



Environmental Strategy for UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre

May 2006

Drafted by the Environmental Committee

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UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre
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1 UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre

UNEP-WCMC is the biodiversity-monitoring arm of the United Nations Environment Programme. UNEP-WCMC's vision is of a wiser world: one in which people everywhere recognize that the diversity of life on Earth is vital to the future of humanity, and use this knowledge in all their decisions. In striving towards this vision the Centre promotes wiser decision-making and a sustainable future by providing information on the conservation and sustainable management of the living world.

UNEP-WCMC's Vision and Mission Statement states:

*“A world where biodiversity counts” and
“To evaluate and highlight the many values of biodiversity and put authoritative biodiversity
knowledge at the centre of decision-making”*

To this end, it is vital that UNEP-WCMC commits to the principles of sustainability and wiser decision making which it promotes. An important first step to achieve this is the development of an Environmental Strategy, which sets achievable targets, objectives, and actions. UNEP is in the process of developing an environmental strategy to ensure the sustainability of its operations. Similarly, many international conservation organisations (e.g. BirdLife International, TRAFFIC International) have conducted environmental audits on their own in-house activities and subsequently developed environmental strategies. In such a way, an environmental strategy will help enable UNEP-WCMC to address the challenges posed by sustainable management of its own activities.

Many positive actions are already being undertaken by UNEP-WCMC (e.g. recycling of glass, tins and paper), however, there is much room for improvement. This Environmental Strategy sets achievable targets and objectives, which UNEP-WCMC should strive to attain, and it lists a series of actions that will help achieve the respective targets. Many of the activities do not require additional financial resources, but simply changes in various aspects of the Centre management and in the behaviour of all staff. Some activities, however, will require modest additional resources, but will be of great benefit both to UNEP-WCMC and to the planet on which we, and future generations will, live.

Implementation of Environmental Strategy

A first step in the implementation of the Environmental Strategy will be the identification of key staff to undertake relevant activities. Many of the objectives outlined in the Environmental Strategy can be accomplished through changes in the daily practice of all aspects of the Centre management. Others will require the participation of the Environmental Committee members and other staff. The mandate to carry out these activities should come from the Centre management in order to justify any changes in current Centre practice.

A number of separate proposals have already been prepared that outline specific details of the activities listed below. They are attached to this document.

TRAFFIC and IUCN are already undertaking a number of activities similar to those outlined in this strategy. Continued co-operation between these organisations will be mutually beneficial to all parties, and should be encouraged where appropriate.

2 Natural Environment

TARGET

To maintain a healthy environment for people and biodiversity in the Centre's surrounding

Objective 1: To ensure biodiversity-friendly mowing

Activities:

- Develop and implement a selective mowing and pruning programme with the gardener and site management to ensure that biodiversity is maintained (e.g. orchid species in the meadow by the pond)
- Remove aggressive grasses by digging them out, rather than mowing

Objective 2: To support native species

Activities:

- Monitor the implementation of the planting plan that was established when the area was landscaped
- Discuss the planting of native species with gardeners
- Plant species that are particularly good for biodiversity
- Liaise with the Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust regarding site management that is beneficial for biodiversity

Objective 3: To carefully manage non-native species

Activities:

- Note location of those non-native species, which should be retained.
- Mechanically remove non-native species
- Regularly remove New Zealand Pigmy weed from the pond (this will be limited but when being removed little bits should not be left behind as this will contribute to the spread in the pond)

Objective 4: To compost all garden waste

Activities:

- Ensure that garden compost is being adequately composted either on or off-site

Objective 5: To clear the pond annually

Activities:

- Reduce the biomass of *Typha* species and remove all New Zealand Pigmy weed around August/September each year after the Moorhens have finished breeding

Objective 6: To further enhance biodiversity through toad and frog protection and nest boxes

Activities:

- Around March/April erect temporary signs and send out an email to all staff to ensure that traffic slows down so that toads and frogs migrating back to the pond after their winter hibernation are safe

- Erect nest boxes, which will need to be cleared out once a year in autumn or early winter
- Consider erecting bat boxes on the non elm trees such as Maple
- Consider erecting additional bird feeders elsewhere on the grounds

Objective 7: To monitor biodiversity

Activities:

- Establish species lists on the Centre's intranet (e.g. absence and presence lists for each year for plants, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals)
- Encourage staff to contribute to survey lists for the area around the Centre
- Make species lists available on the Centre's website
- Make species lists available to the Cambridgeshire Biological Records Centre

Objective 8: To regulate the use of biocides

Activities:

- Discuss the appropriate use of biocides, if any, with the gardener and site management

3 Centre Management

3.1 Energy Consumption

TARGET

To reduce the level of energy consumption at UNEP-WCMC by 1% per capita and year and source 100% of energy from renewable sources.

Objective 1: To raise awareness among staff on the need for and the options of reducing energy consumption

Activities:

- Encourage and maintain staff interest through the use of 'Green Tips' in emails from the Environmental Committee, and reports as to progress of the scheme
- Produce a summary of activities that will help reduce energy consumption, and distribute to all staff

Objective 2: To properly document the level of energy consumption within the Centre

Activities:

- Monitor the level of consumption relative to the number of people working in the Centre over the same period
- Make annual summaries of energy consumption

Objective 3: To actively reduce energy consumption at UNEP-WCMC

Activities:

- Ensure individual desk lights, computers and monitors, and other personal electric equipment are switched off when not in use (i.e., overnight, during lunch breaks, while at meetings, etc.)

- Ensure use of the lift, printers, photocopiers, kettle, microwave, etc., is restricted to essential use only
- Regular maintenance of heating equipment, lifts, and other high energy-use machinery to ensure efficiency
- Ensure the main lights, including kitchen areas, printing alcoves, etc., as well as common areas such as the staff room, are turned off at night by the last person to leave
- Ensure that low energy bulbs are used
- Raise awareness amongst staff members and how they can contribute to reducing energy consumption within the Centre

Objective 4: To ensure that electricity supply comes from 100% renewable resources.

Activities

- Evaluate current sources and costs of energy used at UNEP-WCMC and available renewable sources
- Move to a renewable energy sources

3.2 Recycling

TARGET

By 2007, to recycle all recyclable waste at UNEP-WCMC

Objective 1: To maintain and strengthen the efficiency of the existing recycling schemes at UNEP-WCMC

Activities:

- Continue to collect paper, bottles, cans and milk bottle lids for recycling
- Continue to collect batteries for recycling, while encouraging the use of mains electricity, solar energy or rechargable batteries
- Remind staff of the existing facilities

Objective 2: To establish a system for collecting compostable waste

Activities:

- Organise collection of compostable waste from UNEP-WCMC
- Advise staff on what items can be added to the compostable waste collection
- Regularly collect compostable waste in all kitchen areas

Objective 3: To establish recycling schemes for other recyclable waste, including cardboard, plastic and IT waste

Activities:

- Identify remaining recyclable waste and recycling options
- Organise collection of cardboard, plastic and IT waste and other recyclable waste that has been identified

3.3 Carbon Offset

TARGET

To reduce the CO2 emissions caused by UNEP-WCMC staff traveling by at least 2% each year until 2010, measured through a 2% reduction in annual international and/or air travel compared to

the 2005 baseline and to offset the carbon produced through travel. To achieve carbon neutrality by 2010 through the offset of travel

Objective 1: To raise awareness among staff on the need for and the options of reducing air travel

Activities:

- Adopt the Environmental Committee proposal on carbon dioxide offset options for UNEP-WCMC
- Distribute the proposal among staff

Objective 2: To properly document the air mileage of UNEP-WCMC staff

Activities:

- Develop and establish a system to record the air mileage of staff and calculate carbon use
- Ensure all staff document their air mileage by making its documentation a requirement of air travel
- Make annual summaries of air mileage available to staff

Objective 3: To reduce air mileage of UNEP-WCMC staff

Activities:

- Check whether an individual air trip is necessary; look for alternatives such as using trains, e.g. within Europe, or video conferencing

Objective 4: To offset all carbon production from travel

Activities:

- Build carbon offset payments into project budgets and pay the amounts into a carbon offset code
- Pay the combined carbon offset 'fees' annually to a selected carbon offset scheme

Objective 5: To further develop the issue of carbon offset with UNEP-WCMC partners

Activities:

- Discuss carbon offset with appropriate business partners of UNEP-WCMC, seeking their advice and exploring options for cooperation

3.4 Transport

TARGET

To reduce the carbon emission by staff in local travel including commuting to work

Objective 1: To encourage more staff to cycle

Activities:

- Make maps available of bike paths in and around Cambridge
- Increase the amount of covered bike racks

Objective 2: To encourage staff to use public transport

Activities:

- Make train and bus timetables available to all staff including information on main routes used
- Encourage staff to use public transport to attend local meetings

Objective 3: To encourage car sharing

Activities:

- Make a list available (e.g. on the Intranet) of staff willing to participate in a car pooling scheme

3.5 Paper Use

TARGET

To actively reduce paper use at UNEP-WCMC by 5% each year compared to the 2004 baseline (>400,000 sheets of paper per year) and to source paper that 100% meets environmental criteria.

Objective 1: To raise awareness amongst current staff on how to reduce their paper use

Activities:

- Supply information to staff on current paper usage at UNEP-WCMC and how they may contribute to its reduction via the intranet.

Objective 2: Reduce paper use at UNEP-WCMC

Activities:

- Set printers to default to double-sided for printing
- Encourage double-sided photocopying
- Continue monitoring paper usage at the centre

Objective 3: Source and use paper that meets a high environmental standard

Activities:

- Develop a set of environment criteria (e.g. recycled, FSC and produced using a chlorine free process, locally/regionally produced), which paper can be sourced against
- Investigate options for sourcing different paper types
- Purchase paper that meets the developed environmental criteria
- Produce UNEP-WCMC publications on paper that meets the environmental criteria

3.6 Ethical Purchasing

TARGET

To purchase products and consumables that have been produced in a sustainable manner and that cause minimal environmental damage.

Objective 1: To purchase Fair Trade consumable products where possible

Activities:

- To purchase Fair Trade tea, coffee, sugar etc for consumption at UNEP-WCMC

- To use caterers that offer organic, Fair Trade and/or locally produced food
- To display on the Centre notice board / intranet a list of outlets that stock organic, Fair Trade and locally produced food
- Investigate the use of a fair trade vending machine, compared with the current arrangement

Objective 2: To purchase environmentally friendly products

Activities:

- To purchase washing up liquid and other cleaning products that cause minimal environmental damage
- To ensure that contracted cleaners use cleaning products that minimise environmental damage
- To ensure that recycled toiled paper is purchased for the toilets

3.7 Environmental Information (e.g. to new employees)

TARGET

To ensure appropriate environmental information is available to all Centre staff by the end of 2006.

Objective 1: To raise awareness among current staff of all available environmental information, including the Strategy for the Centre.

Activities:

- Establish on the intranet an area where staff may access the minutes for the Committee, the Environmental Strategy, and information on activities and how they can contribute

Objective 2: To raise awareness of the Environment Committee and its activities to new staff members and Chevening scholars

Activities:

- Prepare inserts for packages given to new staff and Chevening staff
- Organise for an Environmental Committee member to talk to new staff members and Chevening scholars about the Committee and its activities and further inviting them to contribute

Objective 3: To promote the activities being undertaken by the Centre towards the sustainable management of its activities

Activities:

- Ensure that all staff and the outside world are aware of the activities being undertaken. E.g where recycled paper is used in publications

3.8 Finances e.g. Ethical Pensions and the Ethics of Banks

TARGET

To ensure UNEP-WCMC moves towards ethical financial management e.g. banking and pensions

Objective 1: To ensure that competitive ethical pension options are available to all staff

Activities:

- Work with SLC and management team to ensure information is available about such schemes
- Where appropriate, to encourage staff to use ethically managed pensions schemes on offer.

Objective 2: UNEP-WCMC banks with an ethical bank, with the first account opened in 2006

Activities:

- Research the current banking option of UNEP-WCMC and other options available
- Collate information and provide this to management team for consideration

Objective 3: Ensure financial support for activities needed to ensure the sustainability of the Centre's activities

Activities:

- Provide staff time to Committee members for attendance of Committee meetings and environmental activities
- Allow for participation of the Site Facilities Manager in the Committee
- Where necessary, provide financial support for specific activities outlined in the Environmental Strategy

4.0 Review Process

TARGET

To regularly review this Strategy and make amendments where necessary

Objective 1: To keep the implementation and adequacy of the Strategy under constant review.

Activities:

- Check the progress in implementation of the Strategy at least twice a year, take appropriate action and make amendments to the Strategy where necessary



Environmental Committee's proposal for composting at UNEP-WCMC

Introduction

We are now living in a world where we are conscious of the environmental footprint we will leave behind. One way to reduce our impact upon the planet is to reduce the waste we send to landfills or incineration by composting food waste. The UK government is attempting to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfill to 35% by 2020. Many large non-governmental organisations are looking at their waste strategies and assessing the options available following pilot studies.

The UNEP-WCMC Environmental Committee agreed that it would be a good idea to separate food waste including tea bags and cardboard from general waste. Currently the Centre does not compost food waste produced by staff meals. The benefits, drawbacks and pricing were researched for two different approaches. The Sites Facilities Officer Stuart Douglas-Whitehead and the Health and Safety Committee were also consulted for their input and approval.

A compost heap already exists on the grounds of the Centre and is used for garden waste. It would be inappropriate to use this compost heap as it is quickly filled with garden waste and also is not enclosed, hence the inclusion of food waste (cooked or raw) will attract vermin.

Two options for the composting of food waste were discussed:

The establishment of a compost area on site was investigated. This option would involve the purchasing of sealable compost bins for a location outside the building. It was determined that compost bins would fill quickly and would take approximately three months for raw food waste to decompose, therefore the Centre would require more than one. There were also issues about what to do with the compost once it was removed from the compost bins.

Cambridge City Council was approached about providing a compost bin (similar to those issued to households) and then have the council remove the food waste from the site. However Cambridge City Council only pick up household food waste but suggested the private company Donarbon. Donarbon provide bins in which a wide range of raw and cooked food waste may be placed, including cooked meat. Donarbon will also remove the food waste from the site for composting.

Donarbon then use the resulting compost product as a soil improver, top dressing or is blended with soils for use in agricultural or restoration projects. The Group is the largest producer of recycled aggregates in East Anglia and has carried out a number of site reclamation schemes which have brought despoiled land back to agricultural or amenity use, such as a 500 acre site at Waterbeach, which has been restored as a wetland for birds. The compost is also sold to the general public.

Both the above options require the purchasing of sealable containers for each of the kitchen areas and the establishment of a roster of volunteers to empty inside bins into to the large wheelie bin.

The Environment Committee decided that for the long-term viability of composting of food waste at the Centre, the removal from site would be the most appropriate (second option).

Objective: to actively reduce the waste of UNEP-WCMC that is being sent to landfills.

Proposal: to establish the composting of food waste at the Centre.

Costs

Donarbon provides bins for organic waste in three different sizes (80/240/1100litres).

The smallest bin (80L) costs £0.70 per week to rent.

Removal of food waste costs £4.50 +VAT per lift

If the bin was to be emptied once a fortnight, total costs equal £6.69 per fortnight

Extra setting up costs includes the purchasing of four small buckets with a lid for each floor and the staff room for staff to place their food waste in. £2.99 per bin

Therefore a total one off payment is needed of £11.96 (4 bins with lids)

Total costs for the first year £185.90

With a further cost per year of £173.94

Implementation

Following the approval to establish a composting programme at the Centre, a roster will be established using volunteers to empty plastic collection bins in kitchenettes into wheelie bin outside. Environmental committee will also communicate with UNEP-WCMC staff about composting at the Centre.



**United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation
Monitoring Centre
Environmental Committee**

Carbon dioxide offset options for UNEP-WCMC

A proposal from the Environment Committee

Summary of the proposal

Staff at UNEP-WCMC engage in a substantial amount of air travel. In line with all air travel, the cost to the Centre is currently subsidised through the detrimental environmental impacts of CO₂ emissions. Staff air travel contributes approximately 140 tonnes of carbon to the atmosphere annually, the equivalent of around four hundred thousand miles of car travel, or driving 16 times around the earth.

There are three options for the Centre to reduce its environmental impact of CO₂ emissions. Firstly to travel less, thereby reducing the Centre's emissions directly. Secondly to reduce the net emissions through participating in, for example a forest restoration scheme. Thirdly to engage in mitigation activities for the impacts of increased atmospheric CO₂ on the environment.

It is the considered opinion of the Environmental Committee that the most cost-effective approach is to review the Centre's current travel policies, reducing air travel where possible, and fully embracing participation in a forest restoration scheme, that would provide the dual benefits of reducing net carbon emissions, and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity. The costs of eliminating CO₂ emissions from the Centre's air travel (i.e. engaging in Carbon neutral air travel) in this manner are less than 1% of current air travel budgets, and it is proposed that this extra fractional cost be taken on by the budgets of projects requiring air travel. In addition, the Committee proposes to enter into a dialogue with appropriate business partners on the issue.

The problem

Staff at UNEP-WCMC engage in a substantial amount of air travel, and given our concerns about the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, it would seem sensible to deal with the carbon dioxide emissions.

Increasingly, organisations look into their contribution to climate change through CO₂ emissions. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has asked their staff to monitor their travel and calculate the emissions it is causing. Several environmental conferences in recent years have declared themselves 'carbon-neutral' through paying into carbon offset schemes.

Based on the travel information in Who's Where When 2003¹, there were approximately 130 flights for UNEP-WCMC staff. Based on the Climate Care website, flights by UNEP-WCMC staff

¹ The Who's Where When 2003 only covers travel for the period April-December so the figures calculated based on this have been scaled up from 9 to 12 months. Who's Where When 2003 does not specify the mode of travel i.e. flights, train, car, etc. For the purpose of this calculation, it was assumed that all travel outside the UK is through flights.

emitted an estimated 136 tonnes of CO₂ and the approximate cost of offsetting this travel would be £1,153. The costs would be reduced for a bulk purchase i.e. for individuals travelling on the same flight.

These calculations are underestimates of the amount of CO₂ produced as they restrict themselves to flights and do not include travel within the destination country or within the UK.

The total amount of money spent on overseas travel (which consists mostly of flights, although it also includes some overland travel abroad) is £117,993 for 2003. Offsetting our CO₂ emissions would therefore represent less than 1% of the amount spent on overseas travel.

Schemes

Participating in a forest restoration scheme would provide biodiversity benefits as well as reducing net carbon emissions.

Schemes for CO₂ offsets:

- Climate Care <http://www.co2.org>
- Restoration projects: Kibale National Park, Uganda – reforestation of an area to create a new primate reserve – planting 30 native tree species.
- Plus projects for energy-efficient lighting in South African households and for energy-efficient stoves in Bangladesh

Future Forests <http://www.futureforests.com>²

- Restoration projects: redwood forests (USA), Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge (USA), degraded oil/gas exploration Sites (Canada), Halde Klobikau (East Germany). Future Forests also have multiple forest restoration schemes in the UK and Ireland, with community forestry and wildlife objectives.
- Agroforestry projects in India, Mexico
- Clean energy schemes in India, Jamaica, Germany

Woodland Trust (tree planting, not explicitly aimed at carbon offset) <http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk/plantatree/index.htm>

- Multiple forest restoration schemes in the UK, with community forestry and wildlife objectives

Either climate offset organisation would be able to provide the Centre with certificates and logos demonstrating our commitment to offset the CO₂ emissions caused by our frequent overseas travel. It would also be feasible to include other CO₂ emissions based on our energy use – either organisation would help us to calculate these.

Carbon offset projects can involve tree-planting for forest restoration, tree-planting for sustainable development (orchards or agroforestry), set-aside of land otherwise destined for deforestation, or energy production from alternative sources. The set-aside option is the least convincing in terms of carbon sequestration, as it is likely to divert rather than remove the carbon emission.

Both Climate Care and Future Forests have a mixture of schemes (see below). Climate Care has a scheme that ties in most obviously with the Centre's objectives: forest restoration in the Kibale National Park in Uganda, which is a **great ape reserve**. If we could ensure that our contribution was used to support this project, we would suggest choosing this scheme for this reason alone.

² Recently, Future Forests have been criticised for not properly conducting carbon offset projects; see <http://society.guardian.co.uk/environment/news/0,14129,1316051,00.html>

The proposal

Highest priority should, of course, be focused on *avoiding CO₂ emissions* as the most effective way of combating climate change. UNEP-WCMC staff should therefore check thoroughly whether air travel is indeed necessary. Alternative options such as video conferences should be explored. Trips within the UK and to France or Belgium should in general be conducted by rail. The Environmental Committee recommends line managers and project leaders to bear this in mind when granting permission to travel.

In the many cases where travel by air is necessary, *payments for carbon offset schemes* should as a matter of course be built into the project budget at all times. The Environmental Committee recommends the following steps:

- Develop project budgets to include costs for carbon offset
- Fully document air miles
- Calculate carbon offset costs – the websites of Climate Care and Future Forests (see above) offer on-line facilities to do so
- Pay these amounts into a carbon offset code
- Make the payment to Climate Care (or another offset scheme) from the carbon offset code annually.

We would encourage *discussions with appropriate corporate sponsors* of UNEP-WCMC about carbon offset of travelling, seeking their advice and exploring options for cooperation in this regard.