

# ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



## Environment Agency

Sustainability is embedded throughout the Environment Agency, from the Chairman and Chief Executive, through our 20 year Environmental Vision, which sets the agenda for our Corporate Strategy to:

- Act on Climate change and its consequences
- Protect and improve water, land and air
- Work with people and communities to create better places
- Work with businesses and other organisations to use resources wisely
- Be the best we can be

Our board have committed to our 'Improving our own performance strategy 2010-15' which aims to reduce our impact on the environment, be legally compliant and manage our procurement, construction and pension fund in a responsible, sustainable and ethical manner.

There are four core reasons why we are a sustainable organisation:

1. We have strong leaders that direct us to perform sustainably, and challenge us to keep improving;
2. We have integrated sustainability into the way we work, from our procurement through to our work out in sensitive environments constructing and maintaining flood defences;
3. We have 10,500 dedicated staff that all play their part and work to manage our environmental risks and improve our performance.
4. We work in partnership to influence others and make a wider impact, whether through our pension fund, suppliers, contractors or customers.

Through the brilliant work of our staff and visionary leadership we have improved our environmental performance year on year, building on what we had already achieved in order to:

- direct carbon emissions by 19% (11,100 tonnes) since 2006-07. The indirect carbon emissions of our active pension fund by 35% since 2008 and since 2009-10 our construction projects by 11% (27,000 tonnes);
- buildings energy use by 35% (13.4 million kWh) and business mileage by 30% (15.5 million miles) both since 2005/06;
- water use by 26% (17.5 million litres) since 2005/06;
- total office waste by 45% (340 tonnes) since 2008/2009. Before this time we measured the amount of waste we sent to landfill, which has decreased by 91% (173 tonnes);

We have also reduced the amount construction waste we send to landfill and managed the amount of virgin aggregates and legal and sustainable timber we use.

Improving our own environmental performance doesn't just end with our environmental improvements. We promote sustainability to staff and customers through our internal and external internet sites, through our monthly staff news letters and on our twitter, facebook and YouTube feeds.

We also measure and reduce the carbon of our construction operations and only use timber from sustainable sources on our construction projects. We have worked with our suppliers to introduce the Construction Carbon Calculator to be used on our construction projects. Over the last four years our suppliers have saved over 27,000 tonnes of carbon emissions from our construction projects.

Our sustainable procurement strategy ensures all high risk purchases are subject to a sustainable risk assessment. All purchases in these categories are assessed for their impact on the environment. We work with our suppliers to influence them and mitigate these impacts. We have introduced a new clothing contract this year. We worked with our supplier who was able to build sustainability and Climate Change benefits into the contract for little or no extra cost.

Sustainability/Climate Change Benefits of the new clothing:

- to be washed at low temperatures;
- Not to need tumble drying ;
- Not to need ironing;
- Made from recycled materials;

This is a great example of how we have delivered our business outcomes (highly visible clothes), and at the same time delivered sustainability benefits (less energy, recycled materials, type of transport) without incurring additional costs, by working together as an integrated team.

We also have in place an award winning ethical pension fund which through investing in sustainable and ethical investments has managed to decrease the environmental footprint of the fund by 42% less than the market benchmark and emit 35% less carbon than the market benchmark.

So we not only manage our own sustainability performance, but also influence others in improving their sustainability performance.

We have been certified to ISO14001 and EMAS since 2005 so we have independent verification of the improvements we make.

We protect the environment and we are expected to practice what we preach and lead by example.

Our climate change/sustainability agenda is a must for our organisation to influence others to improve their environmental performance, one of our major roles.

The businesses we regulate are given light touch regulation if they have a management system that is accredited to ISO14001; we can't then influence businesses that don't have ISO14001 to adopt these criteria if we don't have ISO14001 ourselves.

Our sustainability performance allows us to influence government in improving their environmental performance, for example, we input our environmental expertise into pan government contracts. An example of this is the e-auction for car purchases; we were able to influence the cabinet office into only allowing cars to be purchased that emitted less than 110 g/km for small cars up to 130g/km for large cars.

We have built partnerships with various external organisations to help promote the work that we do from flood risk management, climate change, creating a better place and working with businesses.

On sustainability we engage various stakeholders including:

- our board and directors who each have sustainability objectives built into their roles and performance objectives;
- our staff in thinking about how they can do their job differently to reduce their environmental footprint. We do this by funding innovative ideas our people have for reducing our carbon footprint, through our Carbon Reduction Fund.
- our suppliers – Our supplier development sustainability programme focuses on the environmental and social performance of key suppliers. We offer advice and encourage our suppliers to adopt sustainable practices for themselves and their supply chains. Providing commercial benefits to them and the wider business community. Our £2.5Billion Construction Framework is a good example, sustainability is built in to manage; resources use; sustainable timber; carbon; and improve suppliers sustainability impacts
- our customers – as part of our Flood Risk Management projects local schools and community groups are invited to open days to learn about climate change and its link to flooding. Our people can also take two environmental outcome days a year, working with our partners to deliver an environmental outcome in their local area.

We engage our people in sustainability through training. Our corporate induction provides information on our environmental impacts and how to reduce them in their day to day work. All new managers attend sustainability training to help them embed sustainability within their teams.

Our policies are designed to engage our people on sustainability; we communicate the benefits and allow staff to deliver sustainability savings in their work areas. Our travel hierarchy provides our people with the information to allow them to make informed choices to reduce cost, environmental and well being impacts of their travel decisions.

This complements our approach with directors who receive management information on our performance quarterly so they can lead and steer our sustainability direction. One recent example is their request for the environmental, economic and social performance of their business areas travel and how they can influence and reduce their impacts in their business area.

We are always looking for ways to improve our environmental performance, with innovation being at the heart of our award winning Carbon Reduction Fund (CRF). This was set up as the Environment Agency's (EA) alternative to carbon offsetting. It allows the money that would have been spent on offsetting our carbon emissions to be spent on internal investment in carbon reduction technology using ideas that come from our staff.

Our people are encouraged to look at the ways we work and come up with innovative ways of reducing carbon whilst still achieving our business outcomes. The fund recognises how integral our people are to reducing our carbon footprint and demonstrates the Agency's commitment to achieve this.

The objectives of the CRF are to:

- Invest in ourselves to directly reduce our carbon emissions
- Encourage staff involvement and engagement in carbon reduction
- Encourage innovation and support new carbon reduction technology
- Trial new ideas and then scale up
- Lead by example and share best practice

Every year the fund is opened allowing staff to apply for funding for carbon reduction projects. The criteria for successful projects are the cost per tonne of carbon saved and innovation. This allows for innovative ideas and technology to be tried

without cost being the only driving factor. Since 2007, 97 different projects have been approved investing over £1M in innovative ideas.

Benefits include:

- Saved 2,700 tonnes of carbon emissions and £370k of savings. The benefits accumulate year on year reducing the EA's carbon footprint and the effects of climate change;
- Reducing the indirect carbon emissions of our suppliers, our construction projects have saved over 27,000 tonnes of carbon;
- Most projects are delivered by SME's working locally to the project and stimulating local economies;
- The projects are innovative and stimulate the development of low carbon technologies;
- The projects have social effects in that we inform members of the local community of the projects and allow them to learn what can be achieved, by low carbon technology;
- Allow the benefits of the projects to be shared with others such as water companies and developing countries.

All projects have long term benefits as they are designed to be scaled up, or have long life spans. The low carbon pumping competition we are funding will deliver completely new pumping solutions to the market and stimulate the growth of British SMEs who retain the IPR for the applications which can be sold to other such as water companies and the developing world.