

MODEL POLICY STATEMENT FOR GREENING GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND DEPARTMENTS

Introduction

1. This policy statement has been agreed by THE MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE DEPARTMENT. It updates and replaces the Department's green housekeeping policy statement.
2. The statement:
 - covers operational and support services such as facilities management, office services, printing, publishing and procurement;
 - applies to all parts of the Department *and to its Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), except those which it has been agreed will produce their own policy statements compatible with this one;*
 - is consistent with the United Kingdom's commitment to sustainable development;
 - the Department's policy on health and safety; and
 - will be reviewed and revised as necessary at least every 3 years.

Responsibility

3. Responsibility for integrating environmental considerations into estate management and other operational areas such as facilities and procurement within the Department is taken jointly by [NAME OF MINISTER], the Departmental Minister, and [NAME AND TITLE OF PERMANENT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT]. Day to day work is delegated by them to [NAME AND JOB TITLE OF SENIOR OFFICIAL, NORMALLY MEMBER OF DEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT BOARD OR EQUIVALENT BODY, TO HAVE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY].
4. Similarly, the business plans for the Department's Agencies and larger Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBS) will require each CHIEF EXECUTIVE to:
 - be personally accountable for the environmental performance of his or her Organisation; and
 - nominate a senior manager to take responsibility for greening operations. All Agencies and *executive* Non-Departmental Public Bodies will be required to include a section on greening their operations in their annual reports which are published and sent to THE DEPARTMENT.

All staff within the Department, its Agencies and larger Non-Departmental Public Bodies and their contractors (when working on the estate) are required to follow the principles of this policy and related guidance and to assist the Department to meet its objectives. All staff must also abide by the Government's procurement policy which is to achieve value for money taking account of whole life costs, quality and benefits to meet the customer's requirements, EC procurement rules and international agreements on trade - as set out in the "Green Guide for Buyers" produced by the Department of the Environment, Transport and The Regions.

Aims

5. The Department continually aims to improve its environmental performance by:
 - **conserving** energy, water, wood, paper and other resources - particularly those which are scarce or non-renewable - while still providing a safe and comfortable working environment; reducing **waste** through re-use and recycling and by using refurbished and recycled products and materials where such alternatives are available and offer best value for money;
 - developing procedures for **monitoring** discharges and emissions to air, land and water to assess what action **is** necessary to reduce pollution or the risk of pollution;
 - **phasing out** ozone depleting substances and minimising the release of greenhouse gases, volatile organic compounds, vehicle emissions and other substances damaging to health and the environment;
 - encouraging **manufacturers, suppliers and contractors** through tighter specifications to develop environmentally preferable goods and services at competitive prices;
 - ensuring that any **products derived from natural sources** such as timber, plants and leather goods are from sustainable sources and comply with EU and international trading rules such as CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species);
 - working with **contractors** to improve environmental performance where this is relevant to the contract and to the achievement of value for money;
 - meeting all relevant current and foreseen **statutory regulations** and official codes of practice and requiring contractors do the same when working on the Department's premises;
 - developing and maintaining, where significant **hazards** exist, emergency procedures for effectively dealing with them and limiting the risk to health and the environment;

- ensuring, where practicable, that **buildings** occupied by the Department are designed, constructed and operated to improve their environmental performance;
- applying the standards in the Government's "**Green Claims Code**" when buying goods and services and when making statements about its own products and services which reach the public;
- **educating, training and motivating staff and contractors** to work in an environmentally responsible manner and to play a full part in developing new ideas and initiatives; and
- **communicating** openly with staff about environmental policies and best practice (including best available scientific advice) and **co-operating** with others in the public and private sectors at home and abroad to develop and promote environmentally sound practices.
considering:

*introducing **environmental management systems (EMSS)** to cover activities in an important operational area or building
extending the existing EMS (S) to cover other operational areas and buildings and, if not already done so, of achieving certification under ISO 14001.*

Objectives

5. The Department will preserve natural resources and reduce pollution by striving to achieve the following objectives:

Conserving Resources

(a) Energy

To improve energy efficiency on the Department's estate by:

- promoting best practice;
- buying energy efficient equipment which achieves value for money;
- introducing new techniques and technologies for using energy more efficiently without loss to productivity or comfort; and
where practicable;
- meeting more of the Department's electricity needs from internal combined heat and power (CHP) systems.

(b) Waste

- to reduce the solid waste produced from the Department's premises using resources more efficiently and improving recycling schemes; and

to ensure that:

- all waste is dealt with in accordance with legal requirements and best practice;
- training of key staff covers legal requirements and best practice; and
- all staff are encouraged to practice the 3 "Rs", ie, reduce, re-use and recycle.

(c) Water

- to monitor water consumption across the estate;

to use the information to develop benchmarks against which targets can be set to reduce water consumption by:

- following best practice;
- where feasible, installing flow restricting devices, waterless urinals and more efficient technologies where it is economic and practicable to do so; and
- where appropriate, specifying water-efficient appliances and equipment.

(d) Wood

- to purchase sustainably produced timber and timber products (such as joinery, fittings, furniture and veneers) by, for example, specifying in orders and contracts that suppliers provide documentary evidence (which has been, or if necessary can be, independently verified) that the timber has been lawfully obtained from forests and plantations which are managed to sustain their biodiversity, productivity and vitality, and to prevent harm to other ecosystems and any indigenous or forest-dependent people;

Note: such evidence might take the form of a certificate issued under a credible, preferably independent, verification scheme; or other documents which demonstrate the operation of an environmental management system incorporating forest management criteria that conform with internationally recognised principles such as the Helsinki Guidelines. (More information on these and other options available can be found in DETR's Green Guide for Buyers.)

- to ensure that timber procurements are in accordance with international agreements such as the CITES;
- to consider buying reclaimed timber or products made from reclaimed timber where it is cost effective and practicable to do so;
- to put in place procedures for monitoring their timber procurement policies, exchanging information and examples of best practice with other Departments and Agencies.

(e) Paper

- to reduce the use of paper, eg, by double-sided printing and copying and maximising the use of alternative technologies and electronic media;
- to use recycled paper comprising genuine post consumer waste (including agri-pulp);
- to ensure that any virgin pulp used in its manufacture comes from sustainably managed woodlands and that both the virgin pulp and the recycling process is chlorine free, ie, manufactured using non-chlorine bleaching agents such as oxygen, peracetic acid, sodium peroxide or more efficient pulping techniques; and
- to ensure that material published or printed by the Department is, where necessary, sealed using a water miscible varnish (not a plasticised finish) and is bound using a water based adhesive or other material which does not impede recycling.

(f) Horticulture

- to substitute the use of all slow renewables such as peat with organic wastes such as compost, manure, leaf mould, bark chippings and coir for improving the soil; and
- to maintain grounds on the Department's estate by using good husbandry and developing Action Plans to enhance local biodiversity.

Reducing Pollution

(g) Climate Change

to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide by:

- reducing energy consumption in the Department's buildings (*see 6(a) above*);

- encouraging the supply of "green electricity" through purchase where it provides value for money;
- considering the feasibility of converting to and cleaner fuels such as natural gas where available; and
- considering the feasibility of generating electricity on suitable sites using Combined Heat and Power (CHP) (preferably gas fired) and from renewable sources such as wind turbines and other developing technologies such as photovoltaic cells as they become competitive;

to control, where feasible, other gaseous and non-gaseous pollutants, which contribute to climate, change. For example, by:

- switching where possible from hydrofluorocarbons (*HFCs - used as refrigerants and in fire extinguishing systems*), *perfluorobutane (fire extinguishing systems)* and sulphur hexafluoride (*insulating switch gear*) to environmentally preferable substitutes having a low or zero global warming potential;

(h) Ozone-Depleting Substances

- to ensure that no products are purchased which contain chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), halons, carbon tetrachloride, 1 1 1 trichloroethane, or any other ozone-depleting substances where suitable alternatives exist;
- to prevent the venting of ozone-depleting substances from equipment and ensuring that they are recovered for recycling or destruction using appropriate technology;
- to extend the leakage control programme through regular servicing of all refrigeration and **air** conditioning equipment containing ozone-depleting substances in compliance with professional codes of practice.

(i) Pesticides and Artificial Fertilisers

- to minimise the use of pesticides and artificial fertilisers, eg, by switching to natural methods of controlling weeds, insects and fungal pathogens wherever possible and maintaining the fertility of soil.

(j) Asbestos

- to continue to check for the presence of asbestos in all buildings;
- to manage undamaged materials in situ through regular monitoring for signs of deterioration and, where there is deterioration, to seal, encapsulate and label it as appropriate;

- where it is necessary to remove and dispose of asbestos materials, to do so in accordance with relevant regulations and guidance to minimise the release of fibres and the risk they might pose to the health of workers, staff and visitors; and
- to require, for new applications or where asbestos materials are being replaced, that asbestos free materials be used where these exist, are equally effective and less hazardous.

(k) Hazardous Substances

- to minimise their use and to use less hazardous substances or techniques where these are sufficient for the task;
- to ensure that hazardous substances are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with legislation and best practice;
- to encourage the use of building materials, furnishings, etc, which are low emitters of formaldehyde, volatile organic compounds and other potentially hazardous substances; and
- to continue to discourage smoking through education and by prohibiting it except in designated smoking areas.

(l) Batteries

- to avoid the use of batteries (especially those with high levels of lead, mercury and cadmium) where there is a better environmental option offering value for money (eg, rechargeable or solar cell products) and, where batteries are essential, to recycle them if suitable outlets can be found.

(m) Solvents and paints

- to specify against the use by staff and contractors of products containing potentially harmful solvents where they can be eliminated or replaced by low-solvent, or solvent-free products such as water or vegetable based paints, varnishes and glues.

(n) Bio-degradable Substances

- to use fully biodegradable substances such as wood, cardboard and vegetable based lubricating oils where they provide the best environmental option and value for money.

(o) Litter

- to keep the Department's grounds clear of litter - taking account of the statutory Code of Practice on litter.

(p) Noise

- to comply with statutes, regulations, by-laws and codes of practice to keep noise levels as low as practicable.

What This Means For The Procurement Of Goods And Services

7. Procurement has a very significant environmental impact. The Department is, therefore, committed through its buying decisions to:

- require that all purchases are made in accordance with this policy statement, relevant current and foreseen legislation, its guides for suppliers and buyers and other official guidance;
- ensure that the practice of its buyers is consistent with this statement by conducting at least one pilot project or environmental audit covering an operational area or function;
- take account of whole life costs and not just the initial price when assessing value for money;
- specify recycled products and re-refined mineral oils where practicable and they provide if value for money taking account of whole life costs;
- use the European Commission's mandatory energy labelling scheme by giving preference to the most energy efficient products where they give value for money taking account of whole life costs;
- make use of environmental labels issued through recognised ecolabelling schemes to help identify environmentally preferable products (*ie, those with a low environmental impact over their life cycle*);
- make use of criteria already established under official ecolabelling schemes (where available and relevant to the contract) to improve specifications for products and services;
- use the Government's "Green Claims Code" to inform its buyers and challenge suppliers who provide information about their products which may appear to contravene the standards set out in the Code; and
- evaluate, as appropriate, the environmental performance of tenderers when relevant to the contract.

What This Means For Estate Management

8. The Department will continue to apply best practice in the management of its estate in particular by:
- ensuring that land owned by the Department or NDPBs does not pose an actual or potential threat to man and the natural and built environment, eg, from contamination of the soil, ground water and surface water, hazards to buildings and building materials and the migration of gas;
 - ensuring that the conservation of species and habitats is respected, especially if sites of international or national importance are involved, or where the priorities of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland Biodiversity Action Plans could be assisted;
 - undertaking assessments such as Building Research Establishment's Environmental Appraisal Method (BREEAM) when planning new or substantially refurbished premises;
 - ensuring that the environmental aspects of any proposed development enhance and are compatible with existing site Environmental Management Systems, eg, Greencode.
 - introducing high standards of energy and environmental management;
 - improving indoor air quality;

adhering to advice on best practice given in guidance such as the:

- Building Research Establishment's and Energy Technology Support Unit's best practice programmes;
- Building Services Research and Information's (BSRIA) *Environmental Code of practice*;
- the Construction Industry Research and Information Association's (CIRIA) *Environmental Handbook for Building and Civil Engineering Projects*.

Monitoring And Auditing

9. The [NAME OF RESPONSIBLE UNIT] will co-ordinate and promote the improvement programme to implement the above policies, prepare an annual report on progress to Ministers and senior management and publicise developments.