

# What we are doing for the environment



With a large estate covering the UK and Northern Ireland, we are one of the 'big four' government departments making a significant contribution to sustainable operations and procurement in the public sector. We also have responsibility for administering environmental taxes - climate change levy, landfill tax and aggregates levy - which puts us further in the spotlight in terms of how we manage our own environmental impact.

## Reducing our environmental footprint

Greenhouse gas emissions and climate change have the potential to do enormous damage to the UK's economic and social wellbeing. Working closely with HM Treasury, we play a key role in supporting green growth and the building of a fairer, more balanced, economy through our effective management of the tax system.

We are committed to reducing the environmental impact of how we deliver our own services. By cutting greenhouse gas emissions from our operations, our estate and business travel, we are ensuring that our future development is sustainable and cost-effective.

In response to the Government's target for departments to reduce carbon emissions from offices by ten per cent in the 12 months to May 2011, we:

- achieved the second largest saving (in tonnes of carbon) of any department, cutting emissions by 13.4 per cent, or 22,408 tonnes
- achieved a 38 per cent reduction in carbon emissions from air travel

- achieved a 25 per cent reduction in road travel emissions
- achieved a 14 per cent reduction in copier paper usage, against the previous year's figures.

## What we have achieved in 2011-12

Working towards the 2015 five-year targets set for all government departments, our measures for 2011-12 were to:

- cut greenhouse gas emissions from offices and domestic business travel by four per cent. We achieved 13.5 per cent
- cut water usage by one per cent. We achieved 11 per cent – a saving of more than 91 million litres
- cut copier paper usage by ten per cent. We achieved nine per cent – a saving of more than three million sheets
- make procurement sustainable and reduce the environmental impact of our supply chain. We achieved this with measures including moving our car fleet to low carbon fuel efficient vehicles, ensuring our furniture meets the government's timber procurement policy, and tracking our suppliers' approach to sustainability.

Progress against these measures is covered in our sustainability accounts within our 2011-12 annual report. To support transparency, we already publish figures on our real-time energy consumption in 100 Parliament Street, our headquarters in Westminster.

### How we are driving down consumption

We are making progress in a number of areas, which affect almost every aspect of our work. They include:

**Estates:** reducing energy consumption, water usage and waste by rationalising and reducing the amount of office space we occupy and working with companies who manage our estate to improve energy management. This includes installing equipment to make sure we use electricity efficiently; reducing office temperatures where this is appropriate; installing meters to monitor energy consumption; and extending recycling facilities. The Carbon Reduction Commitment energy efficiency scheme provides a further incentive for us to cut energy usage from 2012-13. Our first payment under the scheme will be approximately £1.8 million.

**Communications technology:** rationalising our computer hardware; improving the energy efficiency of our data centres and server rooms through active power and cooling management programmes; and making our technology-related carbon emission costs more visible to end-users.

**Behaviour change:** a communication campaign, supported by a network of more than 450 local 'Green Volunteers', to encourage all our people to reduce their waste, water, energy use and business travel. We've developed an innovative environmental waste calculator, to measure the financial and carbon savings that can be achieved through changes in individual behaviour or processes, by reducing paper, printing, postage and the use of office equipment. We've also embedded environmental thinking into our efficiency programme, which provides a structured approach to identifying and reducing wastes.

**Reducing travel:** we have set targets to reduce the emissions from all our business travel and expect staff to use sustainable options, such as video and telephone-conferencing facilities and collaborative online working, to reduce our business-travel footprint. When people do have to travel, we've promoted a shift away from road and air to rail travel; and if road travel is necessary, we encourage staff to use our low-carbon, fuel-efficient pool cars.

**Cutting waste:** we have installed low-energy printers and copiers across our estate, which print double-sided and black and white as the default setting and provide comprehensive management information to track paper use. All of our waste copier paper is recycled into new copier paper under a 'closed-loop' recycling scheme – 4,453 tonnes of paper was recycled in this way during 2011-12.

Working with companies who manage our estate, we are extending recycling facilities and we are committed to ensuring that all computer equipment is recycled or disposed of responsibly.

**Making our customer service greener:** we have significantly improved our internet presence, saving huge quantities of paper from printed tax returns, notices and letters; encouraged customers to complete transactions online; and introduced alternative electronic media, such as text messages. A record 9.45 million people completed online Self Assessment returns for 2011-12, saving more than 2,000 tonnes of carbon related to printing, postage and storage. As a result of all VAT returns being filled online from April, we will save more than 5.5 million sheets of paper.

### Working with our suppliers

Our suppliers are an important link to our customers and it is essential they operate in a sustainable and environmentally-responsible way. We were one of the first departments to invest in an assessment tool, which tracks sustainability in our supply chain. Using this tool has enabled us to encourage good practice with our suppliers, resulting in 78 per cent of them setting a target to increase their recycling rates by more than 30 per cent, and 56 per cent setting a target for water reduction.

### Recognition of our progress

The key measure of our progress comes from a reduction in our environmental footprint, but we have also received external recognition for the steps we are taking to become a more sustainable organisation. We were:

- accredited by the Carbon Trust for completion of the Public Sector Carbon Management Programme to drive cost efficiencies and cut carbon emissions
- recipients of the 2011 Business in the Community 'Big Tick' award for our approach to sustainable business travel
- finalists in the 2011 and 2012 Climate Week Awards – Best Initiative by a Government Body – for making environmental targets a priority and for 'closed loop' paper recycling
- winners of the 2011 'Fleet Hero' Award: Best Large Public Sector Fleet (we have won for three consecutive years)
- joint winners (with the Home Office) of the 2010 Civil Service Sustainability Award for embedding sustainability within the supply chain.

### To find out more

Please visit our website at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/corporate-responsibility/](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/corporate-responsibility/)