



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

UNESCO's Carbon Emissions

Greening UNESCO – Carbon Emissions

The World Environment Day slogan for 2008 is **Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy**. Recognising that climate change is becoming the defining issue of our era, UNEP is asking countries, companies and communities to focus on greenhouse gas emissions and how to reduce them. World Environment Day will highlight resources and initiatives that promote low carbon economies and life-styles, such as improved energy efficiency, alternative energy sources, forest conservation and eco-friendly consumption.

Phase 2 of the UNESCO Green Audit is underway and is measuring the Organization's emissions of greenhouse gases.

Making our Organization climate neutral is as much an issue of cultural change as it is one of political action. By undergoing a formal environmental audit, each section in UNESCO is faced with the impacts of the products, processes and outputs arising from every day internal operations. The audit process gives us not just a rigorous methodology but also a framework for changing behaviour.

What is UNESCO doing to assess its carbon footprint?

At the UN CEB meeting of October 2007 UN organizations undertook to measure greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), to look at measures to reduce and/or offset them and report the results of these assessments by September 2009.

UNESCO is well ahead with own analysis of its GHGs at Headquarters. This is being undertaken by a team from IOS

under Phase 2 of the Green audit. Preliminary results for headquarters are coming through now. They cover activities and operations which give rise to emissions as a result of consumption or production processes.

We estimate our emissions to be 64 432 tons of Carbon for 2006. Of this 51 461 tons comes from our missions.

The Green Audit is examining how these figures compare with other organizations. Clearly, reducing missions would make the biggest difference to our emissions levels. But there are many other everyday practices that can, with just a little adjustment as

described here, make a very big difference to our carbon footprint.

Twelve Steps to Help Kick the CO₂ Habit

There are a number of steps you can take to reduce your carbon emissions, the total of which is described as your carbon footprint. You may think you don't know where to begin, but by reading this, you have already begun.

1. Make a commitment

Reducing your carbon footprint is no different from any other task. Telling people you will reduce carbon emissions may seem simplistic, but even simple actions like announcing your commitment to going carbon neutral can be effective, while the simple act of asking for ideas can lead to creative and innovative solutions.

2. Assess where you stand

Knowing where and how you generate greenhouse gases is the first step to reducing them.

3. Decide and plan where you want to go

Based on your assessment of climate-related risks and opportunities, a strategy and action plan can be developed. Targets help focus efforts and also provide a benchmark for measuring success. A plan to reduce carbon emissions will first focus on the type of energy and

the way it is used; for example electricity for buildings and fuel for transport.

4. De-carbon your life

Everything an individual, organization, business or government does or uses embodies some form of carbon, either in products themselves or in the energy and materials it takes to make them. Buildings, fittings and equipment are all proxies for carbon; 'carbon copies' can be chosen based on the least amount of impact they will have on the climate. Integrating climate friendly criteria into decision making can trigger a ripple effect. Other ways of reducing your carbon footprint include wasting less time and energy on travel.



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World Environment Day 2008

World Environment Day, commemorated each year on 5 June, is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action.

The day's agenda is to give a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership, which will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

When did it all begin?

World Environment Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Another resolution, adopted by the General Assembly the same day, led to the creation of UNEP.

5. Get energy efficient

Very simple measures can lead to immediate savings. Just turning off unused lights, motors, computers and heating can substantially reduce wasted energy—and money.

Think about your travel. Advanced web and video conferencing technology mean the time is rapidly approaching when the need to travel will be substantially diminished.

6. Switch to low carbon energy

If possible, switch to energy sources that emit less carbon and can reduce costs and emissions.

7. Invest in offsets and cleaner alternatives

There is a limit to how much efficiency you can squeeze from your lifestyle or your organisation's operations, or how much renewable energy you can employ. The choice for those who wish to compensate for their remaining emissions is to fund an activity by another party that reduces emissions. This is commonly called a 'carbon offset' or 'carbon credit'. The term carbon neutral includes the idea of neutralising emissions through supporting carbon savings elsewhere.

8. Get efficient

Looking at your life or business through a carbon neutral lens can help you in other ways by increasing the efficiency of resource use, avoiding and reducing waste and ultimately improving your overall performance and reputation. Carbon is generally the waste product of producing energy, and reducing waste and becoming more efficient is always a good idea. Integrate the 3R approach—reduce, reuse and recycle—into your thinking.

9. Offer—or buy—low carbon products and services

The market for climate friendly products and services is growing rapidly, from energy

efficient products to new renewable energy systems.

10. Buy green, sell green

The market for green products and services is growing rapidly. In many countries consumer surveys report that growing numbers of consumers are willing to buy green products if given the choice.

11. Team up

Many private sector companies are increasingly working with non-governmental organisations, cities or governments to identify and implement best practice solutions to reduce emissions. Similarly, local and national governments are seeking opportunities to partner with business on delivering low carbon solutions.

12. Talk

The increasing importance of climate change means that companies and organisations will need to communicate. Transparency is critical. The internet and other new media mean that companies, organisations and governments cannot hide behind greenwash.

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To find out more

2008 World Environment Day
(www.unep.org/wed/2008/english/)

UNESCO and Climate Change
(<http://ioc3.unesco.org/unesco-climate/index.php>)

Sustainable UN initiative (SUN)
(www.unep.fr/scp/sun/)

Calculate your Carbon Footprint
(www.carbonfootprint.com/)

Climate Action for a Low Carbon Economy
(www.climateactionprogramme.org/)

Green Office
(www.circleoflife.org/education/sustainable/reducing/office.htm)