

The work of
Green Ministers

Green Ministers



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

The work of Green Ministers

This leaflet summarises what the Government and Green Ministers are doing to promote sustainable development and integrate environmental concerns into policies and operations. It underlines the Government's commitment to making these issues central to its work.

If you are responsible for developing policy or for procurement, building management, travel planning, energy efficiency or any other aspect of the working environment, this publication will help you contribute to the Government's objectives.

The leaflet takes each of the main areas of Green Ministers' activities in turn, and sets out what can be done and what help is available. Each section lists further guidance and useful publications.

Most guidance is available on the DETR website.

The leaflet makes clear what actions Government has already agreed. In most cases they will be as relevant for agencies and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) as they are for main departments.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

If you have any queries, you should first raise them with the green contact in your own department. A full list of departmental contacts is on pages 10 –12. The Sustainable Development Unit (SDU), who produced this leaflet, can provide you with general advice. Tel: 020 7944 6472

More information on what individuals can do is set out in DETR's *Are you doing your bit?* campaign material. Phone the DETR's help desk on 020 7944 6685 for more information.

Environment at the heart of Government

The **Prime Minister** told the United Nations General Assembly in July 1997:

We must make the process of Government 'Green'. Environmental considerations must be integrated into all our decisions, regardless of the sector. They must be in at the start, not bolted on later.

The **Cabinet Committee on the Environment (ENV)**, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, brings together Ministers from all key departments. The committee considers environmental policies and co-ordinates those on sustainable development.

Each department has a **Green Minister**. Green Ministers champion sustainable development and environmental matters in their own departments and collectively work to:

- promote the integration of sustainable development across Government and the wider public sector;
- encourage the use of environmental appraisals as part of policy making; and
- continue to improve the environmental performance of departments in managing their buildings and facilities (otherwise known as 'greening operations').

The **Green Ministers Committee** produced its first annual report in July 1999. This sets out its achievements and future work programme.

The Parliamentary **Environmental Audit Committee (EAC)** looks at the effects of policies and actions on sustainable development and the environment across all departments. It monitors the work of Green Ministers through an annual inquiry.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Greening Government – First Annual Report of the Green Ministers Committee 1998/99, free publication, from DETR, SDU, Ashdown House 123 Victoria Street London SW1E 6DE

Tel: 020 7944 6472 Fax: 020 7944 6169 or

e-mail: sdudiv@detr.gsi.gov.uk or see:

www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/ar9899/index.htm

EAC, House of Commons 7 Millbank London SW1P 3JA

Tel: 020 7219 5776 Fax: 020 7219 2731 or

e-mail: eacom@parliament.uk or see:

www.parliament.uk/commons/selcom/eahome.htm

Promoting sustainable development

Sustainable development is about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. This requires meeting four key objectives at the same time in the UK and the world as a whole:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources; and
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

In May 1999 the Government published *A better quality of life: a strategy for sustainable development for the UK*. This highlights key policies which will help achieve sustainable development. In December 1999 the Government published *Quality of life counts – Indicators for a strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom: a baseline assessment*. This report uses indicators to provide a baseline assessment, and a benchmark against which future progress can be measured.

Much of the work of Green Ministers continues to focus on the environmental aspects of sustainable development. But departments are taking the following actions on the broader sustainable development front:

- nominating a board member or equivalent to take responsibility for sustainable development and environmental issues;
- monitoring and reporting on progress;
- putting in place strategies to raise staff awareness;
- developing an action plan to integrate sustainable development into the work of all agencies and non-departmental public bodies; and
- integrating sustainable development themes into staff training.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

A better quality of life: a strategy for sustainable development for the UK, priced £11.80, The Publications Centre PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT
Tel: 020 7873 0011 Fax: 020 7873 8200 or see:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/sustainable/quality/life/index.htm

Quality of life counts – Indicators for a strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom: a baseline assessment, priced £22, DETR Publication Sales Centre Unit 21 Goldthorpe Industrial Estate Goldthorpe Rotherham S63 9BL
Tel: 01709 891 318 Fax: 01709 881 673 or see:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/sustainable/quality99/index.htm

Integrating the environment into policy

Departments must follow Cabinet Office guidance on preparing Cabinet papers and Ministers' letters to colleagues. Such correspondence has to explain any significant environmental costs and benefits of new or revised policies. The views of the Sustainable Development Unit in DETR must be taken into account.

Departments should **'screen'** policies for their environmental costs and benefits at an early stage and in accordance with DETR's guidance on *Policy Appraisal and the Environment*.

If the 'screening' suggests the effects are going to be significant, there must be a **full environmental appraisal**. This can be a separate exercise or part of the wider policy appraisal.

Cabinet Office are developing a new **integrated appraisal system** which will support sustainable development. The work involves developing impact assessment and appraisal tools to ensure policy decisions take account of the effects of policies on business, the environment, health and the needs of specific groups to deliver a fairer, more inclusive and more competitive society.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Policy Appraisal and the Environment – Policy Guidance, DETR Free literature PO Box No. 236 Wetherby LS23 7NB

Fax: 0870 1226 237

e-mail: detr@twoten.press.net or see:

www.environment.detr.gov.uk/appraisal/index.htm

Cabinet Committee Business – A Guide for Departments, free publication

Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS

Tel: 020 7270 0055 or see:

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/cabsec/2000/guide/index.htm

Review of Technical Guidance on Environmental Appraisal,

priced £11, DETR Publication Sales Centre Unit 21 Goldthorpe Industrial Estate Goldthorpe Rotherham S63 9BL

Tel: 01709 891 318 Fax: 01709 881 673

Policy Makers checklist – Integrated Appraisal System, see:

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/1999/checklist/intro.htm

Environmental management systems

An *environmental management system* (EMS) will improve an organisation's environmental performance by prioritising actions to meet specific targets. It can also provide efficiency gains and financial savings. It encourages staff, contractors and suppliers to work together to reduce environmental harm.

The Government has committed all departments to having at least one EMS by the end of the Parliament. They should plan to extend EMSs across their estates. Agencies and non-departmental public bodies can also benefit significantly from putting in place an EMS.

A number of departments and agencies have introduced EMSs certified to the ISO14001 standard. The Government hopes that 75 per cent of departments will have at least one site registered to ISO14001 by 2001.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Implementing Environmental Management Systems in Government – guidance for environmental managers and other key people, DETR, SDU
5/A1 Ashdown House 123 Victoria Street London SW1E 6DE
Tel: 020 7944 6686 Fax: 020 7944 6169 or
e-mail: sdudiv@detr.gsi.gov.uk or see:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/ems/guidance/index.htm

The Public Sector Helpdesk (PuSH) provides advice on EMSs and acts as the initial enquiry point for consultancy advice through a call-off contract.
Tel: 020 7296 6598
PuSH has also produced an information note on EMS training, see:
www.la21-uk.org.uk/pdf/emas.html

Environmental reporting

Every department has agreed to:

- contribute to the Government's annual sustainable development report;
- contribute to the annual Green Ministers report;
- include a section on their environmental performance in departmental annual reports (a core Treasury requirement);
- consider whether they should supplement the above with a separate annual environmental report; and
- report on sustainable development strategies to their boards or steering groups.

All agencies and non-departmental public bodies should report on environmental matters in their annual reports (or separately) by 2001 at the latest.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Environmental Reporting: getting started,
DETR, Environment, Business and Consumers Division, 6/E8 Ashdown House,
123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6DE
Tel: 020 7944 6564 Fax: 020 7944 6559 or
e-mail: env_business@detr.gov.uk or see:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/envrp/report.htm

Strategies for greening operations

In May 1998, Green Ministers agreed a *Model Policy Statement for Greening Government Operations*, accompanied by a *Model Improvement Programme*. The former sets out the principles departments should follow in setting their own strategies; the latter makes more detailed suggestions for specific targets in each area of operations.

All departments have strategies in place. Both these and the models need to be kept up to date and progress against strategies should be regularly reviewed. Agencies and NDPBs should liaise with their sponsor departments on introducing their own strategies.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Model Policy Statement for Greening Government Operations, see: www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/general/policy.htm

Model Improvement Programme, see: www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/general/imp_prog.htm

Energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions

The target for the Government's own estate has been a 20 per cent improvement in energy efficiency in buildings by March 2000 (against 1990/91 levels). There was an 18.1 per cent improvement by March 1998.

From April 2000 Green Ministers and ENV have agreed that departments will:

- continue to reduce energy consumption. A one per cent per annum reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is the target for the Government estate from 2000/01;
- benchmark Government buildings against the UK building stock as a whole as extensively and quickly as possible; and
- investigate the feasibility of reporting on emissions from transport as well as buildings.

Green Ministers will also consider the feasibility of a Government-wide target on purchasing renewable energy.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Environmental Reporting – Guidelines for Company Reporting on Greenhouse Gas Emissions, DETR. Environment, Business and Consumers Division, 6/E8 Ashdown House 123 Victoria Street London SW1E 6DE
Tel: 020 7944 6564 Fax: 020 7944 6559 or
e-mail: env_business@detr.gov.uk or see:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/envrp/gas/

Guidance on benchmarking is available from DETR's Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme. Good Practice Guide 286 provides advice for the civil estate while ECON 75 has equivalent advice for the MoD estate. For further information contact the Building Research Energy Co-ordination Support Unit on 01923 664258 or e-mail brecsuenq@bre.co.uk

The Government's Environment and Energy Helpline can be reached on 0800 585794.

Travel plans

A travel plan (formerly known as green transport plan (GTP)) is a package of practical measures tailored to individual sites. It aims to reduce car use for travel to work and on business, the environmental impact of travel and the need to travel to work at all.

The white paper *A New Deal for Transport* said that all departmental headquarters and main agency buildings should have GTPs by March 1999. All other key buildings should have them by March 2000. Nearly all departments were able to meet the March 1999 target.

The first tranche of plans have now been evaluated and further advice has now been published. *Developing an effective travel plan* offers step-by-step advice and examples of good practice for departments to create effective travel plans for their buildings.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

A New Deal for Transport – Better for Everyone, Cmnd 3956.

The Stationery Office National Publishing PO Box 276 London SW8 5DT

Tel: 020 7873 9090

e-mail: book.enquiries@theso.co.uk or see: www.detr.gov.uk/itwp/index.htm

Developing an effective travel plan: advice for Government departments, free publication 1/18 Great Minster House, DETR, 76 Marsham St. London SW1P 4DR
Tel: 020 7944 4897 Fax: 020 7944 2167 or see:

www.local-transport.detr.gov.uk/travelplans/advice/index.htm

A travel plan resource pack for employers. Available through the Energy and Efficiency Helpline Tel: 0800 585794 or see:

www.local-transport.detr.gov.uk/travelplans/resource/index.htm

A Guide to Green Transport Plans – Advice for Government Departments, see: www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/fleet/gcont.htm

DETR travel plan advisor: Travel Awareness branch, Zone 1/22, Great Minster House, 176 Marsham St. London SW1P 4DR.

Tel: 020 7944 4904 Fax: 020 7944 2167

Water conservation

For a modest cost, departments can make significant savings on water bills. Actions which some departments have already taken include:

- employing consultants to carry out an audit of water efficiency. This includes leakage surveys and simply discussing options with the local water company;
- installing more water meters and using the information gained to set water conservation targets; and
- introducing water saving devices such as rainwater recycling schemes, urinal controls and cistern dams ('hippos').

Green Ministers have agreed that all departments should establish ways of monitoring water use by early 2000/01. They should introduce departmental targets by March 2001.

Green Ministers are considering whether a cross-departmental target is feasible. The Government is also considering the introduction of a central water and effluent service which would give departments access to a database and monitoring system to help them set benchmarks.

**FURTHER
GUIDANCE**

Conserving Water – Advice for Government Departments, see:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/conserve/water.htm

Waste minimisation and management

The main aim for all departments must be to reduce the potential for waste by buying only what you will use. Any waste that is produced should be re-used or recycled.

The Green Ministers first annual report introduced a 2000/01 waste management target for departments to recover at least 40 per cent of total office waste. At least 25 per cent of that recovery should come from recycling or composting. This target is likely to be extended to cover non-office waste in future years.

The sort of steps departments should be taking to meet the present target and in preparing for future targets include:

- have regular waste audits;
- have recycling schemes for paper, cans, bottles, printer cartridges, used vegetable oil, vending cups and other products where possible;
- take part in Government-wide disposal contracts, such as the ones for fluorescent tubes and surplus IT equipment;
- reduce hazardous waste where relevant;
- improve systems of waste monitoring and recording; and
- re-negotiate waste disposal contracts where necessary.

**FURTHER
GUIDANCE**

Waste Guide – Advice for Government Departments, see:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/waste/guide.htm

Procurement

Government's purchasing policy allows departments to include environmental criteria in their specifications and contracts within the overall aim of achieving value for money – and often goods and services providing environmental efficiencies also save departments money.

Green Ministers want to ensure that their departments' procurement policies take into account environmental concerns. Departments should make sure their procurement manuals and other guidance reflect this.

Purchasing decisions should be made on the basis of whole life costs rather than on initial price alone. This often saves money in the long term. Working with suppliers to use resources more efficiently and reduce waste benefits both parties.

Buyers must always set out their needs in terms of goods and services required under individual contracts. However, the combined purchasing power of buyers across departments is substantial and can help develop markets for environmentally preferable products.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

DETR's Green Procurement internet site, see:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/greenpro/greenpro.htm

Environmental Issues in Purchasing, DETR-HM
 Mike Davis, PPU, HM Treasury, Tel: 020 7270 1551 Fax: 020 7270 1653
 e-mail: mike.davis@hm-treasury.gov.uk or
 Mike Acheson, DETR, Tel: 020 7944 3067 Fax: 020 7944 3059
 e-mail: mike_acheson@detr.gov.uk or see:
www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/docs/1999/envte2.html

DETR's *Green Guide for Buyers – Part one*, see:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/greenpro/ggbp1.htm

DETR's *Green Guide for Buyers – Part two: checklist*, see:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/greenpro/gguide2/gg2cont.htm

Towards More Sustainable Construction – Green Guide for Managers on the Government Estate, DETR
 e-mail: sdudiv@detr.gsi.gov.uk or see:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/land/suscon/index.htm

Further information and contacts

Nearly all the guidance referred to in this leaflet can be found on the DETR Greening Government website:
www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/gghome.htm

If you need to speak to someone about the work of Green Ministers, you should in the first instance talk to your own Green contact (each Department has one) or sustainable development expert. (See list below.)

Staff in DETR's Sustainable Development Unit will be happy to help with queries:

**Sustainable Development Unit, DETR, 5th Floor,
 Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6DE
 e-mail sdudiv@detr.gsi.gov.uk**

The Government's Environment and Energy Helpline can be reached on 0800 585794.

Further copies of this leaflet can be obtained from Sue Proberts in the SDU on 020 7944 6686. It is also available on the Greening Government website.

Cabinet Office

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Department of The Environment, Transport and The Regions

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Department for Education and Employment

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Further information and contacts *(continued)*

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Department of Health

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Department of Social Security

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Fax: 0845 377 5658
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Department of Trade and Industry

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Export Credit Guarantee Department

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Her Majesty's Treasury

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Fax: 020 7270 4762
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treasury.gov.uk

Customs and Excise

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Inland Revenue

Paul King
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Office for National Statistics

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Home Office

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Further information and contacts *(continued)*

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courtservice.gsi.gov.uk

Law Officers Departments

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Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

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This publication is one in a series of four produced by the Green Ministers Committee.
Others include:

Sustainable development: what it is and what you can do, 99EP0660/A
Increasing sustainable development awareness across Government: preparing strategies for
action, 99EP0660/B
Making biodiversity happen across Government: Green Ministers' biodiversity checklist,
99EP0660/D

Additional copies of these publications are available from:

DETR Free Literature
PO Box No 236
Wetherby LS23 7NB
Fax: 0870 1226 237
or see: www.environment.detr.gov.uk/greening/minister/grmin.htm

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