

# **Environmental Policy**

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**Veale Wasbrough Vizards LLP**

## 1 Overview

We recognise that an awareness of the environment and associated issues is essential. Our objective is to achieve a balance that addresses the needs of the business whilst complying with our responsibility as an organisation to help maintain the environment.

We recognise that the following activities have an impact on the environment:

- electricity, water and gas consumption
- resource use, waste production and levels of recycling
- business travel (including couriers and client travel)
- employee commuting
- engaging suppliers (e.g. production of building furnishings/equipment, production and purchase of other materials including stationery and printer ink and the delivery transport of all supplies).
- other activities which the firm is indirectly responsible for (e.g. energy used by off-site, file storage facilities, printing of e-mails by external recipients etc).

## 2 Our commitment

We recognise the need to reduce our impact on the environment and to take responsibility for future generations by ensuring our business is run sustainably.

In order to achieve this, we commit to:

- reducing our consumption of resources and waste and to reduce our carbon footprint by at least 10% between 2015 and 2018
- improving and promoting recycling throughout our offices
- minimising the environmental impacts of our business operations, including consideration for the environmental criteria used in the procurement of goods and services
- establishing measurable targets for minimising the environmental impacts of our business operations and implementing programmes to achieve those targets
- challenging ourselves to continuously improve our environmental performance and implement recognised best practice into our business operations
- encouraging partners, staff, suppliers and clients to share these objectives and participate in our programmes
- implementing an environmental management system throughout the firm
- becoming ISO 14001 accredited.

To meet our commitments under this environmental policy, we:

- monitor our carbon footprint on a monthly basis utilising tools available
- regularly monitor and service the air conditioning units to ensure that they are used appropriately

- where practical, ensure that lights are not left when not needed through the use of localised switched and automatic sensing switches)
- encourage all electrical equipment to be switched off at the end of the day
- encourage all waste paper, printed paper, magazines, newspapers, glass, cans and plastic to be recycled
- encourage staff to keep the printing of correspondence and documents to an absolute minimum, especially colour
- utilise duplex printing as the default printing option across the whole firm
- encourage e-mail recipients not to print out e-mails and documents unless unavoidable

### **3 Responsibilities**

We have established a project team for the assessment and compilation of the ISO 14001 environmental management system with the objective being our accreditation to the standard.

Knowledge of our environment activities are covered in our staff induction plan, which is actioned for every new member of staff upon commencement of their employment.

We are registered as part of the Law Society's Legal Sector Alliance which is developing a common approach to these issues across the profession and develop further environmental schemes such as the Cycle to Work Scheme which is set out below.

#### **Membership of the Legal Sector Alliance (LSA)**

The Legal Sector Alliance, of which we are a member, is an inclusive movement of law firms and organisations committed to working collaboratively to take action on climate change by reducing their carbon footprint and adopting environmentally sustainable practices.

As members of the Legal Sector Alliance, we commit to:

- measure, manage and reduce the impact of our operations;
- work with external stakeholders to reduce our indirect impact;
- integrate awareness of climate change across our business;
- advise clients on the opportunities and obligations arising from and under climate change law;
- work collaboratively to engage in the public debate on climate change and to develop, apply and promote best practice across the sector;
- report on our progress and be accountable; and
- adopt and pursue a challenging emissions reduction target appropriate for our own organisation and needs, achievement of which will deliver over stated time periods a meaningful and progressive reduction in our emissions.

### **4 Processes for energy reduction and carbon footprint reduction**

#### **Energy reduction**

With a view to saving energy, we adopt the following measures:

- electricity, gas and water consumption costs are monitored on a monthly basis via the use of sophisticated software that allows us to see the peaks and take actions to reduce output
- suppliers of electricity, gas and water are continually reviewed with the aim of changing supplier where more advantageous cost terms can be achieved. We refuse to accept estimated bills for gas or electricity usage
- in the design of our office layout, we ensure that radiators and heaters are not obstructed
- the central heating controls are set in line with any change in occupation times
- the air conditioning units are monitored and serviced regularly and guidance is given to all staff to ensure they are used appropriately particularly in Summer and Winter seasons
- localised switches and automatic sensing switches have been installed across the firm so that lights are not left on in areas when not needed
- where possible, all equipment is switched off at the end of the day
- members of staff are encouraged to take the stairs instead of the lifts.

### **Environmental reduction**

With a view to maintaining the environment, we adopt the following measures:

- all waste paper, printed paper, magazines, newspapers and plastic are recycled by the firm
- our paper stocks are sourced to ensure they are environmentally friendly carrying both EMAS and ISO 14001 environmental management standards
- the default option on printers is for double sided prints. All new printers and photocopiers are purchased to cater for this requirement
- we deploy 'follow-me-printing' which allows staff to only print what they need to
- recipients of firm emails are prompted to consider the need for printing the email
- where possible, staff are actively encouraged to lift-share, cycle or walk to work with the aim of keeping car use to a minimum
- where possible we recycle office waste e.g. print toners, confidential papers, magazines, food waste, plastics .etc
- we have initiated an environmental purchasing policy (see below).

### **Ethical Environmental Procurement policy**

Careful evaluation is carried out before appointing suppliers or sub-contractors and ongoing assessment of performance is conducted through the duration of the supplier relationship.

Each contract will vary in nature and our procurement processes are designed to be adapted to cover a wide variety of supplier requirements. This ensures that long-term and high-value contracts will be subject to the most detailed scrutiny. The process will include an initial and detailed scoping of the project/service required. Once the decision to appoint a new supplier or contractor has been established, a variety of criteria will be used to evaluate potential suppliers. These criteria will include price, quality, technical skills/experience, contractual terms, service levels and references. Depending on the nature of the contract, we will also consider factors such as local suppliers, environmental factors, CSR and diversity policies.

The aim of the Environmental Procurement Policy is to prompt staff involved in the procurement of goods and services to consider environmental factors in their purchasing decisions. In particular for them to:

- ensure that suppliers' environmental credentials are considered in the Supplier Appraisal process.
- ensure that, where appropriate, environmental criteria are used in the award of contracts
- specify, wherever possible and reasonably practicable, the use of environmentally friendly materials and products
- ensure that consideration within all specifications is given to inclusion of a facility for potential suppliers to submit prices for environmentally friendly alternatives
- ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the costs and benefits of environmentally friendly alternatives.
- for ongoing or long term agreements, regular reviews will be held to assess the performance of suppliers

### **Veale Wasbrough Vizards cycle to work scheme**

As part of our commitment to corporate responsibility , we deploy the Cycle to Work scheme in 2008. The scheme enables staff to benefit from the use of bicycles for the commuting to work at a reduced cost, whilst also providing benefits for staff health and the environment. The scheme is available to all PAYE employees who travel to work by bicycle.

#### ***How the scheme works***

The member of staff visits a Cyclescheme approved retailer and selects a bicycle package and obtains an approved quote. The member of staff completes a form with their details and the cycle package quote. Once authorised by VWV and processed by Cyclescheme, the member of staff is issued with a voucher which authorises the collection of the bicycle package. The hire agreement must be signed by the member of staff when they collect their voucher. The firm deducts 12 x monthly payments from the member of staff's wages, starting from the next monthly pay period.

## **5 Review and revision**

This policy is reviewed annually.