

GL's GREEN OFFICE POLICY

1. The *Gender Perspectives on Climate Change* report following the 2008 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) "Emerging issues panel" noted that Africa has already experienced a warming of 0.7°C. This is expected to continue to rise by 0.2–0.5°C each decade. The panel debated how this warming would affect the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals, especially goal three - the empowerment of women.
2. The panel voiced the concern that global warming will disproportionately affect women (see also the 2008 BRIDGE study: *Gender and Climate Change: Mapping the Linkages*).
3. Through its work to help realise MDG 3 and the specific regional targets of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, Gender Links is also concerned about the impact of climate change on the region's women.
4. Climate change will impact on Southern African agriculture, forestry, health and access to energy. Moreover, environmental issues due to climate change increase the likelihood of conflict and mass migration. Women and young girls often bear the largest burden of climate change because they are tasked with collecting water and firewood, as well as being the main producers of African crops, many which have become more fragile because of the impact of global warming.
5. While Gender Links thinks globally through its programme work it also acts locally to reduce its carbon footprint at the micro level.
6. The organisation has a special responsibility and role as a regional leader and consumer of environmental resources, to set positive examples of management and conservation within this area. This policy includes the carrying out of both compulsory and voluntary practices to reduce waste, further recycling, conserve energy and reduce the usage of natural resources. Accordingly, the organisation will purchase products, supplies, and services that further this goal.
7. This policy should be cross referenced with the procurement; employee wellness; and office environment policies. Judicious care of resources reduces environmental; human and financial costs, resulting in better value for money as well as a sustainable future. Appreciation of nature and the environment is a key ingredient in personal well being. Less cluttered green friendly and aware offices make for more holistic and pleasant working environments. This policy also cross references with other policies such as flexi time. Work from home, where warranted, reduces the carbon footprint of staff and can help to promote better work life balance, if responsibly managed.

Education and awareness

8. All GL staff are required to familiarise themselves with the Green Office Policy as part of their induction.

9. GL shall appoint an environment officer, who shall ensure that all staff are aware of the Green Office Policy through periodic education and awareness events, including fun events with families undertaken as part of the wellness programme.
10. GL shall observe Green Office Week (also known by the acronym GOW) launched in 2010 in South Africa to take place annually in the week of 22 April (Earth Day).
11. The environment officer shall have a regular Green Column in *Gender Linked* to educate staff about ways of reducing environmental degradation and increase awareness of the GL environmental policies and encourage staff to practise the same principles at home. Good practices from all GL offices shall be shared through this column.
12. Annual staff awards shall include a "Going Green" award for the staff member who, in the assessment of the environment officer, has contributed most to green awareness and practise at GL and in GL's work.

Programme work

13. As a regional organisation operating in 15 countries, Gender Links works most often at the macro level, using research to influence key stakeholders and decision-makers, including government and media. Through its programme work Gender Links has committed to taking up the issue of climate change and the environment in several key areas:
 - Lobbying and advocacy work as part of the SADC Gender Protocol Alliance, which is pushing for climate change issues to be incorporated into the SADC Gender Protocol. This initiative is led by partners in Mozambique where many of the worst issues around climate change and gender were felt following recent flooding.
 - Working with media to publicise gender issues linked to climate change. This is done through the Gender Links Opinion and Commentary Service and also during in-country newsroom training.
 - Incorporating climate change as "stages" in both the media and local government Centres of Excellence for Gender Mainstreaming. This involves on the job capacity building and application that is later measured through a range of Monitoring and Evaluation tools.

Green building practice

14. GL uses interior plants within personal work zones, where we spend most of our day. (Research shows that plants improve indoor air quality. Sealed energy efficient buildings have less exchange of fresh outdoor air for stale indoor air. Research indicates that plant-filled rooms contain 50-60 percent fewer airborne molds and bacteria than rooms without plants).
15. GL shall ensure that all offices have good natural light, to promote health and well being of staff as well as reduce the amount of artificial light required.

A paperless office

16. GL shall halve its paper usage in 2011/2012 (to be monitored through expenditure on paper) by:
 - Getting faxes by email.

- Sending out and getting electronic invoices and statements.
- Sending invitations electronically.
- Opting for e.cards.
- Doing electronic banking.
- Using electronic application forms.
- Storing data and disaster recovery electronically.
- Using print preview to spot errors.
- Printing on both sides of paper.
- Only printing pages really needed.
- Editing documents on screen eg: track changes.
- Keeping copies of documents on the P Drive rather than on paper.
- Setting printout margin sizes and fonts to minimise paper use.
- Green publishing of monthly newsletters; annual reports and magazines
- Using powerpoint presentations instead of paper.
- Using real mugs, plates and cutlery rather than disposable ones.
- Printing drafts (where necessary) on ruined photocopies as rough paper
- Using shredded paper and newspapers as box fillers when packing for freighting
- Turning printing mistakes or ruined copies into notepads

Water

17. GL shall reduce wastage of water (as measured through monthly metre readings) through:
- Rainwater harvesting in tanks
 - Installing water efficient taps.
 - Water efficient washing appliances.
 - Install signage with hot-line numbers for leak reporting.
 - Requiring that staff immediately communicate significant water losses from broken pipes to the house manager who must report such losses immediately and ensure that they are repaired within 12 hours.
 - Avoid installing ornamental water features and fountains that lose water to evaporation.
 - Clearly marking where the master water shut-off valve is located.
 - Installing water efficient systems for indoor and outdoor plant and landscape watering, and making use of stored rainwater for this purpose.
 - Opting for drought-tolerant /water efficient plants and grass.
 - Upgrading older toilets/urinals with water efficient models.
 - Filling kettles only with as much water as is needed.
 - Using water harvested from the roof for washing company vehicles.
 - Ensuring that there are never any leaking hose nozzles.

Recycling

18. The following items shall be recycled; other classes of recyclables may be added if markets develop:
- Rainwater harvesting in tanks
 - Aluminium cans
 - White copy paper
 - Newsprint – newspapers
 - Glass products
 - Metal products
 - Batteries

- Cardboard
19. The following process shall be complied with to ensure recycling:
- Each staff member is required to have a paper recycling box or bin in their office. This paper is collected on a weekly basis.
 - Staff members are required to put glass, plastic and metal waste products into the corresponding bins provided in the GL parking lot. These bins are emptied once a week at the local recycling plant.
 - All waste paper is recycled and collected once a week by a recycling company.

Waste not, want not

20. GL shall foster a culture and ethos of savings and care for the environment and its resources through:
- Whenever possible distributing documents to fewer people.
 - Minimising waste from catering and leisure facilities i.e glass, beverage cans, plastics, paper and board packaging and food waste.
 - Reducing the use of staples! Saving one staple a day in every office equals tons of metal saved.
 - Reducing the purchase of folders, hanging file dividers, packing boxes and other storage items through efficient and effective E storage and back up systems.
 - Collecting and reusing name badges after meetings.
 - Re using paper clips, bull clips drawing pins etc.
 - Re using padded bags/envelopes, polystyrene.
 - Starting a battery and ink-toner recycling bin.
 - Giving attention to the product durability/ life span when shopping for the office
 - Buying in bulk to reduce packaging.
 - Where appropriate repairing equipment before having it replaced.
 - If machinery is creating a lot of waste, checking whether it needs to be repaired or replaced or if it is being used correctly.

Electricity and energy conservation

21. GL has instituted a number of power saving measures including switching off geysers; switching off lights and plugs that are not being used and switching off computers and printers at the end of the day. Staff are required to use power sensibly and to comply with any power saving measures that may from time to time be instituted.
22. GL provides gas heating in winter to save electricity and fans in summer instead of air conditioners in case of excesses in temperature.
23. The HR and assets manager shall ensure that gas heating is safe at all times. Gas heating shall be used rather than electricity except in exceptional circumstances where this can be justified.
24. Staff are required to use energy sensibly and in a way that is considerate of the overall energy load on the premises through:

- Turning off all unnecessary lighting and heaters in offices when not in use or when away from the office for more than one hour.
 - Using only energy-saving LED light bulbs in the office.
 - All office lights except outside lights switched off every night when the last staff member vacates the premises.
 - Ensure external lights are switched off during daylight
 - Obtaining and displaying "Switch-off when not in use" stickers for light switches
 - Setting all PCs and office equipment to energy saving modes and ensuring ALL are switched off at night. Turning off computers, printers, copiers and other electrical appliances when departing for the day (the world's computers are responsible for creating more CO2 than the world's aircraft!)
 - Switching off geysers for weekends and annual holidays
25. GL shall, as funds permit:
- Look into renewable energy sources.
 - Enhance insulation in ceilings, walls and floors as appropriate.

Reducing carbon footprint in transport and travel

26. To reduce the carbon footprint of Board and staff, GL shall:
- Maintain an open attitude to flexitime and telecommuting.
 - Promote bulk deliveries.
 - Where possible cut down on car travel by encouraging teleconferences including via skype.
 - Plant trees around the office premises: trees and other plants absorb carbon dioxide and give off oxygen.
 - Take direct flights and avoid connecting flights wherever possible.
 - With reference to the office car, GL shall:
 - Drive less and Drive Smart
 - Avoid idling and revving: It hurts engines, wastes petrol, and contributes to global warming and pollution.
 - Drive during non-peak hours –this saves a significant amount of fuel during stops.
 - Plan travel and pick ups to ensure group rather than individual travel.
 - Pick Efficient Delivery Routing using special routing software
 - Inflating tyres properly – this improves mileage by about 3.3%.
 - Keep the car properly serviced.
 - Drive with windows closed as this reduces drag on the vehicle.

Green events

27. GL shall ensure the greening of all its events in the following ways:
- If travel is involved share transport to meetings and events where possible.
 - Arrange for group transport if large numbers of individuals will be attending.
 - When suitable consider video and teleconferencing.
 - Ensuring that promotion and event information are shared through electronic formats and websites.
 - E Mailing paper brochures and invitations in PDF formats.
 - Offer online registration and evaluations.
 - Reduce paper folders, binders and programmes by placing info on Powerpoint at the event and distributing bulky documentation on a flash drive.
 - Using eco-friendly folders.

- Using water pitchers and cordials rather than plastic bottles.
- Using dry-erase boards or other reusable visual aids.
- Using eco-friendly venues.
- Ensuring that conference bags are made from recycled or sustainable materials.
- Reusable or recyclable signs.
- Eco-friendly banners.
- Digital photography.
- Certificates on non-wood or recycled paper and framed in bamboo.
- Name badges that are re-used.
- Making use of re-cycled packing materials and decorations.

Green purchasing

28. GL shall "green" its procurement practices in the following ways:
- When using outside printing services, asking for recycled paper whenever possible.
 - Before purchasing new office furnishings, checking for availability of used furnishings at another office or the Cottages.
 - Being selective when using products with chemicals. Do not order more than can be used before the expiration date or shelf life of the product.
 - Not using aerosol containers. Using refillable pump dispensers, if available.
 - Specifications and Standards for office purchases.
 - Environmentally-friendly vehicles e.g.: hybrid models.
 - Locally manufactured products as they travel lesser distances.
 - Paper and cardboard that is high in recycled content.
 - Office supplies that are free of hazardous materials.
 - Cleaning supplies that are non-toxic and in concentrate form.
 - Non-wood products where possible.
29. GL shall give preference to:
- Bio based products.
 - Energy Efficient products.
 - Recycled Content products.
 - Non-ozone Depleting Substances.
 - Repairable products.
 - Recyclable products.

