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# GREEN GOVERNMENT POLICY

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## **1.0 Background, Scope and Purpose**

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the environment as an important component of the wealth of the country that is inextricably linked to the health and well-being of citizens. In this regard, the Government is cognizant that in order to achieve sustainable development, a strong economy and a clean and healthy environment, there needs to be a balance between development and conservation.

The adoption of clean and safe environmental practices at both the community and business levels is essential. As such, the Government aims to become a 'green business' in order to support the conservation of the environment by complying with environmental regulations, reducing waste, preventing pollution and conserving water and energy resources. To foster such an environment of corporate responsibility and "buy-in" to this goal it is critical that the Government show leadership in this matter. The adoption and implementation of a Green Government Policy will also enable the reduction of critical financial resources in terms of Government operations by reducing consumables and the use of energy.

## **2.0 Objective:**

The objective of the Green Government Policy is the conservation of resources and the reduction of pollution thereby minimizing the adverse effects of operations of the Government on the environment. This policy is intended to further promote the environmental principles as expressed in the 2006 National Environmental Policy. It is envisioned that the Government shall endeavour to mainstream the aforementioned principles by integrating them into its routine operations.

## **3.0 Policies to Achieve the Objective**

### ***3.1 Conservation of Resources***

The conservation of resources within Government offices focuses on reducing the production of solid waste, minimizing use of the energy, water, and paper; and ensuring the proper disposal of all waste.

#### **3.1.1 Energy**

The main focus of the energy conservation policy would be to reduce energy consumption by using energy more efficiently at Government offices without loss of productivity or comfort. Towards this end, the Government shall:

- identify and promote the use of energy efficient Information Technology (IT) and other equipment through a phased replacement of existing equipment as their functional life comes to an end, with the most energy efficient equipment available.
- equip all light fixtures with energy efficient bulbs, including where appropriate Compact Fluorescent (CF) and Light Emitting Diode (LED) technologies.
- promote a 'lights off' policy which encourages the complete shut down of lights and other electronic equipment when not in use, rather than use of stand-by facilities in particular on non-working days.

### 3.1.2 Waste

The Government shall strive to reduce the generation of waste at its offices by:

- reducing the amount of materials used, and by re-using, recycling or repairing materials and products where possible.
- encouraging the use of refurbished and recycled materials where such alternatives are available.
- establishing reuse area for office supplies that can be reused.
- engaging in recycling stewardship programmes within the office.
- using reusable kitchenware in office kitchens rather than disposables.

### 3.1.3 Water

The Government shall strive to reduce unnecessary water consumption at its offices. Where possible all offices should be fitted with water saving devices on taps and toilets. All leakage or drips shall be repaired as a matter of urgency.

### 3.1.4 Paper

The Government shall strive to reduce the use of paper at its offices by:

- maximising the use of alternative technologies such as e-mail, e-documents and networking systems.
- using double sided printing and photocopying where possible.
- using recycled paper.
- establishing arrangements to shred and transport waste paper to a dependable recycling company.
- using post-it fax notes for faxing documents.
- producing single spaced documents with narrow margins.
- using presentation software or dry erase boards for presentations rather than flip charts.

### 3.1.5 Disposal of electronic waste

The Government shall ensure that disposal of all electronic waste products is conducted in an environmentally sound manner. This includes the disposal of computer monitors, hard drives, printers, photocopiers, print cartridges, toners, and other electronic wastes. All efforts should be made to engage the services of a company or individual with the expertise to handle the disposal of these products which contain hazardous components.

## **3.2 Pollution Reduction**

The reduction of pollution should explicitly include specific product procurement, usage and disposal as well as environmentally friendly office practices. This approach is also relevant to the reduction of the contribution of offices to climate change and ozone depletion.

### 3.2.1 Climate Change

The main of focus of the climate change policy would be to reduce the annual emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. In this regard, Government offices shall:

- reduce energy consumption in office buildings, and equipment.
- where feasible, control other gaseous and non gaseous pollutants by composting kitchen and garden wastes to reduce emissions of methane.
- switch from sulphur hexafluorides for the cleaning of switch boards to environmentally preferable substitutes having a low global warming potential.
- use hydrofluorocarbons(HFCs) as a refrigerant only where other safe, technically feasible, cost effective and environmentally acceptable alternatives do not exist.
- reduce carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen by cutting vehicle emissions through the use of compress natural gas fuel.

### 3.2.2 Ozone -Depleting Substances

The Government shall ensure that its offices use:

- no products are purchased which contain chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) halons, carbon tetrachloride, 111 trichloroethane or any other ozone-depleting substance.
- alternatives to hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) are used where feasible.
- refrigerators, air conditioning units, and vehicle air conditioning systems and fire extinguishing systems that do not use ozone depleting gases.
- refrigeration and air conditioning equipment that are properly maintained, including leakage prevention and recovery of refrigerants.

### 3.2.3 Asbestos

The Government shall continue to manage undamaged asbestos containing materials *in situ* at its offices through regular monitoring for signs of deterioration and sealing, encapsulating and labeling where appropriate. Where it is necessary to remove and dispose of asbestos materials, to do so in accordance with relevant regulations and guidance to minimise the release of fibres and the risk they might pose to the health of workers, staff and visitors. For new applications or where asbestos materials are being replaced, ensure that asbestos free materials are used where these exist and are less hazardous.

### 3.2.4 Hazardous Substances

The Government shall minimise the use of hazardous substances at its offices and ensure that they are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with suppliers' instructions. Emphasis should be placed on the use, as far as practicable, of bio-degradable and non-polluting cleaning agents.

### 3.2.5 Batteries

The Government shall avoid the use of batteries at its offices, especially those with high levels of lead, mercury and cadmium, where there is a better environmental option. Where feasible, offices should encourage the use of rechargeable batteries.

### 3.2.6 Solvents and paints

The Government shall continue to check the use of products at its offices containing potentially harmful solvents in order to identify those which can be eliminated or replaced by low solvent, or solvent- free products such as water based paints, varnishes and glues.

### 3.2.7 Biodegradable Substances

The Government shall use fully biodegradable substances at its offices such as wood, cardboard and vegetable based lubricating oils, where available and when they represent the best environmental option and value for money.

### **3.3 Transportation**

The Government shall minimise the impact of the travel arrangements of its offices on the environment by:

- reducing the level of travel through the use of video conferencing and encouraging employees who have to travel to do so in a way that minimises the environmental impact.
- reviewing pool vehicle needs and capabilities, and identify suitable replacement vehicles with more efficient fuel use and reduced emissions, where feasible.
- retrofitting vehicle fleets to use compressed natural gas as a fuel alternative.
- regularly maintaining vehicle fleets.
- encouraging officers to car pool on any site visits within the same vicinity.
- ensuring that remote access to official e-mail works efficiently to ensure high levels of efficiency among Ministry and Agency personnel. This should be done in a manner that ensures the security and confidentiality of official documents. Where feasible systems for remote access to network systems should be established to allow officers to work from home thereby minimizing road time to the workplace.
- increasing the sharing of vehicles for work assignments.
- maintaining teleconference facilities in all offices, and promoting the use of voice conference technology to enhance the ability to hold distance meetings.

### **3.4 Procurement**

The Government shall commit through its procurement decisions to

- ensure that all purchases are made in accordance with this policy statement, and relevant, current and foreseen legislation.
- take account of whole life costs (from manufacture to disposal) and not just the initial price when assessing value for money, wherever practical.
- specify recycled products and refined mineral oils where practicable and where they provide value for money taking account of whole life costs.
- where practical use ecolabels to help identify environmentally preferable products and where practical, select suppliers who use recyclable packaging.

### ***3.5 Corporate Communications***

In its promotional and corporate communications activities the Government shall ensure when possible:

- use of chlorine free (TCF) environmentally friendly paper.
- printing of all promotional material double-sided.
- ensuring that all events are conducted in the most environmentally friendly manner.
- using inks, laminates and varnishes which are low in toxicity and bio-degradable.
- using paper packaging which is re-usable or bio-degradable and plastic which is UV degradable.

### ***3.6 Staff Awareness***

The Government shall promote staff awareness of environmental issues through education, training and motivation of staff to work in an environmentally responsible manner, and to play a full part in developing new environmental conservation ideas and initiatives. This will provide for keeping staff informed about new environmental policies and practices.