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**ISN Guide to writing an Environmental Policy**

The following is a guide to writing and developing an Environmental Policy. This document might be useful for organisations who are developing a policy from scratch to use as a reference point. We recommend that you take this and adopt as relevant for your organisation and receive senior leadership sign off before publishing. Once published, it should be accessible and visible to all employees.

1. **What to include**

*Guidance: There is no standard format for writing an environmental policy, but it is important to consider the following:*

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| **Heading** | **Information** |
| *Introduction and Aim* | * Organisation name * Which aspects/part/location of the organisation the policy covers * Links to other aspects of the organisation such as quality systems * The overall aim of the policy |
| *Environmental Impacts* | * Acknowledgement of the company’s environmental impacts. |
| *Responsibility*  *(implementation and review)* | State who is responsible for:   * Integrating environmental considerations into the organisation * Maintaining the environmental policy. |
| *Resources* | State that you will:   * Make resources available to implement the policy, e.g. time; * Provide relevant training to staff and stakeholders. |
| *Objectives* | State the organisation’s environmental objectives, e.g.:   * Complying with relevant regulations; * Reducing material and energy consumption; * Minimising the impact of activities on neighbours. |
| *Targets* | Give specific targets relating to your objectives, e.g.:   * Percentage reduction in energy consumption from a known baseline. |
| *Monitoring and auditing* | Indicate the systems to be used to monitor progress, e.g.:   * Reviews and assessments; * Data collection; * Annual audits; * Publication of annual summaries of progress against policy objectives. |
| *Communication to stakeholders e.g. customers, shareholders, staff, regulators, neighbours*. | How to obtain a copy (e.g. telephone number and address of company web site).   * Who will be given a copy (e.g. all employees and customers). * How will involve stakeholders in policy and activity. * Name and title of person to contact with any queries. |
| *Date & Signature* |  |

It is important that the format of your environmental policy reflects the objectives and areas important to your business. There are a few basis rules to follow:

* Keep the statement short - if it's longer than a sheet of A4, then it's probably too long
* The statement is meant for everyone to see, so make sure it's easy to read and understand, no jargon and the policy style and format should reflect your organisation’s culture
* It should describe your company and what the impact of your activities is on the environment in a couple of sentences
* The statement must be realistic, achievable and relevant to your company's activities and practices
* Make the policy available on your website
* Ask new employees and suppliers to read a copy of the policy so it should contain a commitment to comply with environmental legislation
* It should contain a commitment to very broad ways of reducing environmental impacts such as waste and pollution prevention/ minimisation
* Demonstrate commitment to making the policy work and get the statement signed, dated and endorsed by the owner, managing director or other senior manager

1. **Writing your Environmental Policy**

# Introductions and aims - a brief paragraph on your organisation, vision and acknowledgement of your organisation’s environmental impact

*Example: We are committed to promoting environmental good practice, to continually reducing our environmental impact and to preventing pollution.*

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# Responsibility - state who is responsible for integrating environmental considerations into the organisation and maintaining the environmental policy as well as who will be reviewing the policy on at least annual basis

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*Example: All operations, management, facilities management, procurement team, green team, all employees.*

* 1. **Objectives** - state the organisation’s environmental objectives

*Example: To comply with relevant regulations; To reduce material and energy consumption; Monitor our performance and publicly report on this*

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* 1. **Targets** – give specific targets relating to your objectives. Make them SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound

*Example: Reduce energy use by 20% from the 2020 baseline by 2030; Reduce paper use by 80% from 2020 baseline by 2025.*

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2.5. **Monitoring targets** – how performance will be measured

*Example: ‘Resource use data will be collected on a monthly basis and progress against targets monitored through our monthly management meetings’*

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* 1. **Communication** – how will you communicate the policy and involve others

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**Remember to have the policy dated and signed by the senior management and agreed timeframe for reviewing your policy.**

**See below for an example:**

***Example Environmental policy***

*Our mission is to protect, promote and enhance our environment, while accelerating the building of a sustainable way of life. We will take a positive solutions-oriented approach that recognises our impact on the environment.*

*Our Environment Policy, together with our Health and Safety Policy and our Values Statement, expresses our company’s commitment to achieving this aim.*

*Through managing the environmental impacts of our own business, we aim to inspire our partners and suppliers, and encourage them to reduce their own adverse environmental impacts.*

*Our most significant adverse environmental impacts are:*

* *Carbon Emissions to atmosphere from the use of carbon-based energy in offices and fuel in transport*
* *Consumption of resources by our use of energy, raw materials, office supplies and furniture*
* *Production of waste materials*
* *The environmental performance of our suppliers*

***Objectives***

* *Establish carbon neutral operations through improved energy efficiency, purchase of renewable energy supply and carbon sequestration*
* *Minimise resource consumption, and purchase goods which have the least environmental impact throughout their lifecycle, whilst taking steps to reduce the amount of pollution emitted by [Company Name]*
* *Reduce waste at source wherever practical, and re-use and recycle remaining waste*
* *Seek to enhance biodiversity and natural habitats in locations where [Company Name] has offices located*
* *Preparing [Company Name] for the likely effects of climate change by looking at how the business can be adapted to deal with a changing climate*
* *Assess and make purchasing decisions based on product and supplier environmental performance, by using local suppliers where possible*
* *Comply with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, applying the best available techniques*
* *Demonstrate environmental best practice in all areas of the business*

***Commitment***

*To deliver this Policy, we make the following commitments for all the organisation’s sites:*

* *Continually improve our environmental performance, including prevention of pollution by reducing CO2 emissions by [X%] by [year]*
* *Achieve and maintain ISO 14001 certification*
* *Use our resources, including research, development and capital to meet this commitment in a manner that reinforces our activities. The company aims to reduce energy usage by [x%], paper consumption by [x%] and water use by [x%] by [year]*
* *Monitor the use of business travel and aim to reduce the firm’s use of air travel by [%] by [year] through the increase of video and telephone conferencing*
* *Measure our progress in pursuing this Policy and report annually to our stakeholders via the Annual Report and our Sustainability Report*
* *Use suppliers, where possible, who have a record of strong environmental performance and encourage existing suppliers to enhance their environmental record.*

***Signed: Date:***