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## SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE GUIDE

### *@ work*

The following extracts from the Eco-Office Kit from Share-Net can start you on your sustainable office path, but we recommend that you order the full Eco-Office Kit from Share-Net.  
E-mail Share-Net on [sharenet@wessa.co.za](mailto:sharenet@wessa.co.za) or call: 033 330 3931

Sustainable Development requires integrated actions in order to change society. It requires people and organisations to be environmentally responsible in ways that contribute to economic and social sustainability.

### AN ECO-OFFICE WILL HELP ACHIEVE:

- Economic sustainability – through cost cutting
- Social sustainability – through creating a better workplace
- Ecological sustainability – through reducing ecological footprints in the workplace

### BENEFITS OF AN ECO-OFFICE

**Cost savings:** An Eco-Office can significantly reduce its costs through more efficient use of energy and materials such as electricity, paper and water.

**Care for the environment:** An Eco-Office helps to ensure the long-term sustainability of the environment.

**Building values for a sustainable future:** the involvement of an organisation's staff in creating an Eco-Office raises awareness among staff and the broader community.

**More attractive workplace:** The safe, healthy and pleasant environment of an Eco-Office can promote improved job satisfaction and increased motivation.

Enhances compliance with environmental legislation.

### ECO-OFFICE ACTIONS

#### *Rethink*

Think about creating and maintaining a safe, healthy, pleasant and efficient office environment.

Ask yourself questions such as the following:

- How do we limit risks from chemicals and radiation?
- Where can we find 'greener' products and services?
- Which cleaning agents are odour-free, environmentally friendly and safe to use?
- How can we improve the general office environment?
- How do we make the best use of the space and natural light? What colours would be best?
- How can we promote strong supportive working relationships between colleagues?

- Which other environmentally concerned organisations can we work with?
- Who would be willing to closely monitor the work environment, and help promote a culture of environmental care and responsibility within your organisation?

### *Reduce*

- Choose monitors and equipment with low radiation emissions. Work not less than 60 centimetres from computer monitors.
- Take rest breaks to minimise eye strain and stress.
- Remove or reduce materials that give off toxic or hazardous substances, such as asbestos or lead.
- Ensure adequate airflow, especially in confined spaces.

### *Reuse*

Before buying new office furniture, see if your existing office furniture can be refurbished (it may be less expensive than buying new and could be better for the environment).

### *Repair*

- Keep all equipment in good repair. It gives staff fewer problems and causes less stress.
- An improved workplace and relationships, as well as diet and exercise, will enhance physical and mental health.

The same principles of **rethink, reduce, reuse, recycle and repair** can be applied to the use of energy, water, paper and equipment in our environment.

## FIVE STEPS TO AN ECO-OFFICE

### *1. Audit*

Examine your current practices and identify how they can be improved from an environmental point of view. Check how you comply with legislation requirements and how to make the office environment safer, healthier and more inspiring for employees.

### *2. Plan*

Agree and adopt an Eco-Office Policy. Agree on Eco-Office objectives for the implementation of the policy. Develop the Eco-Office objectives into a coherent plan of activities. Identify and agree on specific responsibilities associated with each activity. Agree on clear achievement targets and time frames for each activity. Involve colleagues in developing the plan, and seek the agreement of all staff, especially senior management.

### *3. Communicate*

Involve colleagues in the development of the Eco-Office programme to ensure their support and ownership. Discuss the benefits and disadvantages of proposed changes with everyone. Let people know the simple ways in which they can contribute. Keep your colleagues informed about progress to ensure their continued interest and commitment.

### *4. Do*

Implement your plan! Implement the simpler activities first. Make these a part of everyone's daily routine as this makes them easier to accept and do.

### *5. Review*

Monitoring and reviewing progress is essential to staying on track.  
Share-Net: Enviro Facts on Waste Management.