

Environment Policy

(Incorporating The Environment (Wales) Act 2016
Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystem Plan)

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Key messages

The main objective of this policy is to:

- Set out the ICO's policy, goals and approach to minimising the potential for our activities to have a detrimental effect on the environment.
- Describe overarching environmental objectives
- Inform people of our governance arrangements and how we report information about our environmental impact and environmental initiatives.

Does this policy relate to me?

This policy is to be noted by all staff, as all colleagues are in a position to contribute to the achievement of our objectives through their behaviour, purchasing decisions and engagement in environmental initiatives.

Table of contents

1. Policy statement	2
2. Our environmental objectives	3
3. Minimising CO2 and Green House Gas emissions	4
4. Minimising water and energy use.....	4
5. Waste management and recycling	5
6 Minimising the use of single use products, plastics and harmful chemicals	5
7. Raising awareness and influencing behaviour	6
8. Governance arrangements	6
Feedback on this document	7
Version history	7

1. Policy statement

At the ICO we understand that undertaking our work as an effective regulator and employer requires the use of natural resources, energy and a wide variety of supplies and services.

The ICO is committed to minimising damaging environmental impacts which may arise from the conduct of our activity.

To do this we will explore and implement ways of working which help us to operate in a way that enhances environmental sustainability, minimises harm to our eco-system and continually improves our environmental performance. We are committed to contribute to the achievement of government Net Zero targets for CO2 emissions.

We will use our position as a prominent organisation and significant purchaser of goods and services to encourage stakeholders and suppliers to adopt environmentally responsible practices.

Though ICO has no land management function or responsibilities at any of its offices, we have a duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to produce and update at least every three years a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystem Plan.

This Section 6 plan details the ICO's approach and gives examples of the action taken to help biodiversity.

[Back to Top](#)

2. Our environmental objectives

- 2.1. We are committed to minimising the amount of energy and water we use, and waste we produce.
- 2.2 We will seek to minimise the amount of CO2 resulting from our activity and offsetting CO2 emissions where possible.
- 2.3 We will maximise the proportion of the energy we use from renewable and environmentally responsible energy sources.
- 2.4 We will minimise the use of single use products, plastics and harmful chemicals where feasible.
- 2.5 We will encourage and facilitate the recycling of waste.
- 2.6 We will link with and support local initiatives on environmental issues.
- 2.7 We will seek to minimise or eliminate the amount of waste we produce that goes to landfill.
- 2.8 We will raise awareness and influence our staff to understand how they can improve the environment through their behaviour both in work and at home.
- 2.9 To help us gauge how effective we have been we will monitor our use of energy and the resulting production of CO2 and publish data in our annual report.

[Back to Top](#)

3. Minimising CO₂ and Green House Gas emissions

- 3.1 We will implement initiatives which reduce the amount of CO₂ and GHGs that our activities generate and seek means by which we can off-set emissions which are unavoidable.
- 3.2 We will purchase electricity for our offices using green tariffs wherever feasible.
- 3.3 We will influence our landlords in buildings where we do not control the energy supply to implement green energy tariffs.
- 3.4 We will explore CO₂ offsetting schemes, or similar initiatives, to mitigate the impact of the CO₂ that are unavoidably produced from our activity.
- 3.5 We will use technology to minimise the amount of business travel that we undertake.
- 3.6 We will support hybrid working which will help to reduce the environmental impact of commuting to offices.
- 3.7 We will encourage active travel such as cycling to work, and the use of public transport for journeys to the office and for business travel where practical.
- 3.8 We will seek information about environmental performance and initiatives of suppliers when procuring for goods and services and including this in our decision-making process.

4. Minimising water and energy use

- 4.1. We will work to minimise the amount of these utilities we use on a 'per employee' basis. Where feasible, we will implement initiatives that help to reduce the total amount of energy and water that we use.
- 4.2. We will use energy efficient lighting with sensors which turn off lighting automatically when not needed.
- 4.3. We will take energy efficiency into account when purchasing business infrastructure equipment such as IT and servers, vending machines and other electrical equipment and gas boilers.

4.4 We will seek opportunities for greater energy efficiency in our buildings.

5. Waste management and recycling

- 5.1 The most effective way of managing waste is not to produce it in the first place. We will work with our suppliers to minimise the amount of packaging which is used for inward deliveries.
- 5.2 We will contract with waste management suppliers who recycle as much of our waste products as possible and utilise remaining waste in a responsible way. Our aim is to send no waste to landfill.
- 5.3 We will seek to minimise the amount of paper that we use as an organisation, and we will ensure our paper shredding services are provided by suppliers who recycle the shredded paper.
- 5.4 We will purchase recyclable consumable products where feasible eg paper cups.

6 Minimising the use of single use products, plastics and harmful chemicals

- 6.1. We will be mindful of the environmental consequences of the purchases we make and the processes we implement.
- 6.2 Eliminate the use of disposable plastic cups.
- 6.3 Encourage the use of mugs and cups for vending machine drinks as an alternative to use of paper cups.
- 6.4 Provide sustainable wooden cutlery for staff events instead of plastic.
- 6.5 Minimise the use of plastic bin liners in our offices.
- 6.6 Require cleaning contractors to use environmentally friendly cleaning products.

7. Raising awareness and influencing behaviour

- 7.1 The actions of our staff will make a considerable contribution to our success in implementing this policy. We will take opportunities to educate and inform our people.
- 7.2 We will provide staff with information about how they can reduce energy usage in the office and at home.
- 7.3 We will maintain benefits like our cycle to work scheme and public transport season ticket loan initiative.
- 7.4 We will encourage the use of car sharing.
- 7.5 We will seek ways to implement incentives for staff to act in environmentally responsible ways.

8. Governance arrangements

- 8.1 We will have a 'Green Group' which is chaired by the Head of Facilities and Estates and involves interested staff and trade union representatives. This Group will seek to take forward the objectives set out in this policy and provide oversight of the ICO's environmental performance.
- 8.2 The Green Group will report outcomes to the Audit and Risk Committee, and where necessary seek approval for initiatives which may have strategic significance eg major changes to contracts, or changes to the Environmental Performance.
- 8.3 The ICO will provide information to its sponsor department as part of the Greening Government initiative and contribute to public sector Net Carbon Zero targets.
- 8.4 Our Annual Reports shall provide details of Environmental initiatives undertaken, as well as statistical information about our use of energy, water and CO2 emissions.

Feedback on this document

If you have any feedback on this document, please [click this link](#) to provide it.

[Back to Top](#)

Version history

Version	Changes made	Date	Made by
1.0	Original policy	December 2019	
2.0	Updated format of the policy and review of content	April 2023	
3.0	Update of format and scheduled review of policy	August 2025	

[Back to Top](#)