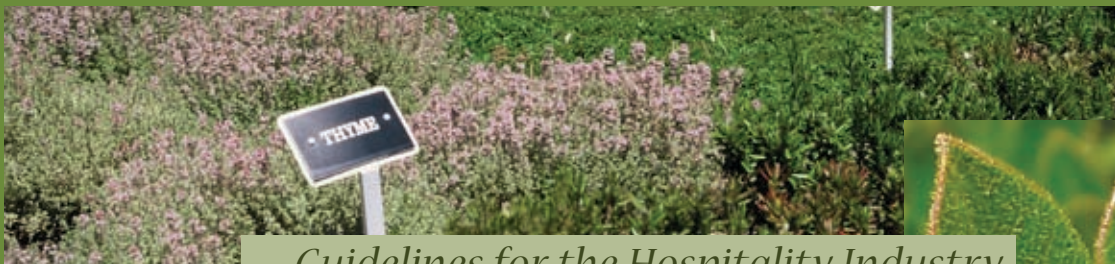


General Environmental Management



Guidelines for the Hospitality Industry



Environmental Policy / Mission Statement should be developed and displayed publicly

Benefits

- Publicly acknowledge commitment to improved environmental performance in your establishment.
- Use the environmental mission statement as a marketing tool to highlight environmental commitment
- Direct the environmental action plan, which leads to reductions in resource consumption and waste production and leads to improved environmental performance.

Overview of the intervention

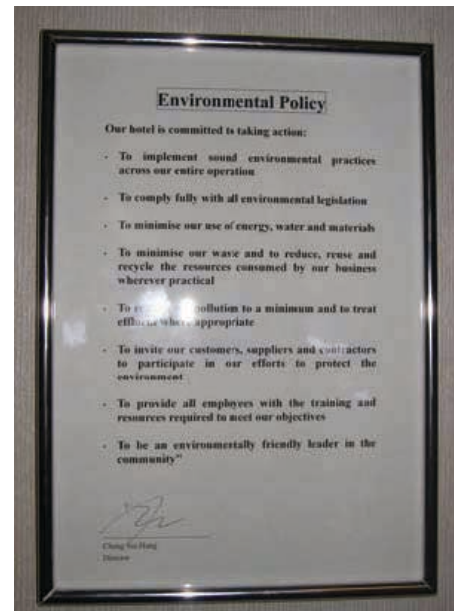
An environmental policy or mission statement is a written statement outlining an establishment's mission in relation to managing the environmental effects and aspects of its operations.

The environmental policy should clearly state the aims and principles of the organisation, its mission with respect to its impact on the environment. The policy should also allow its management to communicate its aims and objectives to employees and other interested parties, including shareholders, customers and suppliers.

There is no standard format for writing an environmental policy, but the style should reflect your organisation's culture. A good starting point is to collect and review examples of policies written by other organisations and select the format and style most appropriate to your own organisation

There are a few basic rules to follow to ensure the policy is clearly written and concise:

- Keep the statement short – if its 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;



- The statement must be realistic, achievable and relevant to your organisation's activities and practices
- Demonstrate commitment to making the policy work and get the statement signed, dated and endorsed by the MD, Chief Executive or / and other senior management

There is no standardised content for an Environmental Policy, although policies normally contain the same themes, including those listed below:

- A commitment to continuous improvement;
- Recognition of compliance with relevant environmental legislation as a minimum level of performance
- The education and training of employees in environmental issues and the environmental effects of their activities
- The monitoring of progress and review of environmental performance on a regular basis (usually annually)

Additional issues relevant to your organisation, and which you may wish to address in your environmental policy, could include:

- Transport
- Recycling of packaging materials
- Minimising waste
- Efficiency use of water and energy
- Use of biodegradable chemicals
- Minimising use of solvents and lead-based paints
- Use of timber from sustainable (managed) forests
- Procedures to minimise noise disturbance to neighbours

The checklist below may help you to draft a policy appropriate to your business. Choose examples of the statement that would apply to your business and make the statements as specific as possible for your operations:

- Comply with the requirements of environmental legislation and approved codes of practice;
- Assess the environmental impact of all historic, current and likely future operations;
- Continuously seek to improve environmental performance;
- Reduce pollution, emissions and waste
- Reduce the use of all raw materials, energy and supplies
- Raise awareness, encourage participation and train employees in environmental matters

- Expect similar environmental standards from all suppliers and contractors
- Assist customers to use products and services in an environmentally-sensitive way
- Liaise with the local community
- Participate in discussions with environmental issues.

A generic environmental mission statement is available for download and can be used as is, or modified for use in your establishment.

Carbon Footprint Calculation and Trend Tracking

Benefits

- Enables your company to report on greenhouse gas emission performance
- Enables you to set targets to reduce emissions and then measure the reductions
- Cost savings through managing resources and implementing good environmental practice

Overview of the intervention

A carbon footprint is a measure of the impact your activities have on the environment and in particular on climate change. It relates to the amount of greenhouse gases produced in day-to-day activities through burning fossil fuels for electricity, heating and transportation. The carbon footprint is a measurement of all greenhouse gases that are produced as a unit of tonnes (or kgs) of carbon dioxide equivalent.

A basic approach to carbon footprinting

For most organisations, calculation of a basic carbon footprint is a fairly quick exercise. A basic footprint is likely to cover direct emissions and emissions from electricity as these are the simplest to manage, but exclude some of the indirect emissions.

There are usually a handful of major emissions sources that must be quantified, including:

- Onsite fuel use
- Onsite electricity usage
- Use of transport which you own

To get the key information to calculate a basic carbon footprint, collect data from all electricity meter and record the distances travelled by the establishment's vehicles. The easiest way to convert the fuel, electricity and transport consumption figures to CO₂ is by using one of the web-based carbon calculators available online.

When calculating a basic carbon footprint it is common to exclude sources of indirect emissions which the establishment does not control e.g. emissions from waste, from the supply chain of products, etc.

Once the basic carbon footprint has been established, it is then possible to take steps to manage your emissions:

- Set and agree efficiency or emissions reductions targets;
- Identify likely interventions, based on environmental or financial criteria;
- Take action to implement the interventions, in order to reduce the carbon footprint or to offset the CO2 emissions
- Monitor the performance of actions and interventions in order to track your carbon footprint.

You should present the results of your carbon footprint on your website or in other environmental marketing materials that you produce.

A full carbon footprint can also be done, which is a more accurate calculation of your carbon footprint and requires a more detailed approach. This is usually done by a specialist consultant, who can assist you in this process.

For more information on carbon footprint calculation and offsetting, visit the following websites:

Carbon footprint – www.carbonfootprint.com

Food and Trees for Africa – www.trees.co.za

CO2 Balance – www.co2balance.co.za

Carbon Trust – www.carbontrust.co.uk

Environmental Management System (EMS) developed and implemented

Benefits

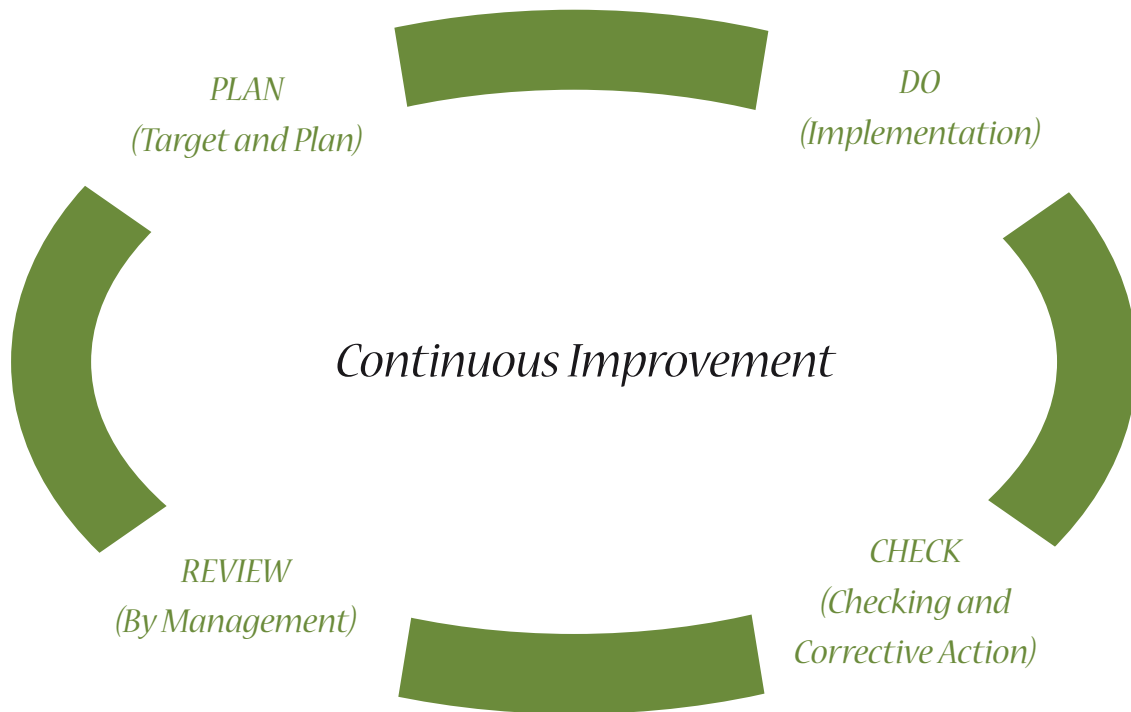
- An EMS can allow an establishment to integrate environmental and social practice into its operations in a systematic way
- An EMS allows an establishment to monitor and assess its successes and failures related to environmental and social issues, identifying problems and improve its performance based upon this information.
- Having a single, public EMS can facilitate the buy-in of staff, guests, business partners and local communities.

Overview of the intervention

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a system that directs the environmental performance of an establishment. It consists of a set of processes and practices that identify areas in the establishment that impact on the environment and develop ways to mitigate and address these impacts. A typical EMS will include the following :

- An environmental policy
- Identification of the environmental impacts of the services and activities in the establishment;
- Defining the environmental targets and objectives for the establishment
- It identifies the legal and regulatory requirements
- It sets up training for the employees on environmental issues affecting the establishment and the global environment
- It sets up the mechanism for monitoring and measuring the progress against the targets, objectives and policy.

ISO 14001 is an environmental management standard that was developed by the International Organisation of Standardisation (ISO). The standard is the internationally recognised framework for environmental management systems and has been designed to be applicable to all types of operations.



Certified or not, an EMS is a tool that can be used by any organisation to identify potential areas of efficiency, which leads to better management of the operation and improved environmental performance. A key focus in an EMS is of continuous improvement and that the development of an EMS is not a once-off task, but needs to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis based on changes in the establishments and its environmental performance.

How to implement an EMS

Appoint a task team that includes staff from all departments and levels to design, implement and evaluate the EMS;

1. Conduct a thorough review of current practices at the establishment, identifying opportunities for improvement and setting priorities for action. This review should include energy use, water use, waste management, chemical use, product purchasing, community relations and potential impacts on the local environment.

2. Work with staff and other relevant parties to develop an environmental and social mission statement, standards, goals and action plan. The mission statement should be publicly displayed and be advertised through marketing material.
3. Designate a specific staff member or group to have responsibility for each component of the action plan and then report back to the task team.
4. Educate staff about goals and activities, through orientation, briefing, memos, incentives programmes, performance reviews and other methods
5. Communicate goals and activities to guests and advise them on how they can reduce their environmental impact and support local conservation and community development projects
6. Regularly assess if goals have been met and evaluate successes and failures
7. Use information collected during regular assessments to review your policy, goals and action plan, to determine what changes need to be made;
8. Provide regular feedback to staff, guests and the local community on achievements and acknowledge outstanding individual performance.

For more information, visit:

- 1) ISO 14001 (Environmental Management Systems) : http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/management_standards/iso_9000_iso_14000/iso_14000_essentials.htm
- 2) NETREGS – Guiding Small Businesses through Environmental Regulations (Environmental Management Systems) http://www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs/275207/587836/?version=1&lang=_e
- 3) US Environmental Protection Agency (Environmental Management Systems) <http://www.epa.gov/EMS>
- 4) Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment <http://www.iema.net/readingroom/show/283/c146>

In-house environmental program/s are communicated to guests

Benefits of Implementation

- Encourage guests to holiday in a more environmentally friendly manner
- Marketing advantage through guest preference and word-of-mouth
- Raising awareness in a wide community

Overview of the intervention

The communication of the environmental policy and programs is a proactive way of encouraging and informing guests about programs and to encourage their involvement in the process.

How it is applied?

There are a number of ways in which an establishment can communicate their environmental programs and policies to their guests. These include the following:

- Information about the environmental programme is available on the establishment's website. This generally includes initiatives that they are involved with as well as the environmental mission statement / policy (see www.vineyard.co.za/pages/enviromental_social.htm as an example)
- An environmental message, such as a programme that the establishment is involved with is added to the electronic reservation confirmation
- The environmental statement / policy is displayed publicly in the reception area and staff are educated about the policy and can answer questions about it
- The environmental message and programs should be incorporated into the in-room information packs



- If there is a specific activity that the guest needs to be involved with, then the relevant information needs to be presented to the guests to inform them why they are operating in a different way:
 - o The guests should be informed of the laundry policy and how this will work. E.g. if you want your towels washed put them in the bath, otherwise hand them on the towel rack.
 - o If the convenience items are not automatically provided, the guests should be provided with a list of products that are available on request.

It is important that staff is informed of policies and decision, so that they can effectively implement them.

Staff member has designated responsibility for environmental issues in the hotel and this is written into their job description

Benefits

- Some-one to hold all the initiatives and to take responsibility for the implementation of the programs
- A champion to implement the environmental policy
- A single contact person for more information and one “environmental voice” for the establishment

Overview of the intervention

One staff member needs to be identified as the champion of the environmental initiatives at the establishment.

In a large hotel, this person could be the HR manager, the deputy General Manager, the maintenance manager or the horticulturist

In a smaller establishment, such as a guest house or B’nB, it is most appropriate for the owner to serve this purpose.

The responsibilities of the designated staff member include directing the environmental initiatives in the establishments individually or with the assistance of an environmental committee or task team. They need to monitor the process of the establishment against the environmental policy. The designated staff member should have a good understanding of the programs that are being implemented and what the environmental benefits are. The responsible staff member should facilitate the introduction of the policy to new staff as well as give regular refresher courses for all staff in the establishment.

Additions to the job description of the designated staff member for environmental performance

- Hold the environmental policy and implementation strategy and direct the implementation of the policy;
- Chair the environmental committee / task team and report back to senior management at regular intervals

- Act as the spokesperson for the establishment's environmental initiatives
- Facilitate training or awareness raising on the policy and environmental programs for all staff
- Monitor and measure the establishment's progress against the environmental policy and implementation strategy.

Environmental Issues form part of staff induction programme

Benefits

- Raising awareness about environmental issues experienced in the world today;
- A better understanding of why the establishment is operating in a more environmental friendly way and how this affects the work that the staff do
- A more informed and educated staff on the issues of sustainability

Overview of the intervention

For any business to achieve its goals it must have well trained and motivated staff, this is especially important when it comes to improving the environmental performance of the establishment.

Staff need to understand what changes are being made to the operations, why these changes have been made and how these changes will affect the day-to-day tasks of the staff.

E.g. if a waste separation at source program is being implemented, then the staff need to know which bins are used for the different waste types as well as understand why this is being done, OR

If a laundry policy has been put in place that gives the guests a choice of whether their towels should be washed, the housekeeping staff needs to understand the policy and how to implement it.

There are numerous areas that can be covered by staff training. Staff training can range from generic topics applicable to everyone (e.g. understanding tourism and the tourism business, “responsible tourism”, the potential positive and negative impacts of tourism, improved environmental and cultural awareness, and customer services) to more specific and technical topics that are focussed on particular job descriptions.

Areas to be covered in environmental training

The following key areas should be covered in the induction training course

- An introduction to key global problems and why the establishment is operating in a more environmentally friendly manner

- The environmental policy / mission statement and the associated implementation strategy
- The environmental programs that are being implemented and what role the staff will play in the implementation of these programs. This will include :
 - o The changes to the waste collection process, if an at-source waste separation system is put in place
 - o The changes to the laundry process, if a choice is given to the guests whether their towels are washing on a daily basis or not
 - o The changes to the housekeeping system, if it is decided to change from a disposal amenities collection in the room, to a refillable system e.g. the shampoo, soap, etc.