

All organisations should work to reduce its negative environmental impact, both direct impacts deriving from the organisations own activities (e.g. travels, resource consumption, waste generation) and its indirect environmental impacts associated with the organisation's programmatic activities. This document deals only with minimising the direct environmental impacts from organisations by greening the office.

A green office is a sustainable one. This means that the workplace strives to minimise its negative impact on the environment, and takes necessary measures to ensure resource efficiency, lower emissions and less waste. Greening your office will not only reduce the environmental impact of your workplace but also keep employees motivated and make them proud of their workplace. It is also a way to “walk the talk” and be an inspiration to other organisations. By going green, there is also potential for cost savings through efficient use of resources. The main responsibility of greening the office lies with the top management. At the same time, it is important that all staff in the office are involved and contribute to a green and sustainable office. It is therefore important that there is consensus within the organisation about key concepts and definitions concerning greening the office.

For more information on key concepts and definitions, see [Environmental concepts and definitions used by Sida - an overview](#).

The environmental impacts of your workplace can be reduced through a number of activities. You can find some examples and ideas in the below checklist on how to make your office greener. The local context and specific local challenges and opportunities will determine what is relevant and feasible to do in a particular location. You can also make study visits to organisations that have come a long way with greening their office, to learn and get inspiration.

The checklist is designed to be an inspiration to start greening your office by identifying low hanging fruits (measures that can easily be introduced) as well as measures that can be implemented over time. After identifying areas that you want to start improving, it is important that you jointly produce an action plan with priority measures and a clear division of responsibilities. An environmental working group can be appointed to drive the work forward and follow up the work continuously.

Remember, you don't have to do all at once, there are many green initiatives that you can start with in the workplace that will make a difference!

CHECKLIST FOR GREENING THE OFFICE – EXAMPLES AND INSPIRATION

| | YES | NO | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----------|
| Reduce amount of paper | | | |
| Printing is mainly done on both sides | | | |
| Paperless alternatives are used whenever possible (invoicing, information materials, etc.) | | | |
| Reduce and recycle waste | | | |
| Paper, metal, plastic and glass are recycled if possible* | | | |
| Food waste is composted | | | |
| Recycling bins are clearly labelled and regularly monitored, and education is provided when needed | | | |
| Unused and/or outdated electronic devices are donated for reuse or properly recycled* | | | |
| Hazardous waste, including batteries, fluorescent light tubes and compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) are safely stored and properly recycled* | | | |
| Only reusable dishware (mugs, cutlery, plates, etc.) is available for day-to-day office use | | | |
| Only waste bins (and e.g. not water closets) are used for disposals | | | |
| Reduce chemical use | | | |
| The least possible use of chemicals for indoor and exterior maintenance | | | |
| Potentially hazardous products such as paints, solvents and cleaners are safely stored and recycled* properly | | | |
| Green-certified** cleaning products and detergents are used in the office | | | |
| Reduce water use | | | |
| Water-efficient toilets and water taps are installed | | | |
| If possible, only tap water is provided | | | |
| No water delivery service of single-use plastic bottles | | | |
| Rainwater is collected for garden watering | | | |
| Water use is measured | | | |
| Landscaping is designed to use water efficiently | | | |
| Exterior water faucets/water hoses have auto-shutoff nozzles that don't leak | | | |

* Not all countries, cities and/or communities have systems for collection and recycling of waste.

** If no certified products exist, use cleaning products and detergents that do not include ingredients that are harmful for the environment.

| | YES | NO | Comments |
|---|-----|----|----------|
| Reduce use of non-renewable energy | | | |
| Purchase of renewable energy is encouraged if possible | | | |
| Solar panels have been installed to cover all or part of the office's energy needs | | | |
| Only energy efficient lights are used (e.g. LED bulbs) | | | |
| Lighting is dimmed or turned off when adequate sunlight is available | | | |
| Emergency EXIT lights use LED bulbs | | | |
| Occupancy sensors/timers are used for lighting in storage room, offices, restrooms and other common rooms | | | |
| Computers, printers and copiers are set to sleep after at least 15 minutes of inactivity | | | |
| Thermostats automatically reduce heating and air conditioning during closed hours | | | |
| Windows are energy-efficient | | | |
| An energy audit is conducted regularly | | | |
| Transportation – reduce amount of emissions of CO₂ and other pollutants related to transportation | | | |
| A travel/meeting policy is developed and implemented to reduce emissions of CO ₂ | | | |
| Air travels are replaced by other modes of transport or video/telephone meetings when possible | | | |
| Teleconference and videoconference technologies are encouraged and used, e.g. virtual field trips | | | |
| Alternative transportation (train, walk, bike, transit, car-share, carpool, or electric vehicle) is encouraged for work-related trips whenever possible | | | |
| Avoid running vehicle engines idle for more than one minute, except when for security reasons | | | |
| Information related to transportation options, including public transportation, are displayed on website for guests | | | |
| Secure bike parking is available for employees and visitors | | | |
| If possible/relevant, electric vehicle charging stations are available for employees and visitors | | | |
| Eco-driving is encouraged | | | |
| For more information on travels and meetings – see Dialogue support for smarter travels and meetings (in English) or Dialogstöd med samarbetspartners för smartare resor och möten (In Swedish) | | | |

| | YES | NO | Comments |
|--|-----|----|----------|
| Procurement | | | |
| Green procurement ¹ is encouraged and considered in the organisation's procurement guidelines and systems | | | |
| Organic, fair trade and locally produced coffee and food are prioritised | | | |
| Caterers are encouraged to follow sustainable practices (reusable dishware, buffet style serving, minimal packaging, etc.) | | | |
| Management and employee engagement | | | |
| An environmental policy (or equal) has been developed and is implemented | | | |
| An environmental action plan has been developed, with specific targets and mitigation measures, and is implemented, monitored and regularly revised | | | |
| An employee or a working group responsible for the green office is supported by management in implementing the plan and policy | | | |
| Environment-related trainings or events about environmental best practices are encouraged by management and take place annually (at a minimum) | | | |
| All employees are informed about the environmental policy, action plan, and sustainability best practices and take an active part in implementation | | | |
| Various information channels are used to inform internally and externally about ongoing environmental work (on website, in newsletters, signs in the office, etc.) | | | |
| A system is in place to gather employee feedback, comments and suggestions for improvements related to sustainability actions | | | |
| Create monthly green challenges among staff | | | |

¹ Green Procurement means purchasing products and services that cause minimal adverse environmental impacts. It incorporates human health and environmental concerns into the search for high quality products and services at competitive prices.