

**Greening Government
Commitments:
Operations and
Procurement**

**Department for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs
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Greening Government Commitments: Operations and Procurement

The *Action Plan for driving sustainable operations and procurement across Government* (November 2010) set out how we aim to support our vision to be the greenest Government ever, through a step change in leadership, efficiency, transparency and accountability that will underpin the reform of Government's operations and procurement.

Leading by example

Government needs to show leadership on the environment 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 will also communicate the results (even where we haven't been successful) so that others can learn from our experiences.

Efficiency and reform

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 whilst continuing to demonstrate value for money through procurement.

Transparency and accountability

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.

Our vision means that we must take action to significantly reduce the impact we have on our environment: reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases, reducing our waste, reducing our water usage and making our procurement more sustainable. We have therefore agreed the following commitments.

To reduce our environmental impact, by 2015 the Government will:

1. **Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from a 09/10 baseline from the whole estate and business-related transport***
 - a. cut carbon emissions from Central Government offices by 10% in 2010/11 and all ministerial HQs to publish online real time energy use information
 - b. cut domestic business travel flights by 20% by 2015 from a 09/10 baseline.
2. **Reduce the amount of waste we generate by 25% from a 2009/10 baseline:****
 - a. Cut our paper use by 10% in 2011/12
 - b. Government will go to market with a requirement for “closed loop” recycled paper in 2011, subject to approval from the Government’s Procurement Executive Board. ***
 - c. Ensure that redundant ICT equipment is re-used (within government, the public sector or wider society) or responsibly recycled.
3. **Reduce water consumption from a 2009/10 baseline, and report on office water use against best practice benchmarks:******
 - a. ≥ 6 m³ water consumption per FTE poor practice
 - b. 4m³ to 6m³ per FTE good practice
 - c. ≤ 4 m³ per FTE best practice
 - d. % offices meeting best/good/poor practice benchmark.
4. **Ensure government buys more sustainable and efficient products and engages with its suppliers to understand and reduce the impacts of its supply chain:**
 - a. Embed the Government Buying Standards in departmental and centralised procurement contracts, within the context of Government’s overarching priorities of value for money and streamlining procurement processes.
 - b. Improve and publish data on our supply chain impacts, initially focussing on carbon, but also water and waste - setting detailed baselines for reducing these impacts.

* We intend to publish the level of ambition for the greenhouse gas emissions reduction shortly.

** This commitment will be subject to review to ensure that it is sufficiently challenging in light of the structural changes (i.e. reduced staff numbers and building closures) that will follow from the Spending Review. This will include further analysis of the costs and the benefits. The Government will also announce its ambitions for diverting waste from landfill following the outcomes of the Waste Policy Review to ensure that the ambition for Government’s action on waste is consistent with that set for the household and business sectors.

*** This measure will be informed by a feasibility study to be completed in 2011.

**** For non-office water use Departments will set their own water reduction targets focussing firstly on areas which are subject to water stress.

Reporting against the Green Government Commitments

When reporting we will also be transparent about the steps we are taking to deliver against these commitments, including the innovative approaches being taken and tested. We will also communicate the results (even where we haven't been successful) so that others can learn from our experiences. All Departments will need to submit plans for delivering these commitments to the Cabinet Office which will coordinate performance management of pan-government delivery and publish regular updates on progress to ensure we can be held to account by the public.

Government's impact and ability to show leadership stretches beyond the headline commitments, for example through the way we promote and conserve biodiversity on our estate, and the standards we set for construction projects. Departments will therefore be open and transparent on the steps they are taking to address the following areas:

Climate Change Adaptation: steps taken to adapt the estate to a changing climate.

Biodiversity and Natural Environment: including action taken to promote, conserve and enhance biodiversity, including use of Biodiversity Action Plans or equivalent and the management of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Procurement of food and catering services: including action taken within the context of overarching priorities of value for money and streamlining procurement, to encourage the procurement of food that meets British or equivalent production standards where this does not lead to an overall increase in costs; and to reduce the environmental impacts of food and catering services and support a healthy balanced diet.

Sustainable Construction: including the management of construction waste to best practice standards, the application of BRE's Environmental Assessment Methodology, and the extent to which standards used at the London 2012 Games are being applied/exceeded.

People: including for example, reporting on social and environmental assessment of office re-locations, and action taken to promote staff wellbeing.*

**In addition to reporting on actions taken to promote staff wellbeing, staff volunteering is a priority within the work on Big Society, on which the Cabinet Office Leads. In future, reporting on numbers of staff volunteering will be incorporated into departmental staff surveys and the data will be shared to inform this reporting process.*

Notes on Scope

These targets and reporting requirements apply to all Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Executive Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), and non-Ministerial Departments in England. They do not apply to the estates and operations of the Devolved Administrations, their Executive Agencies and related bodies.

To ensure that the reporting requirements are proportionate, these requirements will only apply to organisations with 250 full-time-equivalent (FTE) staff and floor space greater than 1000m². A phased implementation will be adopted to take account of the changes to the NDPB estate driven by the review of Arms Length Bodies.

Exceptional special case exemptions:

Owing to the diverse nature of the Government's estate and operations (office and non-office), it is sensible to consider cases for exceptional special case exemptions from these requirement. This would allow for cases to be tested against the following objective criteria.

- Where there are no safe, technically feasible, and environmentally friendly options available for meeting the objectives;
- Where application of a commitment might deliver a perverse outcome; and
- Exemptions may specifically be considered where an organisation has dual or multi-status (e.g. being both an NDPB and a trading body) and the extent of its commercial operations are such that it is officially classified as a 'business' under the National Greenhouse Gases Inventory.