

NCT 'GREEN' POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The earth is getting much hotter and most scientists attribute this change in climate to the build up in the atmosphere of man-made gasses that trap the sun's heat causing global changes in weather patterns. In addition, we are polluting the planet with toxic and non-biodegradable waste.

Governments, businesses and individuals are implementing changes and making commitments to lessen the impact of our daily activities on the environment. The South African Government is a signatory to the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals which has a strong focus on environmental issues. CIPC further requires that Companies report on environmental impacts.

This is an international trend and NCT must be part of this movement. It is especially important in our industry where there are many opportunities to make a difference. Plantation forestry and the associated industries do have a significant impact on the environment, but at the same time there are many opportunities to make a positive contribution.

NCT's 'Green' policy consists of two approaches, namely to educate and encourage members to implement management systems on their farms that will result in more environmentally friendly practices; and secondly, a policy implemented by all NCT staff at various offices, NCT mills and on NCT owned farms.

Fortunately, it often pays to implement environmentally friendly practices. Even those who aren't concerned about the environment cannot deny the economic benefits of waste minimisation. Whether we call it an 'Environmental plan' or a 'Waste minimisation plan' is not important; the fact is that we need to collectively act now to change things for a sustainable future.

While government is hinting at 'greener' practices, ordinary people can take the lead quite effectively on their own and make a significant difference. By having a practical 'green' plan for our organisation and encouraging our staff and membership base to follow suit, we can be part of the solution.

NCT negatively impacts the environment through:

- CO₂ emissions (transport, equipment, machinery, brush and grass burning etc.)
- Use of chemicals (Pesticides, fertilisers, detergents etc.)
- Use of non-biodegradable materials
- Use of service providers from distant areas (CO₂ miles)
- Dumping waste rather than recycling
- Consumption of electricity from non-renewable sources.
- Impacts on water quantity and quality
- Impacts on biodiversity
- Travel

In this document, the word NCT refers loosely to the offices, mills, staff and membership of NCT Forestry Co-operative.

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OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Green plan is to:

1. Educate staff and Members about the environmental problems seven billion people on our planet bring about on an on-going basis.
2. Expose staff and members to the concepts of waste minimisation and the associated benefits to the business to the environment.
3. Implement initiatives to ensure that NCT is:
 - Recycling waste.
 - Reducing waste including energy.
 - Using non-toxic, recycled, environmentally friendly products and supplies whenever possible.
 - Using environmentally friendly service providers and suppliers whenever possible.
 - Implementing environmentally friendly management practices on farms.
 - Reduce impacts on the water resource.

ADVANTAGES

By adopting an easy, practical approach to 'green' behavior we can change mindsets and ultimately cut operating costs as well as 'do our bit' towards helping the environment. These principles can also be applied in our daily lives.

By implementing sound environmental practices on NCT farms we can ensure sustainability of our timber operations and take advantage of Green labeling markets. A 'Green' approach to our business could also be advantageous in marketing our product, as increasing emphasis is placed on good environmental practice by our customers.

Demonstrating that NCT is a carbon neutral (or positive) organization will result in tax benefits and can also be used as a tool to negotiate with government.

FOCUS AREAS

The new NCT head office has been refurbished with energy efficiency as an objective, some of the issues discussed below have been addressed at head office but need attention in other facilities.

Energy

Lights

- Lights that aren't being used should be switched off! (the most obvious, but least adhered to energy saving rule!)
- Dedicated after hours lights can be fitted with a timer.
- Energy-saving light globes should be used wherever possible – these use only about 25% of the energy that the standard ones use, and last about 6-8 times longer
- Light bulbs especially neon will be disposed of appropriately

Aircons and heater

- Aircons and heaters should not be left on overnight. Another easy thing to do, but people need reminding.
- A timer can ensure that aircons are off after hours?
- Don't have the aircon on when some windows are open
- In summer, close the blinds enough to prevent the sun from shining through the windows and heating the office (do the opposite in winter to allow the sun to warm the office)
- Dress appropriately. In summer wear short sleeved shirts, or cool clothing! In winter consider wearing a jersey rather than turning the heater on.

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Geysers

- Geyser temperatures can be lowered considerably.
- Insulate geysers.
- Install a timer so that geysers are switched off over weekends or after hours.
- Geysers should be switched off over holiday periods.

Computers

- Computers should be switched off overnight and over weekends and holidays. Screen-save mode doesn't do much to cut energy use. Though there is a small surge in energy when a computer starts up, this small amount of energy is still less than the energy used when a computer is running for long periods of time. For energy savings and convenience, consider turning them off whenever practical.
- Back-up could be done daily at 16:00 instead of after-hours to enable staff to switch off before leaving.
- Old computer equipment and batteries will be disposed of at designated e-waste sites.

Tea stations

- These must be switched off over weekends and holidays.
- Coffee makers/urns must be switched off every night.

Appliances & chargers

- Fridge temperatures can be 'turned down'.
- Fridge door seals should be checked and replaced when necessary.
- Unplug appliance chargers from the wall when not in use.

Logistics

- Support initiatives to develop more efficient transport systems .
- Maximise available rail capacity.
- Lobby government for more PBS permits and incentives.
- Maximise available PBS capacity and promote its benefits to members (including environmental benefits).
- Support the initiatives like Vryheid East depot as it reduces timber trucks on the road and thus CO₂ emissions.
- Negotiate timber swop agreements that will reduce lead distances to mills.
- Continue to support initiative to transport more timber on rail.

Cars

- NCT to monitor the development of electric cars (and hybrids) technology and consider introducing them to NCT when viable.
- NCT to incentivise staff for buying low fuel consumption cars.

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Paper & printing

Check prints

- Printing for checking purposes should be done using back-to-back printing and or using scrap paper.
- Checks could also be made electronically – just make sure comments are saved for quality purposes.

Switch off plotters and printers

Plotters and printers should be turned off over weekends and holidays.

Documents

Where appropriate print final document using back to back printing.

Scrap paper

Don't use exam pads for scribbling on – use scrap paper

Cartridges

We should only use cartridges which are recyclable, and make sure we are recycling them

Recycling paper

Every piece of discarded paper should be recycled.

Emails

- Save emails electronically so that not every email needs to be printed.
- Train users on maximum utilisation of electronic filing including email archiving.

Glass, tin & plastics

Glass

All glass bottles should be discarded into recycling bins marked "glass". (Glass that is not recycled ends up in a landfill, contributing to the overall problem of pollution).

Tin

All tin cans should preferably be flattened and then discarded into recycling bins marked "tins".

Plastics

- Plastic shopping bags shouldn't be thrown away but reused! In fact, we should be discouraged from buying plastic shopping bags altogether.
- All other disposable plastics should be discarded into recycling bins marked "plastic"
- "Plastic PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles are collected, baled and delivered to recycling plants where they are colour sorted, washed, granulated, re-washed, extruded (made into long thin strips of plastic) and cut into pellets, before being recycled into a number of items we encounter every day, such as, fibre filling for jackets, duvets and pillows, non-woven automotive carpets, building insulation, geotextiles for road stabilisation, magnetic strips on smart cards or tennis ball felt." – taken from the PETCO website.

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Travel

Document delivery/collection

- Whoever is traveling out of the office should let everyone know in case documents etc., need delivering/collecting from where you're heading (likewise, if anyone needs documents delivered they should enquire early as to other people's trips that week).
- Courier services save time and money so we should use this option, when appropriate.

Farm visits

- Plan farm visits on a monthly basis so that numerous farms in an area can be visited on a trip.
- Only drive to farms when necessary.

Lift club

- Try to combine lifts with other staff members to and from meetings/conferences etc.
- When attending industry meetings, share lifts with colleagues from other companies.

General office cleaning

- Know what harmful substances are in the cleaning agents we use.
- Know what alternatives are available – for instance, a half-cup of vinegar and bicarb mixture poured down drains monthly can eliminate the use of highly toxic drain cleaners; also, the same mixture can be used as an effective cleaning agent for kitchens and bathrooms.
- Aerosol toilet sprays could be replaced by the more environmentally friendly liquid dispenser type.
- Educate the cleaners as to the amount of cleaning substances that should be applied and how often.

Suppliers

Quiz our suppliers

Where there is a selection of suppliers for office materials, we should enquire as to their environmental policies in place – we should always support the ones who make an effort to reduce/recycle waste.

Buy local

Supporting local suppliers reduces energy usage in terms of transport.

Packaging

- Don't buy items with extravagant packaging.
- Avoid packaging which becomes toxic when ignited.

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Farm management

NCT owned and managed farms: Will be certified under a credible independent environmental standard. Principles outlined in this document will be implemented on NCT owned and managed farms. The farms will be managed in compliance with the NCT Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) Group Management System and the FSA environmental guidelines.

NCT members' farms: Members will be encouraged to manage their farms according to the NCT FSC Group Management system or the SAFAS Certification System. The South African Forestry Environmental Guidelines will be promoted as a guideline for best environmental management practice.

NCT maintains FSC and PEFC Group Schemes which allows members to certify their farms using the generic NCT management system. This system is based on legal compliance and best forestry and environmental practice.

NCT has been instrumental in developing an alternate Certification system (SAFAS) which has been internationally endorsed (PEFC). This new system will enable a larger percentage of our membership base to achieve certification and thus improve their farm management including environmental practices.

NCT wood chip mills

The NCT wood chip mills have documented an Environmental Management Policy (EMP) that guides operational activities (Appendix 1). In addition, they subscribe to the principles of the NCT policy.

The objective of the EMP is to minimise environmental impacts of operations and to ensure that environmental awareness becomes a way of life. All timber processed in the wood chip mills is sourced under an FSC controlled wood system, grown in renewable, sustainable tree plantations.

Operational processes and products that have an environmental impact are identified and the risk evaluated. Measures are put in place to manage risks and reduce negative impacts.

Waste products are either treated, recycled or utilised in other operations.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

A baseline document has been developed which includes an assessment of the current status in the various business units of the co-operative. The document also captures future actions that can be taken to further reduce the environmental impact of operations. This document will be used to monitor progress and report against.