

What does sustainability mean for my organisation?

Govt³ quick tips for sustainability

Being sustainable begins with looking at all areas of your organisation in daily practice. For example:

Take a look at the office building you are in. Is it built with sustainable materials? Is it set up to be energy efficient? When undertaking a fit-out or refurbishment choose systems and products that are energy efficient, conserve water, produce good indoor air quality, have a recycled content, are durable and reduce the production of waste.



Your organisation, like any other, generates waste. Can you reduce, reuse and recycle to lessen the impacts of waste? When constructing new buildings or retrofitting consider installing enhanced recycling systems.



Government agencies are a big user of office consumables and equipment, such as paper and photocopiers. Can your organisation reduce the amounts of paper used and can you buy products that are better for the environment?



Make smart transport choices. Is your existing vehicle fleet clean and fuel efficient. Are you encouraging other means of transport?



Here are some quick and easy ways you can work smarter and more sustainably in your workplace.

- 1 Switch off when not in use**
Reduce your energy waste by switching off lights and equipment, especially when everyone's gone home for the day. This is a simple yet effective way to save on your energy bill.
- 2 Reduce, reuse and recycle**
Reduce the amount of rubbish your office produces by minimising your paper use, by thinking about the packaging when you make purchases and by using recycling facilities.
- 3 Green your office**
Save money and support environmental practice by reducing your paper use, buying energy efficient appliances and stationery products that are kinder to the environment. Make a difference by specifying "greener" options when using printing services and ordering office equipment.
- 4 Choose greener and safer products**
Choose products that have less impact on human health and on the environment. Consider products with an eco-label (eg Environmental Choice) when purchasing paints, carpets, appliances, cleaning products etc. Equip your kitchens with 'fair-trade' products.
- 5 Walk the talk whenever you can**
Choose other ways of getting about such as walking, cycling or public transport. If you use a vehicle, make sure it is clean, fuel efficient and well maintained. Explore options to offset the carbon emissions of your travels.

Your Govt³ contact is: _____

Walking the talk to sustainability

3

Sustainability seems to be a new mantra – but what is it? A generally accepted definition says it is:

“development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The New Zealand Government has agreed that sustainable development principles should underpin economic, social and environmental policies – at home, and abroad. It has set up work programmes which contribute to sustainable development. It expects government agencies to set an example and undertake sustainable practices in their own organisations.

Govt³ programme

Under the motto ‘walking the talk’, the Ministry for the Environment runs the Govt³ programme that helps government agencies become more sustainable. The ‘3’ in Govt³ stands for the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economic.

Becoming more sustainable is not only the right thing to do, it offers measurable gains. For example, your organisation will save money through better energy efficiency and reduced use of materials, and the environment will benefit too.

The Government spends approximately five billion dollars each year on purchasing goods and services. For example, it manages a large workforce, it owns and leases buildings, uses paper and runs vehicle fleet to name a few. This has a huge impact on the environment.

The possibilities for improvements are endless. But at the same time, adopting sustainable practices may seem daunting and complicated. Govt³ can help agencies develop an action plan which targets areas for change over a manageable timeframe.

Govt³ is about practical action – it is about government agencies ‘walking the talk’ when it comes to doing things differently. For example, it helped Transit New Zealand reduce its waste by 51 percent. The Ministry for the Environment now spends approximately \$100,000 less a year on energy than the average building of the same size due to implementation of a number of energy saving measures.

Govt³ helps agencies:

- 1 cut down the amount of waste sent to landfill – by promoting actions to reduce, reuse, recycle and increase composting
- 2 manage vehicle fleets to reduce CO₂ emissions and fuel use
- 3 improve the sustainable performance of buildings
- 4 buy environmentally friendly products such as recycled paper, energy efficient photocopiers, ‘cleaner’ carpet tiles and sustainably produced office furniture
- 5 take sustainable business practices into account when contracting for services
- 6 work on policies that are aimed at addressing environmental impacts
- 7 prepare a Sustainable Practice Action Plan.

Govt³ promotes a ‘learning by sharing’ approach where participating agencies learn from each other’s experiences. Govt³ runs regular network meetings, linking people across agencies and sectors, and provides case studies and technical information on the Govt³ website and the Govt³ shared workspace. Participating agencies report progress against eight key sustainable practice indicators through the completion of an annual Govt³ survey.

How to get involved in Govt³

You can get involved in your agency’s Govt³ initiatives. See the back of this brochure to find out who is the key Govt³ contact in your agency or contact the Govt³ team at the Ministry for the Environment.

Get your name on the Ministry for the Environment’s Govt³ contacts list so you are informed about upcoming workshops and Govt³ network meetings by emailing: govt3@mfe.govt.nz

Check out the range of Govt³ practical tools, case studies and government success stories and links at: www.govt3.mfe.govt.nz

Published in October 2006 by the Ministry for the Environment.

Ministry for the Environment
Environment House,
23 Kate Sheppard Place
PO Box 10362
Wellington

Phone (04) 439 7400
Fax (04) 439 7700

www.mfe.govt.nz

Publication number: INFO 174