability information. Those who are providing reporting are not setting and tracking progress to targets. The entry of multinational organizations, particularly from Europe, and consolidations among our competitors is starting to drive expectations for corporate sustainability reporting.

Achievements that we are particularly proud of in relation to our peers are:

- Our employee awareness: 98%, compared to peer achievements in the range of 72 to 85%
- Our employee engagement: 93%, compared to 83% top peer achievement
- Our community contributions (we aim for 1% of net revenue, significantly more than 1% of pre-tax profit of our peers)
- Our paper consumption: 21 kg/FTE in 2011 compared to 33kg/FTE of our peers.

### Targets

Four years ago, we set targets for our IRIS Project. We intended to complete these targets by the end of 2012 and have made noteworthy strides toward achieving these goals. The goals that we set were “stretch goals” to challenge the organization.



The IRIS Interactive Reporting Tool

## The IRIS: An Innovative, Interactive Reporting Tool

One of the most innovative aspects of *The IRIS Project* is the IRIS reporting tool itself. The IRIS, which stands for “Integrated Rating Indicator for Sustainability,” was developed by Loop Initiatives to provide a dynamic, graphical and transparent method of reporting on our sustainability progress.

Available both on our company intranet and our external website, the IRIS contains information on all aspects of our sustainability journey. The IRIS provides a clear view of each of the 13 Sustainability Indicators. The IRIS is a living, breathing application that can be updated as we move along our sustainability journey. It also allows for two-way dialogue with both internal and external stakeholders.

An online “Index Card” displays the specific Indicator’s targets, milestones, strategies, actions and score, including benchmarking statistics to provide full transparency about how our results compare to other organizations.

The “Score” states our performance on a scale of zero to ten. It features numerical data to demonstrate where we are relative to our target. It also provides information on where we are relative to other organizations giving us a transparent picture of how our results compare.

The “Targets” tab includes a high level statement of where we want to be at the end of our three-year plan (2012) and includes an exact quantified target. As well, any particular milestones that we have set out to meet along the way are outlined in this section.

The “Strategies” tab describes what course of action(s) we will take to reach our targets and “Milestones” and “Actions” tabs provide more detail about the specific activities that are planned.

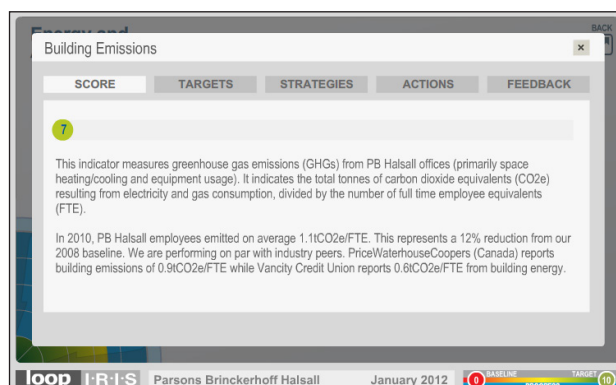
Finally, the “Feedback” tab allows anyone who has access to the tool to go enter their name, e-mail address and any comments they have about our progress toward that particular indicator, the overall IRIS Project or the IRIS reporting tool itself.

## Benefits to Employees

*The IRIS Project* benefits employees in four key ways: it engages our employees on a daily basis; it provides opportunities for personal and career growth; it encourages positive change within our employees’ lives beyond the office; and, as mentioned above, it contributes significantly to making Halsall a “great place to work.”

## Engagement

Since its launch in 2008, *The IRIS Project* has engaged employees across all offices, at every level, from seasoned veterans to those fresh out of school. Engagement is accomplished through



*The IRIS Interactive Reporting Tool – online Index cards*



a wide variety of means - posters and monitor displays, videos posted on You Tube, an annual launch conducted by video conference across all offices, regular progress updates via email and blogs on our company intranet, and intra-office contests (for example, to reduce waste or increase commuting by means other than cars).

As indicated above, overall employee engagement with the project is high: In 2011, 98 per cent of respondents in our annual Triple Bottom Line Culture engagement survey indicated that they are familiar with *The IRIS Project*. Some 93% of survey respondents knew that the primary purpose of the project is to reduce our corporate impact on the environment.

### Personal and Career Growth

*The IRIS Project* provides employees with the opportunity to take part in a 28-member national team. Each category team consists of four or five people, representing different offices.

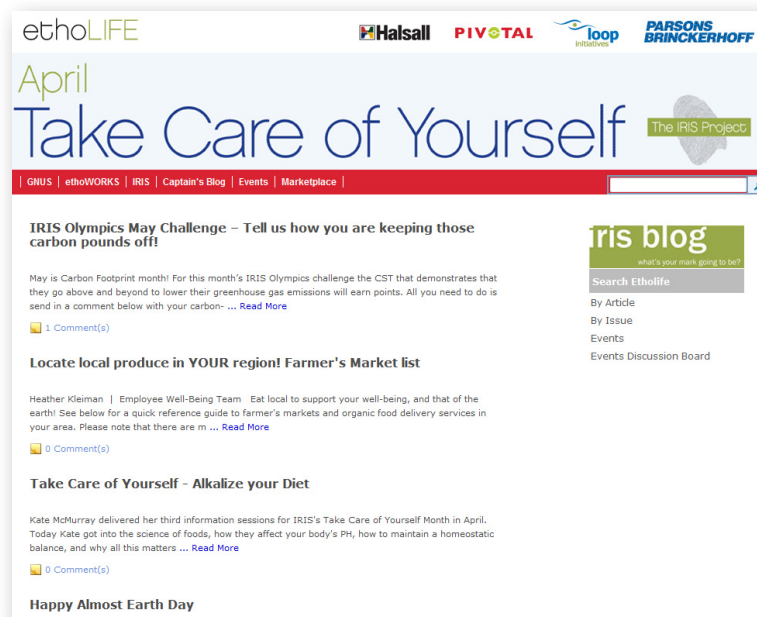
Participating as a member of one of the IRIS teams gives employees an opportunity to develop new skills and areas of expertise. *The IRIS Project* has been especially important in advancing the careers of a number of our

younger employees. For example, employees can develop and grow their ability to project manage, budget, develop action plans, and interact with senior management. Team members also become adept at taking grass-roots initiatives and turning them into business cases.

### Positive Changes Beyond the Office

The mentality that is engrained at Halsall is benefiting employees outside of work as well. Some 95% of employees are making changes in their work and personal life by incorporating sustainable practices.

In our 2011 employee engagement survey, 86% of respondents report using more than five green practices in their personal lives, surpassing our target of 70%. Similarly, 77% of respondents reported they have increased the green practices they incorporate in their personal lives over the past year. In addition, in 2011, 85% of our internal work teams participated in our Carbon Commuting Challenge that rewarded lower-carbon commuting and business travel, and 75% participated in volunteer initiatives not covered by our official company-funded volunteer time.









Left to right: *The IRIS Blog*; *Monthly enews*



## IRIS (Integrated Rating Indicator for Sustainability) Project Team

### IRIS Category Teams

| TBL Culture:<br>Employees   | Energy &<br>Atmosphere:<br>Carbon<br>Footprint<br>Reduction                         | Human Well-<br>being:<br>Workplace<br>Engagement                                    | Human Well-<br>being:<br>Community<br>Investment                                    | Materials &<br>Consumables:<br>Facilities &<br>Resource<br>Management                 | Materials &<br>Consumables:<br>Procurement  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Tania K@  | • Richard M@  | • Heather K@  | • Sonika S@   | • Ryan Z@   | • Aaron D@  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| • Nicole P<br>• Jia S<br>• Randy P<br>• Andrew M<br>• Melanie R                     | • David U<br>• Danielle K<br>• Dave D   | • Sally T<br>• Brandon M  | • Jay L<br>• Priscilla C<br>• Adriana K   | • Tomas K<br>• Pete W<br>• Bill S<br>• Melissa S                                      | • Marc D<br>• Steve M<br>• Amy G  |

Top to bottom: Monthly calendar; project team

### **Great Place to Work**

As outlined in the “Benefits to Firm” section above, we believe our commitment to sustainability has been a significant factor in our firm being ranked as a Best Workplace by The Great Place to Work Institute for six consecutive years now, from 2007 to 2012. *The IRIS Project* enhances employee morale and contributes to our employees choosing Halsall as a place to build long and rewarding careers.

### ***In closing...***

Several years ago, we decided to do what was necessary so that our company would be a desirable workplace for future generations. We started to ask some difficult questions about ourselves and about the design and construction industry. Instead of the status quo, we want to foster longer-term thinking, a holistic, team approach to projects and careers that are rewarding professionally, economically and emotionally. To us, this defines sustainability. We’re serious about it. We’re doing something about it. And, we think it makes us a better company.

