

Making government work better by...



# Supporting action against **CLIMATE CHANGE**

**The latest climate change models predict that, without action, global temperatures could rise by 1.4 to 5.8 degrees centigrade over the next 100 years, causing widespread destruction of the Earth's ecosystems.**

The UK is currently responsible for 2% of global emissions. Under the Kyoto Protocol the Government agreed a target of reducing the 1990 emissions levels of six greenhouse gases (GHGs) by 12.5% by 2012. In 2005, GHG emissions levels had dropped to 15.6% below 1990 levels, meaning that the UK is one of the only developed countries to have already met its Kyoto commitments, a full seven years early.

Commissioned in 2005 by the Prime Minister and the Chancellor, the Stern Review was published in October 2006. The most in-depth climate change review ever carried out, it revealed that only with immediate international action could the world still avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Since the 1990s, the 10 hottest years on record have occurred globally. For the UK global warming would mean hotter summers and wetter winters.

Low-lying areas would be regularly flooded while rising seas would batter coastal villages with stormy waves. Further afield, climate changes would cause drought, disease and famine in vulnerable areas. In short, the economic and social impact of widespread climate change could be catastrophic.

Recognising that effectively tackling climate change requires committed long-term action, the UK published a draft Climate Change Bill in March 2007. Included in it was a challenging target to reduce the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by 60% on 1990 levels by 2050.

To reduce government impact on climate change, the Prime Minister set a range of Sustainable Operations Targets for the government estate, including a commitment to be carbon neutral by 2012. The Cabinet Office is fully committed to this and has put in place an Environmental Management System which sets out clear responsibilities and robust procedures to improve environmental performance.

- The Energy Efficiency Accreditation Scheme

The only scheme of its kind in Europe. Participating organisations must meet stringent requirements for organisation, investment and progressive improvement. The Cabinet Office has addressed many of the criteria already and plans are being undertaken to meet the rest as soon as possible.

- Office of Government Commerce Energy Efficiency Review

The Cabinet Office has joined this two-year programme, which provides a framework for achieving savings through making changes to current working practices. It focuses chiefly on energy procurement, financial management and energy consumption.

As part of the Government's commitment to tackling climate change, the Cabinet Office is taking decisive action to improve its environmental performance. It has signed up to several key initiatives focused on reducing climate change. These include:

- The Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Programme

A comprehensive carbon and energy 'audit' was carried out in 2006 covering the Cabinet Office's central London buildings. The team responsible for sustainable development will shortly report back to the Trust with an action plan to improve our future performance.

The Cabinet Secretary has taken a personal lead in promoting this work, and planet friendly improvements are taking place all over the Cabinet Office. A team of 'Green Coordinators' was recently launched, energy efficient light bulbs are being installed where possible, old computer monitors are being replaced with energy saving alternatives and over three quarters of the electricity supplied to the core London estate now comes from renewable sources. Recycling bins have been placed in all offices and campaigns are being run to make all staff more aware of how their day-to-day activities affect the planet.