

1 ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

The NAO is committed to addressing sustainability through its audit work. We will address sustainability issues where relevant in our value for money work, engage with external developments in public sector sustainability reporting and provide relevant support to select committees such as the Environmental Audit Committee. This commitment is set out and addressed in our business planning.

The NAO Leadership Team approves our Environmental Policy for our operations, which is realised through the statements and procedures referenced in the environmental policy manual.

The environmental policy ensures that the documentation is appropriate to the nature, scale and environmental impacts of our activities and includes a commitment to continuous improvement and the prevention of pollution.

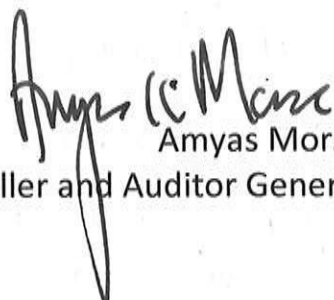
It is the National Audit Office's policy to practice what we preach and so manage our organisation in the most environmentally responsible manner, to comply with the applicable environmental legislation and with any other requirements necessary, in relation to the environmental aspects of our organisation.

We shall assess and consider the environmental impact of all our activities at planned intervals and use the environmental management system to provide a framework for the setting and reviewing of environmental objectives and targets, to help support our continuous improvement.

Whilst accepting their individual and collective roles in providing environmental management leadership to our organisation, the Board has appointed John Thorpe as the Executive Leader with particular responsibility for environmental risk management issues. The NAO will apply with all environmental legislation and competent people have been appointed to advise upon and ensure compliance with their requirements.

This policy is documented, implemented, maintained and communicated to all employees and sub-contractors working on behalf of the National Audit Office through regular training of our environmental responsibilities.

To ensure staff and public awareness of this policy, it will be displayed in a prominent position within the organisation and, in an area that is accessible by the public.


Amyas Morse
Comptroller and Auditor General

2 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

2.1 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all parts of the NAO and covers the immediate impacts of our activities and policies. It is important that both management and staff play their part in adhering to the policy.

This policy concentrates on our internal operations, but will be revised and updated as necessary to take account of any legal, technological, managerial, process or related developments and, over time, the broader impact of our activities.

2.2 Sustainable Development Policy

Organisations within both the private and public sectors are increasingly seeking to achieve and demonstrate sustainable development by controlling the impact of their activities, products and services on the environment. This is becoming increasingly important for organisations because of a growing awareness of sustainability issues, increasingly stringent legislation and other factors promoting environmental protection and best practice.

The National Audit Office (NAO) recognises that its activities can have an impact on environmental and social issues. The NAO also recognises the importance of practicing what we preach, and being in line with the expectations set for our clients in terms of sustainable development, where relevant and cost effective to do so. In order to improve our own performance, this Sustainable Development Policy has been developed to underpin the NAO's commitment to these issues and to raise awareness of sustainable development through a programme of continuous improvement in our environmental and social practices and performance.

2.3 Environmental Commitments

These commitments set out a programme of continuous improvement to reduce the harmful impacts of our operations on the environment and to prevent pollution. In the course of our operations and within resource constraints, we will establish systems and procedures to work towards the Government's sustainable targets and seek, over time, to improve our environmental performance by:

Using resources effectively

- Conserving energy, water, wood, paper and other resources, particularly those which are scarce or non renewable, while still providing a safe and comfortable working environment.
- Reducing waste through re-use and recycling and by using refurbished and recycled products and materials where such alternatives are economical and suitable.
- Ensuring that any naturally-derived products, such as timber and plants, are from sustainable sources, and comply with EU and international trading rules.

Reducing pollution

- Monitoring relevant discharges and emissions to air, land and water to assess what action is necessary to reduce pollution or the risk of pollution.
- Reduce, where practical, ozone-depleting substances and volatile organic compounds, vehicle emissions and other substances damaging to health and the environment.
- Minimising the release of greenhouse gases by decreasing our energy consumption where possible and increasing the energy efficiency of new equipment purchased.

Complying with regulations

- Meeting, and in some cases exceeding, all relevant, current and foreseen statutory regulations, official codes of practice and other requirements that we adopt; specifying contractors do the same when working on our premises.
- Developing and maintaining, emergency procedures for effectively dealing with significant hazards where they exist and limiting the risk to health and the environment.

Improving management communication

- Communicating openly with staff and other stakeholders; educating, training and motivating our colleagues, and relevant others, to encourage them to support our environmental programmes and jointly develop new ideas and initiatives.
- Responding appropriately to reasonable external requests for environmental information.

Improving procurement

- Encouraging manufacturers, suppliers and contractors through our contracts and other means to improve or develop environmentally preferable goods and services at competitive prices.

Improving estates management

- Ensuring, where practicable, that buildings occupied by the NAO are designed, constructed and operated to optimise their environmental performance.
- Taking account of environmental considerations when making decisions, planning and developing policy, programmes and projects.

2.4 Monitoring and reporting

The NAO will monitor progress against the environmental commitments above, and the Government's sustainable targets as appropriate, and seek, over time, to develop its internal and external reporting arrangements.

2.5 Environmental Procurement Policy

The NAO recognises that effective procurement can help towards sustainable development by setting environmental objectives, which seek to protect the environment when purchasing goods and services and ensure the prudent use of natural resources in the production of goods and services purchased.

2.5.1 There is a great deal of scope to consider environmental issues in procurement, within the context of achieving value for money. The aim of this policy is to ensure that, where possible, the goods and services purchased for the NAO are manufactured, delivered, used and managed at end-of-life in an environmentally responsible way.

The NAO will therefore:

- Progressively integrate environmental considerations into procurement activities and processes.
- Assess contracts, where relevant, to determine the nature and significance of associated environmental impacts, and take these into account when selecting suppliers.

Issue: 2

- Seek to reduce waste through re-use and recycling and by using refurbished and recycled products and materials, where such alternatives are available.
- Ensure that any products derived from timber or leather goods for furniture requirements, are from sustainable sources and comply with EU and International trading rules.
- Motivate suppliers to develop environmentally responsible goods and services.
- Monitor the governments' environmental procurement objectives, and seek to mirror them where relevant and cost-effective to do so. We will also seek to follow guidance provided by the Office of Government Commerce, where applicable.
- Ensure that employees engaged in procurement activities have access to appropriate guidance and training to assist them to implement this policy.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS

3.1 Environmental Aspects

The NAO has identified the environmental aspects of our activities over which it has an influence and maintains a documented procedure that includes normal and abnormal activities as well as negative and positive aspects.

We have identified the impact these aspects have on the environment and their significance in relation to our other aspects and the environment. Objectives and targets have then been set accordingly to minimise or eliminate these impacts. Any new products, processes and services will result in the aspect assessment being completed.

3.2 Legal and other Requirements

The NAO has identified the legal and other requirements to which we subscribe or must comply with. A list of relevant legislation, codes of practice, policies, schemes and guidance notes will be kept as part of our environmental management system and maintained by the Facilities Operations Manager.

3.3 Objectives, Targets and Programme

We have established a procedure for dealing with environmental objectives and targets and the setting of these for each relevant environmental impact.

Consideration has been given to:

- Legal requirements
- Significant environmental aspects identified in the aspect assessment
- Technological options,
- Financial, operational and business requirements
- Views of interested parties such as local offices and our neighbours.

We have prepared and will maintain a programme for achieving our objectives and targets, along with the responsibilities for all functions in the organisation, the means for achieving them and the time frames.

Issue: 2

3.4 Resources, Roles, Responsibility and Authority

The NAO has appointed John Thorpe as the Executive Leader with particular responsibility for environmental risk management issues as well as the Facilities Operations Manager who has responsibility for:

- Ensuring the environmental management system is maintained in accordance with the International Standard – ISO 14001:2004
- Reporting on the performance of the environmental management system to the NAO Leadership Team for review and improvement.

3.5 Competence, Training and Awareness

The NAO has identified and documented a procedure to ensure that all training is completed and records of all training are maintained accordingly. Employees at all levels will be made aware of the Environmental Management System and Environmental Policy through:

- A mandatory e-learning module;
- Display via the intranet (MERLIN); and
- Communications through the Sustainable Office Group.

4. MANAGEMENT REVIEW

The Environmental Management System will be reviewed annually to ensure its continued suitability, adequacy. The Operations Manager will ensure that the appropriate information is made available for the management review and this review will be documented.

