

An Action Plan for driving sustainable operations and procurement across government

**Department for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs
2010**

Introduction

This Government is committed to becoming the 'greenest ever.' In support of our wider policy goals we need to be leading by example. This action plan sets out our priorities around leadership, efficiency transparency and accountability that will underpin the reform of Government's operations and procurement.

Our Objectives

- To drive the agenda on transparency in the environmental performance of government by facilitating the release of departmental and supplier data;
- To improve the sustainability of the supply base so that government builds stronger relationships with its suppliers and manages risk and cost effectively;
- To reform government sustainable delivery by developing new tools and solutions which deliver greater efficiency and provide a lead across government and other sectors.

Priorities

1. Lead by example

Government needs to show leadership to the wider public sector, businesses and citizens. This means setting and meeting ambitious goals – but it also means sharing Government practice with the world; passing on our accounts of the innovative approaches being taken and tested. We'll also communicate the results (even where we haven't been successful) so that others can learn from our experiences.

The Government will:

- Review Government's existing waste, water and carbon targets (including transport and business travel) and ambitious new goals will be announced in December;
- Ensure that Department's not only publish their performance data online but also give an account of the innovative approaches that they are taking to provide a shared evidence-base on what works and what doesn't – available to parliament, the wider public sector, businesses and citizens.

Priorities

2. Transparency & accountability

In support of the Prime Minister's commitment to cut central Government office emissions by 10% this year, Departments are reporting energy use (and expenditure) from their headquarters in real-time online. Building on this, we are committed to being open and transparent with more of our performance data in line with the new Public Services Transparency Framework. In addition to reporting data on our direct impacts we will look to provide more transparency on Government's supply chain.

The Government will:

- For the first time publish a high-level carbon footprint of its supply chain; and work with Departments to calculate their individual footprints, identifying high impact areas to inform Government Buying Standards;
- Establish baselines to target these high carbon impact areas ensuring that departments work with their key suppliers to develop at least three projects to reduce ghg emissions;
- This transparency will enable Government to bring pressure to bear on our suppliers to offer the most sustainable products and services.

We need to drive efficiency and reform in central Government - this means reducing demand and tackling waste wherever it exists. This is about getting better value for money and ensuring that we can capitalise on the opportunities to make financial and environmental resource savings. We must reform our relationship with our key suppliers to ensure we are working in partnership to help deliver on the commitment to be the greenest Government ever.

The Government will:

- Implement changes to working practices and our estate that will deliver value for money – reduced bills for departments, and a net benefit to society;
- Through its Government Buying Standards set minimum technical specifications to encourage the purchase of low carbon technologies whilst also setting stretching functional specifications as to encourage innovation;
- Undertake a full feasibility study to better understand the benefits and costs of Government re-cycling its own paper waste to produce its own copier paper i.e. providing materials for closed loop recycling system;
- Engage and incentivise the private sector (particularly facilities management suppliers) to come up with innovative proposals to deliver change.

We are determined to drive behaviour change across Government; we need to make sustainable choices the norm in Government operations and procurement. We will implement innovative behavioural approaches to sustainability which can then be rolled out in wider policy making.

The Government will:

- Look at new ways to engage civil servants across government to drive staff behaviour change in delivering improved sustainability at work and in associated activities such as travel.

Priorities

4. Governance

We are committed to mainstreaming sustainable development across the whole of Government. Sustainable development cannot be delivered by one department alone and we working at a number of levels across government to set the policy framework and delivery plans to achieve this.

At a ministerial level, the Secretaries of State for Defra and DECC are working with the Minister of Government Policy in the Cabinet Office to ensure that government can deliver on its commitment to mainstream sustainable development, including through appropriate cabinet level working.

This high level commitment will help drive these best practice standards on estates and procurement across Government.

| Key Milestones | Start | End |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Central Government Departments work to reduce their CO ₂ emissions in line with the commitment to cut emissions from the central Government office and administrative estate by 10%. | May 2010 | May 2011 |
| The Cabinet Office will publish 2009/10 performance data against the Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate (SOGE) targets . | - | December 2010 |
| Departments continue to report against the SOGE targets for 2010/11. The Cabinet Office will then publish Government's performance data. | Through 2010/11 | December 2011 |
| Government completes review of its greening Government targets for operations and estate, including waste targets, and publish its goals and milestones beyond 2010/11. | - | December 2010 |
| Government publishes a high level carbon footprint of its supply chain; and works with key Departments to calculate their individual footprint, identifying high impact areas for emissions reduction and to inform Government Buying Standards. | October 2010 | March 2011 |
| Government publishes new and revised Government Buying Standards criteria (a) to help public sector procurers buy goods and services that are more sustainable and better value for money and (b) embed them in key centralised contracts. | October 2010 | (a) March 2011 (b) December 2011 |