

# HOW GREEN IS MY WORKPLACE?

**A GUIDE FOR UNITE MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES IN THE  
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING, ELECTRONICS AND IT SECTOR**

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## **FOREWORD**

### **PETER SKYTE, NATIONAL OFFICER**

Issues to do with the environment and climate change have been rising up the agenda of governments, large and small companies and unions in recent years. In

2006 the Stern Review prompted many to take the issue much more seriously. The report estimated that climate change could, in time, cause a 5 to 10% drop in global GDP. The report also predicted that the effects of climate change will be magnified for those in developing countries, causing more regular instances of drought, famine and conflict. Even leading economies such as the UK stand to lose up to £76 billion a year.

The Electrical Engineering Electronics and IT sector has a unique position in the effort to reduce the carbon footprint of the economy. While the sector is and should continue to curb its own emissions, it is also at the forefront of developing technologies and solutions that can mitigate and reduce the environmental impact of many other sectors. The contribution of the sector to these efforts is discussed further in the Introduction and Chapter 4.

As the UK's largest union, Unite has grasped the need to engage with the climate change debate and to shape environmental policy and practice. In early 2008 the EEEIT sector of Unite surveyed over 10,000 of its members in order to gauge what

companies and union members have been doing in their workplaces to tackle climate change.

The survey gathered responses from workplace representatives about the initiatives and environmental measures they have negotiated for with their employers. The results of this survey and comments from individual Unite members are used to illustrate points and trigger discussion throughout this publication.

As well as reporting on environmental policies that are already being taken forward in workplaces, this document will also discuss the attitudes of union members and employers towards climate change issues. Chapter 5 explores further means of pursuing the environmental agenda, including negotiating workplace environmental agreements, electing activists to be responsible for environmental issues and campaigning for an ethical supply chain.

Unite is optimistic about what workers can contribute to preservation of the environment. Incremental and, in some cases, innovative and dynamic changes in workplaces are occurring because Unite members are raising awareness of climate change issues, setting a positive example and challenging their employers to take action. The goal now for the whole sector is to mainstream environmental awareness, broaden the scope of the union's power to bargain on this and other issues and to accelerate change in the workplace.

The outlook is very clear. No employer will make money from a dead planet and no worker will gain from being part of a poisoned population.

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# Introduction

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## Electrical Engineering, Electronics and IT and climate change



### **WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?**

Climate change or global warming is caused by increased levels of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other polluting gases in the atmosphere. High levels of carbon dioxide are emitted by a wide spectrum of activities including industry, transport and energy generation. As the concentration of these gases increases, the temperature of the planet will increase, causing irregular and damaging patterns of weather.

### **SECTOR EMISSIONS**

The share of emissions produced by the electronics and IT sectors is estimated to be around 2% of the UK's total emissions. Nearly 40% of the UK's CO<sub>2</sub> output comes from the energy sector, the largest source of emissions. Road transport follows shortly behind and accounts for just over a fifth of emissions.

2% may seem like a marginal contribution to the emissions total, however, the growth in demand for IT and electronics related products means that in the future the EEEIT sector will account for an ever increasing share of CO<sub>2</sub> output.

The Energy Saving Trust predicts that by 2020 45% of domestic electricity will be consumed by IT and electronics products.

Furthermore, while IT and electronics have the ability to make other sectors more efficient, for example; by improving logistics operations, replacing the need to travel with facilitating video or teleconferencing or through the monitoring and adjustment of energy use by buildings, the sector has yet to definitively solve some of the problems it has created. These inefficiencies include the still pervasive use of standby and the rapid cycles of upgrades and product diversification generating electronic waste as a result of companies competing for market share and chasing profit.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY**

The Climate Change Bill states that the UK must reduce its net carbon output by at least 60% of the 1990 baseline by 2050. The EEEIT sector is a cornerstone in strategies to meet the targets set out in the Bill and in ambitions to create a zero carbon economy.

The development of environmental technologies in the UK and abroad is anticipated to become a billion pound industry. Environmental technologies will increase the efficiency of fields as diverse as engineering, energy generation, printing, lighting, logistics management and transport.

Products, processes and services that decrease the environmental impacts of the economy are outlined in more detail in Chapter 4 but briefly here are some examples of the use of environmental technology could generate:

- Smart buildings technologies, which monitor and adjust lighting, heating and energy use
- Broadband, which facilitates communications through email, video and teleconferencing, and VOIP (Voice over internet protocol)
- Bio-informatics and 'in silico' testing which reduce the environmental impact of scientific modelling and testing
- Multifunctional devices such as the i-phone, all in one printers with inbuilt fax and scanner and blackberries help reduce the proliferation of electronic devices and can cut the use of paper

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## **JOBS AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

Individual workers, consumers and citizens, employers and governments are all responsible for CO2 emissions. Currently more CO2 is emitted by processes in workplaces than in the home.

Already scarce resources and rising energy costs are severely affecting pay, jobs and UK competitiveness. Union representatives in the manufacturing sectors have been reporting for some time that decisions to offshore production have in part been made because of rising energy costs in the UK.

Currently it is thought that the IT and electronics sectors contribute around 10% of UK GDP and employ over 1 million people. While there are fears that energy costs and readily available low cost labour in emerging economies will drive further jobs, especially in manufacturing, out of the UK, there is certainly great potential for the expansion of employment in the field of environmental technology.

In 2005 the Climate Change Review reported that the UK's environmental economy was worth £25 billion pounds and employed around 400,000 people. The Trade Union Sustainable Development Committee draws on the examples of Germany, where 1.5 million people work in environmental technology businesses. TUSDAC believes that environmental manufacturing and engineering alone could create more than 50,000 new jobs in the UK and that wind related technology another 45,000.

New jobs related to the environment are not restricted to the technology sectors. Just as IT and electronics are already important to the smooth running of all sectors of the economy, in the future, IT and electronics will have a significant part to play in greening the whole economy.

As well as contributing to the efficiency of renewable sources of energy, IT and electronics will be essential in the development of paperless offices, online banking and e commerce, simulated testing and the substitution of video and teleconferencing for travelling to meetings.

All of these solutions will require skilled workers for their implementation, use and servicing.



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# Chapter 1

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## What do Unite members think about environmental issues in the workplace?

### **THE UNITE EEEIT SECTOR MEMBERS SURVEY**

In early 2008 the Unite contacted nearly 10,000 members in the EEEIT sector via email to ask about their views on climate change and to discern what is being done in workplaces to cut emissions. An online survey of members distributed through the email, regular sector news bulletins and posted on the Unite website gathered nearly 450 responses from representatives, stewards and members based across the UK in a wide cross section of companies.

### **REGIONAL BREAKDOWN**

	Percent	Value
1 North East, Yorkshire and the Humber	6,0 %	27
2 East Midlands	11,2 %	50
3 Eastern and London	10,5 %	47
4 South East	17,0 %	76
5 South West	6,7 %	30
6 West Midlands	5,6 %	25
7 North West	21,7 %	97
8 Scotland	6,5 %	29
9 Ireland	2,2 %	10
10 Wales	12,5 %	56
Total		447

### **COMPANY BREAKDOWN**

Responses were received from 140 companies from across the EEEIT sector. The companies represented included Fujitsu Services, Accenture, Steria, EDS, CSC, NCR, Siemens, Panasonic, Phillips, Kodak, IBM, Ericsson, Atos Origin, Areva, BAE Systems, Dell, Toshiba, Sharp and Cummins among others.

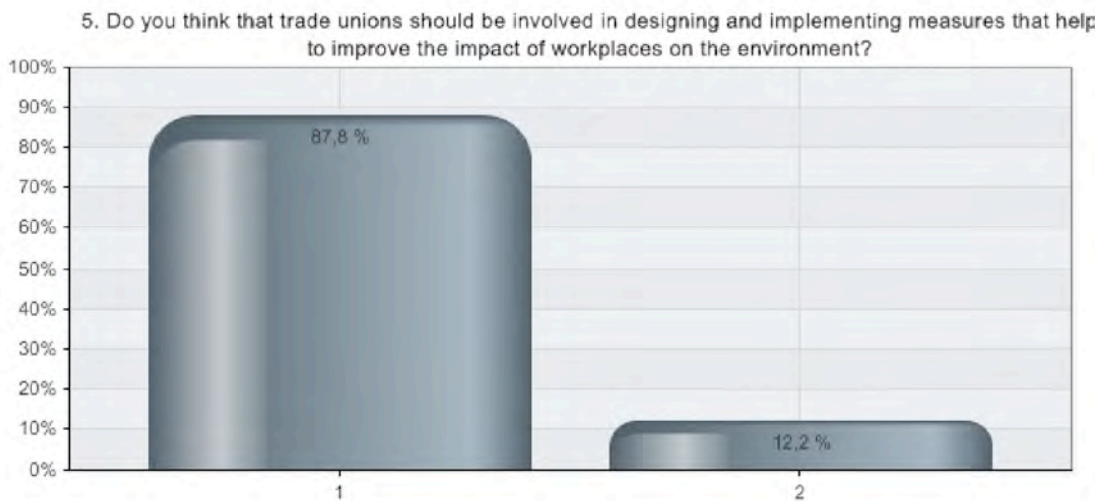
The survey suggests that a majority of Unite members in the EEEIT sector are highly educated about climate change and the environment and can identify the environmental inefficiencies that exist in their workplace:

***“Environmental issues are coming more and more to the top of my list of priorities and should be very high in everybody else’s priorities. Sustainable carbon neutral energy sources, such as solar, wind and tidal need to be looked at immediately to help our planet survive.”*** Workplace Representative, Panasonic



	Alternatives	Percent	Value
1	Yes	83,6 %	376
2	No	16,4 %	74
	Total		450

A majority of respondents believe that unions should be doing more to tackle climate change and should be making interventions in workplaces to improve environmental policies.



	Alternatives	Percent	Value
1	Yes	87,8 %	396
2	No	12,2 %	55
	Total		451

Members who took part in the survey also appear to be aware of the pressing need to engage with climate change issues and recognise the convergence between environmental policies and pro-worker policies:

***“Unite should encourage companies to adopt environment saving practices like home working, tele-working wherever possible.”*** Unite member, Barclays

***“I would like to see Unite as a union not only support the worker with work related issues, but also use their influence over what the worker needs to do to support the environmental issues happening around us. I think the union can use this influence positively to encourage more from the average worker than just what their workplace rights are.”*** Unite member, Panasonic

***“There are major commercial gains to be had by cutting carbon emissions. There is going to be a major and permanent rise in energy/fuel costs over the next 2-10 years that is unavoidable. Organisations that meet this challenge are more likely to thrive and be cost competitive than those who ignore this issue.”*** Unite member, Fujitsu

# Chapter 2

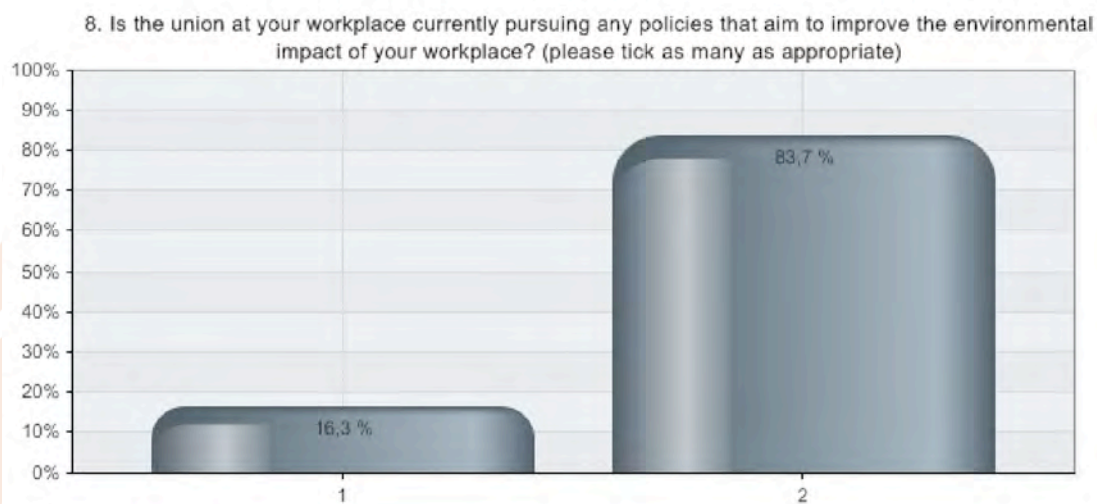
## Unite members' efforts to green the workplace

### WHAT HAVE UNITE MEMBERS BEING DOING ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT IN THEIR WORKPLACES?

*"We are taking steps to promote recycling in a new initiative being introduced next week."* Unite member, Fujitsu

*"I have been given responsibility for waste reduction and increasing recycling within our company in the UK."* European Works Council Representative, Areva

Just over 16% of respondents to the Unite survey reported that the union structures in their workplace were engaging in some form of activity to improve the environmental impact of their workplace, which indicates that remains much to be done to encourage members to pursue environmental issues as strongly as they do other workplace issues.



	Alternatives	Percent	Value
1	Yes	83,6 %	376
2	No	16,4 %	74
	Total		450

Nevertheless, a wide spectrum of activity is taking place in workplaces which have mobilised members around the environment. Some workplace unions are campaigning to change behaviours, reduce waste and raise awareness of environmental issues.

Ambitious projects and more systemic changes have been happening in some other workplaces, including the election of environmental representatives onto union negotiating structures and environmental audits. Delegates from Unite's EEEIT National Sector Committee have also attended a trade union conference on environmental issues.

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## ***CASE STUDIES***

### ***EDS***

Unite members at EDS have campaigned for shower facilities and secure bike parking to encourage more people to cycle to work. They have also lobbied the company to start recycling.

### ***CUMMINS***

Workers at this company have helped to establish an environmental committee to reflect the eco-credentials of the employer. The company manufactures wind turbines and aims to recycle all waste produced in the manufacturing process.

### ***CSC***

CSC employees on client sites have participated in union activities geared towards reducing waste and recycling all paper and batteries. CSC workers have also been involved in the adoption of motion sensor switches for lighting and timers for heating/air conditioning systems in their workplaces.

### ***MISYS***

Unite members at Misys have been campaigning to reduce the amount of air travel used by the company and to increase the use of teleconferencing facilities.

### ***AREVA***

At Areva Unite has brought environmental issues onto the collective bargaining agenda. Aspirations towards making the company more environmentally friendly were included in the union's 2007 pay proposal and will be pursued again in 2008.

### ***PANASONIC***

Unite members at Panasonic have argued the case for flexible working as a means of reducing the environmental impact of their workplace. A petition was submitted to the company to make starting and finishing times flexible in order to reduce traffic congestion.

### ***FUJITSU***

At Fujitsu, Unite members have been campaigning on a number of fronts to reduce the environmental impact of their workplace. Unite members take part in the company's 'Green Team' initiative and have introduced environmental training for employees. The union has also campaigned for CRT monitors to be replaced by flat screens in order to reduce electricity consumption and for a wider availability of video and teleconferencing.

Unite members recently passed a motion at their AGM about a number of environmental issues that they are seeking to take up with their company.

### ***ERICSSON***

Unite members at Ericsson have been negotiating with their employer to increase the availability of homeworking and flexible working. The motivation for achieving these goals is to both reduce the environmental impact of the company and to promote family friendly working practices.

### ***EATON ELECTRIC***

Eaton Electric has also established a company 'Green Team'. Unite members are among those on the Green Team committee who come up with ideas on saving energy and cutting down on waste.

# Chapter 3

## What do employers in the EEEIT sector and beyond think about environmental issues and climate change?

### EMPLOYERS IN THE EEEIT SECTOR

The results of Unite's survey of its members in the EEEIT sector show that workers are unsure about the commitment their companies are making towards tackling climate change. Responses to the question 'How would you rate your company on its commitment to sustainable workplaces?' were distributed normally. Just under half of respondents thought that their company's commitment to sustainability was average, 24% believed it was good and 17% felt it was poor.



	Alternatives	Percent	Value
1	Very poor	7,3 %	33
2	Poor	17,3 %	78
3	Average	46,7 %	211
4	Good	24,1 %	109
5	Very good	4,6 %	21
Total			452

### INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS VIEWS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

In the near future companies in all sectors will have to respond and adapt to the demands of a low carbon economy. Already employers are raising concerns about rising energy prices and raw material costs. With an increasing focus on tackling climate change by consumers, workers and governments, companies are calculating what the impact will be on profits, costs and jobs.

The results of a survey published by McKinsey and Co. in February 2008 reveal much about senior executives' perspectives on climate change.

McKinsey found that over half of executives felt that it was important to account for climate change in areas such as; product development, investment planning and purchasing and supply management.

However, beliefs about the importance of climate change as an issue are not being translated into concrete action. McKinsey found that 40% of the same CEOs also said that their own companies seldom or never account for climate change when developing new products, planning investments, developing a regulatory strategy or in purchasing.

McKinsey further found that a majority of companies do not set performance targets related to climate change, nor do

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they set emissions targets. 36% of senior executives reported that their companies seldom or never consider climate change when agreeing corporate strategy.

It seems that in some companies action on climate change will only occur if or when there is a demand from consumers or an increase in environmental regulation. The McKinsey survey found that more than 80% of executives expect some form of government environmental regulation to be enacted in their home countries within the next five years.

Furthermore, it seems that being seen to be doing something about the environment is just as, or more important than taking real action. 70% of CEOs said that climate change is somewhat or very important in managing corporate reputation and brands.

Companies do, however, seem to be optimistic about the potential to increase revenues by the shift towards a low carbon global economy. 61% of respondents in the McKinsey survey felt that issues associated with climate change could have a positive effect on profits if managed well.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE REGULATION**

At governmental level, the UK and Europe are already introducing a number of measures to tackle climate change and to encourage businesses to address their environmental responsibilities. Some of the main regulations relating to the EEEIT sector are summarised below:

- **The Climate Change Levy**  
The climate change levy (CCL) is a tax on the use of energy by businesses and the public sector. Organisations pay the levy through their energy bills. The applicable rate of the levy depends on the type of fuel used.
- **The Climate Change Bill**  
The Climate Change Bill contains a series of targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions. The Bill sets an overall target of a 60% reduction in the UK's emissions by 2050 and a 26-32% reduction by 2020. A new statutory body, the Committee on Climate Change will provide independent expert advice and guidance to Government on achieving its targets and staying within its carbon budgets. The committee will also ensure the Government is held to account every year on its progress towards each five year target and the 2020 and 2050 targets.
- **EU Emissions Trading Scheme**  
The European Union Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) has been introduced across Europe to encourage businesses to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The EU ETS works

on a 'cap-and-trade' basis. EU countries, including the UK, have set an emissions limit and an emissions allocation for all businesses taking part in the scheme. If countries emit more than their allocation they have to choose whether to buy additional allocations from the market, or to invest in measures to reduce emissions.

- **Energy labelling and energy efficient design**  
If a company manufactures or sells certain household electrical products in the EU it is required to provide the energy efficiency rating of the product through clear labelling. This is so that consumers can make better informed decisions. The European Union is also intending to expand the list of products covered by energy-efficient design requirements over the next few years.
- **The WEEE Regulations**  
The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations apply to electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) such as lighting, household electrical appliances, tools and IT and communications equipment. Manufacturers of this equipment must ensure that it can be disposed of in an environmentally sound way, including the treatment, reuse, recovery and recycling of the components where appropriate.
- **The Restriction of the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment (RoHS) Regulations 2006**  
These regulations ban the production of new electrical and electronic equipment containing more than agreed levels of lead, cadmium, mercury, hexavalent chromium, polybrominated biphenyl (PBB) and polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) flame retardants. The Regulations came about after the European Directive on RoHS was adopted in 2006.
- **Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation 2007**  
The REACH Regulations mean that industry must manage the risks from chemicals and to provide safety information on these substances. Manufacturers and importers will be required to gather information on the properties of their chemical substances, which will allow their safe handling, and to register the information in a central European database.

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# Chapter 4

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## The UK EEEIT sector's role in creating environmental technology and services

### THE CASE FOR BETTER INVESTMENT IN THE UK'S ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMY

The EEEIT sector globally is often perceived to be at the cutting edge of producing environmentally friendly goods and services. In Japan, Sharp has a strong record of environmental awareness and operates a 100% self sufficient manufacturing plant at Kameyama. At this plant, all waste water is recycled and energy is generated through the use of solar panels.

In Denmark, investment in wind generated energy has led to the creation of 20,000 new jobs in the sector. In Germany, the expansion of environmental technology businesses and employment has been impressive. One German based company, Siemens, has diversified its business into providing smart buildings systems. These systems regulate the energy efficiency of over 1600 buildings and workplaces such as hospitals, schools and industrial sites.

Environmental products and services are estimated to be worth more than £25billion to the UK economy. Given the UK's strong history of engineering, design and manufacturing excellence, there is scope to expand environmental production and service provision and to build a competitive advantage in this field.

### ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES IN THE UK: CASE STUDIES

#### • Sharp and solar power

Sharp's manufacturing operations in the UK claim to have robust environmental credentials and the company aims to be a world leader in environmental technology.

Sharp's manufacturing plant in Wrexham, which employs nearly 300 Unite members, has been producing solar power equipment since 2004. This plant assembles highly advanced solar technology for use in both residential and commercial sites.

Solar power cells, or photovoltaics, have been produced in the UK for many years. Currently around 2% of the UK's electricity is generated through solar power, compared to the European average of 7%. Weather is no barrier to their construction or effectiveness. Germany produces half of the world's solar generated electricity, despite changeable conditions which suggests that the potential to expand the UK's solar power base is considerable.

#### • Philips and environmentally friendly lighting

Philips designs and manufactures lower carbon lighting technology which has been used in lighting projects such as the National Theatre, Southampton Airport and the O2 arena. In the case of the National Theatre project a 70% reduction in the energy needed to illuminate the building meant that a saving of £100,000 a year was achieved. The company has a manufacturing base in Hamilton, Lanarkshire, which employs over 300 Unite members.

#### • Cummins and wind turbines

Over 1200 Unite members work at various Cummins manufacturing sites across the UK. The company primarily produces engines and components for power generation systems. A number of Cummins workers in the UK produce wind turbines for the domestic and international market.

#### • Solid State Lighting

Solid state lighting LED products have the ability to contribute to energy use reduction as these typically only take 20% of the current energy use of conventional lighting. In addition, LED based lamps have a lifetime some five times longer than their halogen counterparts. Over its lifetime, each LED based lamp can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to a ton when used instead of a typical halogen lamp. Such lighting could therefore play a key role in the reduction of energy consumption and the carbon footprint of residential and commercial buildings. Zetex Semiconductors has developed a novel chipset and design for LED lamps, which could significantly reduce the size and weight of the electronic circuitry and the overall cost of lamp manufacture.

#### • Other

Currently there are 171 wind power projects operating in the UK which generate two and a half thousand megawatts of power per year. A further 200 projects are at the planning stage.

Across Europe, employment in renewable energy generation is expected to grow from 30,000 to over 300,000 jobs in the coming years. As well as creating products and services, a number of firms have integrated new and emerging environmental technology and climate change solutions into their UK operations:

In Wales, Eaton Electric has been exploring the possibility of generating electricity to power a manufacturing plant through wind power.

# Chapter 5

## Organising around climate change and negotiating for environmental agreements and policies

Climate change and environmental issues are likely to remain high on the agenda for quite some time. As the public becomes better educated about the impact of the economy on the planet, there will be an increasing motivation to change behaviours and take action. It is important that trade unions are at the forefront of efforts to tackle climate change. Through identifying the links between good environmental practice and getting a better deal for workers unions can organise effectively, and put climate change on the bargaining agenda to achieve positive, worker-friendly outcomes.

This chapter will focus on how to campaign on environmental issues in the workplace, from a trade union perspective. Firstly, the processes involved with getting hold of environmental information about companies will be examined, including using statutory rights to access sources.

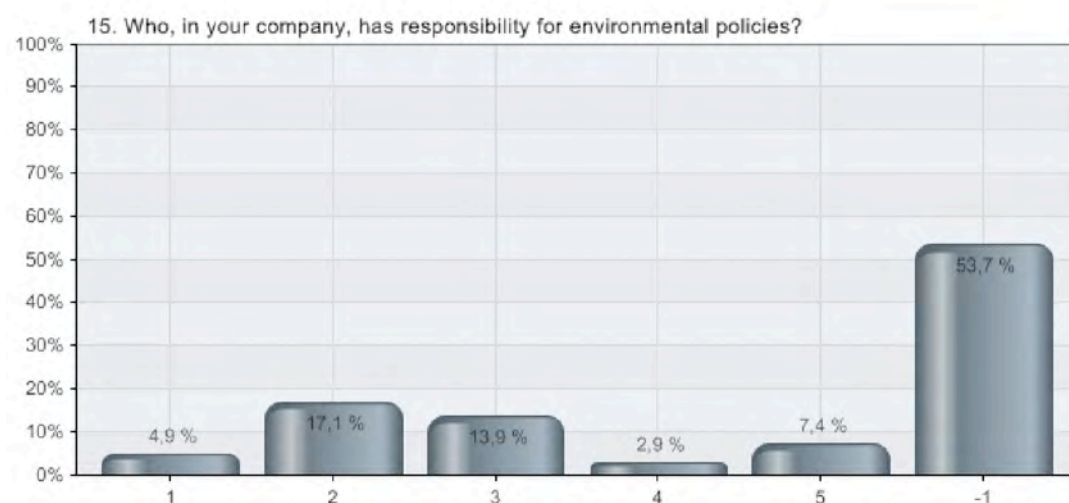
The next section will deal with organising and negotiating around the environment, including initiating environmental audits, conducting member surveys, forming an environmental agreement and establishing environmental negotiation and representative structures in the workplace.

The final section will address further areas for activity including educating members about the environment, campaigning for an ethical supply chain and bringing an environmental dimension to negotiations on redundancy, off shoring and relocation.

### ACCESSING ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION ON COMPANIES

Unite's survey of the EEEIT sector reveals that union members are unclear about who, among the management tier in their workplaces, takes responsibility for company environmental policy.

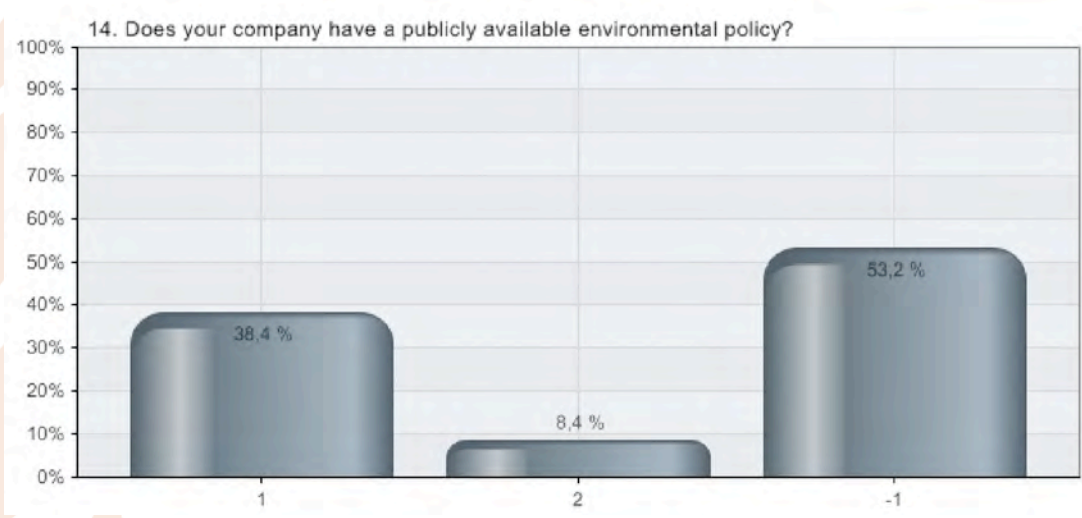
***"The very fact that I as a manager am not aware of the local environment policy indicates its failure or complete absence."***  
Unite member, EDS



	Alternatives	Percent	Value
1	No one	4,9 %	22
2	A member of staff with full time responsibility for environmental management	17,1 %	76
3	A member/members of staff with part-time responsibility for environmental management	13,9 %	62
4	Energy Manager	2,9 %	13
5	Other, please specify	7,4 %	33
-1	Don't know	53,7 %	239
Total			445

This confusion may be due to the fact that in many workplaces, environmental issues are not yet firmly placed on the agenda, as the evidence from the McKinsey survey in Chapter 3 demonstrates. Poor communication around environmental issues and duties in the workplace may also be due to an absence of robust information, consultation and bargaining structures.

The results of the Unite survey show that over half of workers in the EEEIT sector are also unaware of the existence or lack of an environmental policy in their workplace. On the upside, however, nearly 40% of members reported that their company does have an environmental policy that is available to members of the public.



	Alternatives	Percent	Value
1	Yes	38,4 %	173
2	No	8,4 %	38
-1	Don't know	53,2 %	240
Total			451

***"I would like more information about what my company and the client company whose site I work on actually currently do and what their future plans and targets are to reduce environmental impact...I want to see evidence of good environmental practice where I work."*** Unite member, Accenture

Building and improving information, consultation and bargaining structures in the workplace should be part and parcel of building an effective campaign around climate change and the environment. Workers have rights to gain access to information about the environmental impact of their workplaces, through a number of statutory measures, however, as evidence from the Unite survey above suggests, in the main, and with a number of notable exceptions, workers are either unaware of, or have not made full use of these measures.

Some of the legislative tools that workers can use to find out about the carbon footprint and environmental impact of their workplaces include:

- **Information and Consultation Regulations**
- **Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and the ACAS Code of Practice on Disclosure of Information**
- **Environmental Information Regulations**
- **Freedom of Information Act**
- **European Works Councils Legislation**

The government has also published a list of environmental regulations and legislation which can be seen at [www.netregs.gov.uk](http://www.netregs.gov.uk)

The Carbon Disclosure Project ([www.cdproject.net](http://www.cdproject.net)) is a voluntary scheme which employers sign up to and use to report on their emissions. It is a good source of information for companies based in other countries and those listed on the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250 such as Logica, Vodafone and BAE Systems.

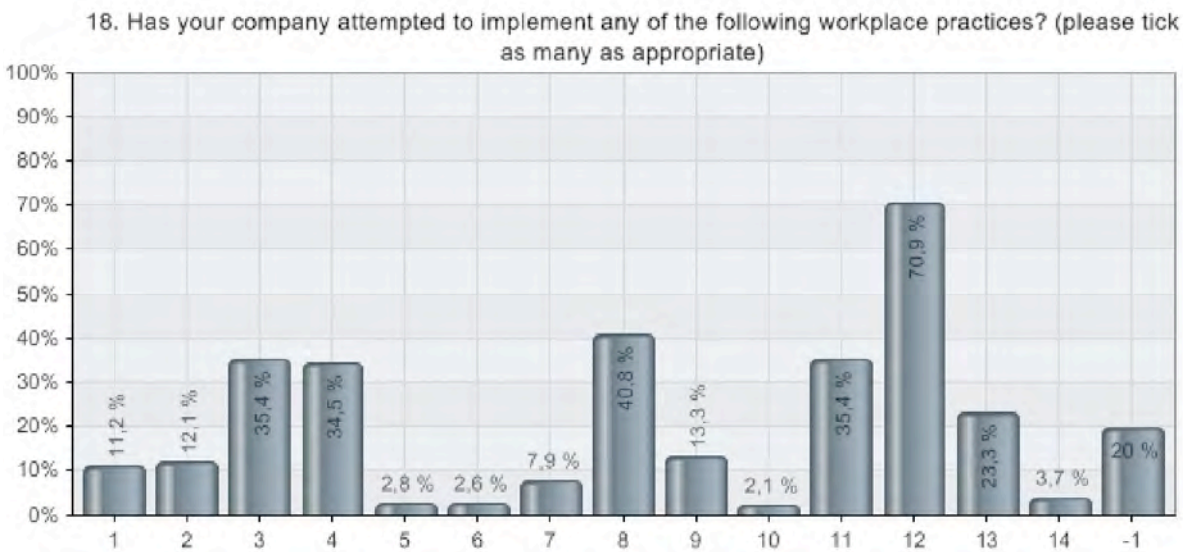
Company websites and annual reports, especially sections covering corporate social responsibility, are also useful sources of information.

### **ORGANISING AND NEGOTIATING AROUND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Environmental concerns are akin to other workplace issues such as health and safety, training, pay and conditions and equalities. They can act as a trigger for mobilising and organising workers or can reinvigorate existing structures in unionised workplaces. They can also provide a focus for continuing campaigning and education programmes.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 Unite workplaces are already engaged in a number of environmental activities and campaigns. The success of Unite members in these workplaces demonstrates that there are a number of different ways in which environmental issues can be approached. Perhaps more importantly, these campaigns illustrate that in order to be successful, an environmental campaign must have clear and relevant objectives that inspire and mobilise as many members as possible.

Results from the Unite survey of EEEIT members demonstrate that both behavioural and systemic changes are already happening in workplaces.



	Alternatives	Percent	Value
1	A systematic utilities and building monitoring system (BMS)	11,2 %	48
2	A carbon reduction plan with time bound targets for continual emissions reductions	12,1 %	52
3	Energy efficient lighting and appliances	35,4 %	152
4	Systems for ensuring that heating and electrical equipment are only on at appropriate times	34,5 %	148
5	Microgeneration (e.g. installing wind turbines or solar panels on buildings)	2,8 %	12
6	Construction of a combined heat and power (CHP) plant	2,6 %	11
7	Assessing major purchases according to their environmental impact	7,9 %	34
8	Controlling paper use	40,8 %	175
9	Upgrading or replacing inefficient plant	13,3 %	57
10	Promoting biodiversity	2,1 %	9
11	Raising awareness of environmental issues	35,4 %	152
12	Recycling	70,9 %	304
13	Promoting environmentally friendly travel options (such as car sharing, park and ride schemes, cycling and public transport)	23,3 %	100
14	Other	3,7 %	16
-1	Don't know	20,0 %	86
Total			429

By far the most popular policies that have been readily adopted by companies include recycling schemes, controlling paper use and raising environmental awareness. It is also encouraging that companies in the sector have been willing to implement systems that ensure heating and electrical equipment are only on at appropriate times and that only energy efficient lighting and appliances are purchased.

### Tackling Resistance

Trade unions face challenges in all of their dealings with employers, including tackling climate change. Unite members in the EEEIT sector anticipate some resistance to union efforts to campaign on environmental issues.



	Alternatives	Percent	Value
1	Very supportive	7,4 %	33
2	Supportive	31,9 %	143
3	Neutral	33,0 %	148
4	Not Supportive	21,2 %	95
5	Hostile	6,5 %	29
Total			448

While a third of workers believe that their employers would support union work on improving the environment, 1 in 5 members surveyed believed that their employer would not necessarily be supportive of union efforts to tackle environmental issues. As with all workplace campaigns, Unite members should be prepared to challenge the resistance of employers at all stages of the process. A strategic plan for organising around environmental issues, anticipating objections, may be necessary. It is also vital to collate as much research and information as possible before starting out.

**ENGAGING MEMBERS AND POTENTIAL MEMBERS**

Employer resistance will not be the only obstacle faced by members keen to progress the environmental agenda. Workers themselves may be reluctant to embrace union campaigns which focus on non core issues and which they believe detract from bread and butter issues of pay, conditions, job security and pensions, especially at a time when many of these core rights and benefits are being attacked.

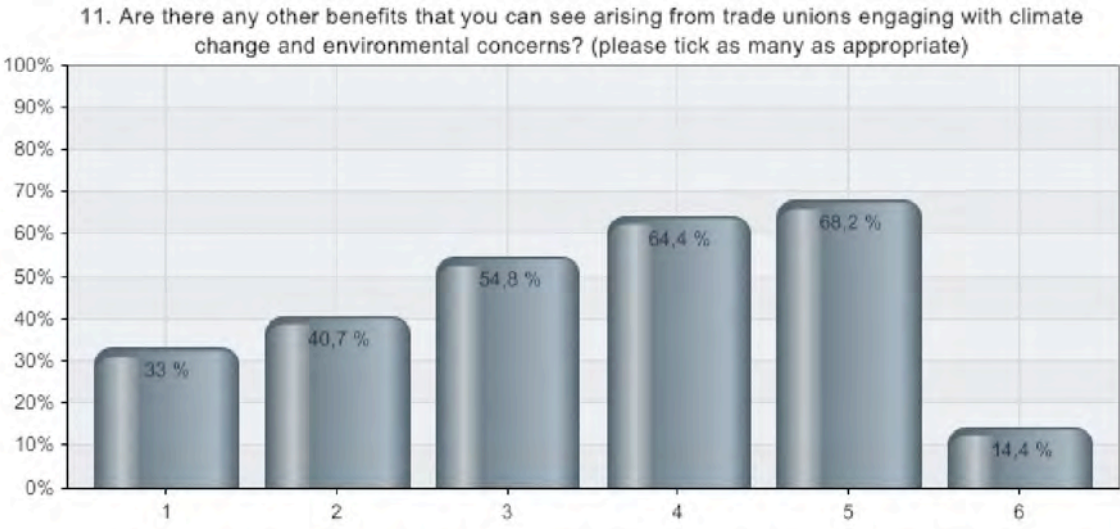
It is important to stress that an environmental campaign has the capacity to multiply union power and influence in the workplace. Environmental campaigns have the ability to engage and involve people who may be turned off by traditional union business, in

much the same way that work on equalities, learning and health and safety have encouraged new and different forms of workplace activism and can build a critical mass of support to channel back into core demands for better pay and conditions.

Environmental campaigning can also appeal to younger members and potential members who, studies have shown, have strong concerns about climate change and sustainability. Engaging with environmental and other social issues therefore has the capacity to sustain and extend workplace organisation beyond the achievement of recognition and negotiations for better pay, conditions and benefits.

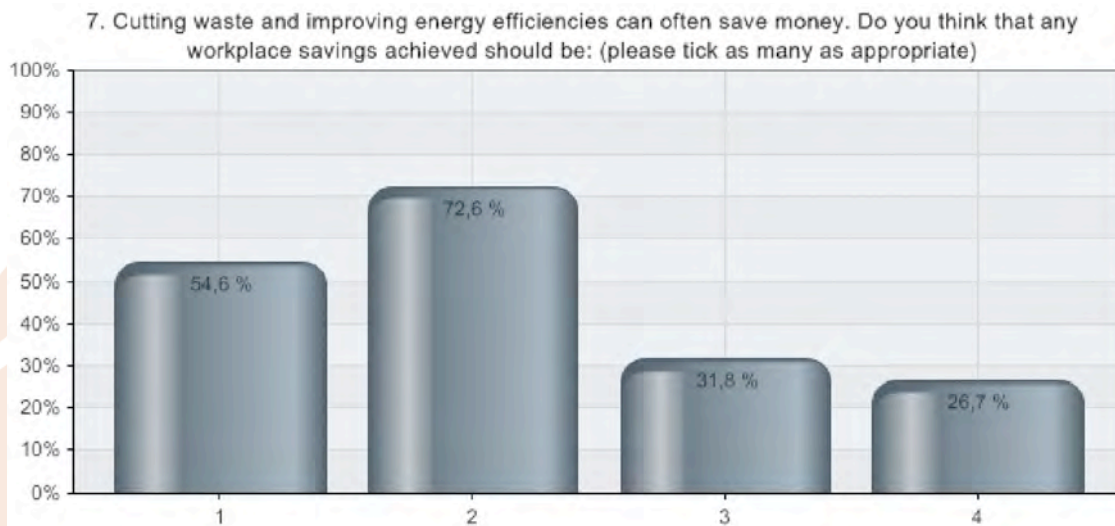
Furthermore, if unions take the lead on environmental campaigns in their workplaces they can advance other claims for better pay and conditions. Unite members can argue that their contribution to savings made as a result of implementing efficiencies should be rewarded by better pay and conditions, in much the same way that members would expect to benefit from improvements to productivity in the workplace.

The Unite survey of the EEEIT sector membership found that individuals could identify a number of benefits which would result from engaging with climate change issues in the workplace:



	Alternatives	Percent	Value
1	Job security	33,0 %	138
2	Engaging young people	40,7 %	170
3	Getting new members involved with the union	54,8 %	229
4	Developing constructive relationships with management	64,4 %	269
5	Cutting consumption costs that could be used in pay bargaining	68,2 %	285
6	Other	14,4 %	60
Total			418

Respondents to the survey were also questioned about the savings that environmentally friendly working practices generate. Unite members identified a number of areas where they thought savings should be re-invested:



	Alternatives	Percent	Value
1	Shared with everyone in the workplace as an incentive to make further savings	54,6 %	245
2	Reinvested in the workplace to deliver a cleaner environment	72,6 %	326
3	Retained by the organisation to assist with training and development for those likely to be affected by a move away from carbon reliant working	31,8 %	143
4	Retained by the organisation for its own priorities (such as salary increases, pension benefits, departmental budgets, operating surpluses etc.)	26,7 %	120
Total			449

### **IDENTIFYING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THE WORKPLACE**

Before initiating a formal workplace campaign it is essential to identify those issues that are most important and relevant to members in the workplace. This could be done through an environmental audit or a survey of members.

Environmental audits apply similar principles to health and safety assessments. The audits estimate the efficiency and performance of all systems, devices and policies which have an environmental impact in the workplace and assess where savings can be made. Many companies

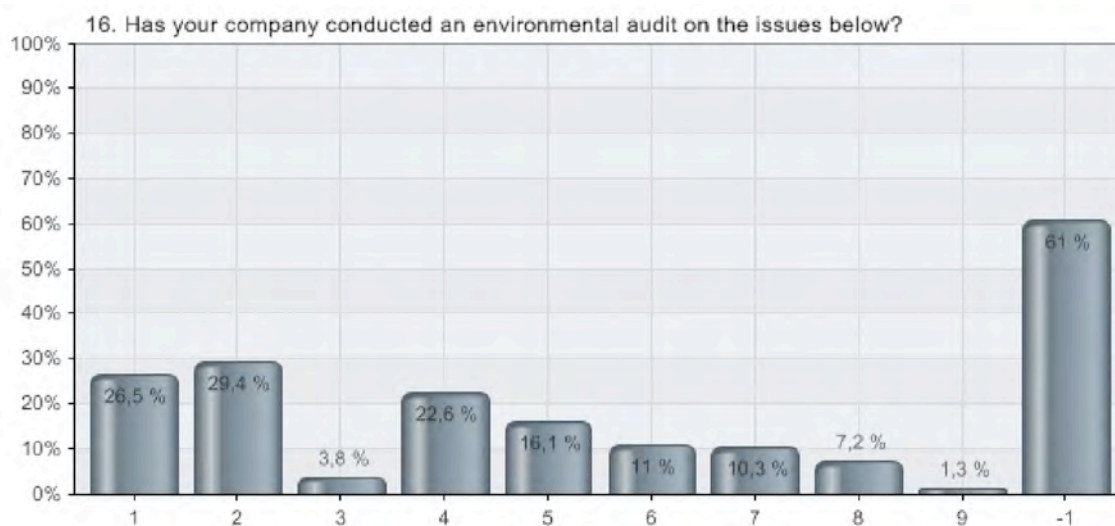
in the EEEIT sector such as Fujitsu, Accenture and CSC are already involved in providing auditing services to other client organisations. Those employees who are involved in performing audits for clients may be able to apply their skills to their own workplace.

A number of companies and not for profit organisations can also assist with carrying out an environmental audit, such as the British Safety Council, Carbon Footprint and the Carbon Trust.

Friends of the Earth Scotland have a basic but useful online audit for offices which is available from:

<http://www.green-office.org.uk/>

The Unite survey reveals that while a number of workplaces have already conducted their own environmental audits in specific areas, many employees (61%) are unsure whether or not such studies have taken place:



	Alternatives	Percent	Value
1	Energy consumption	26,5 %	118
2	Waste and recycling	29,4 %	131
3	Biodiversity	3,8 %	17
4	Hazardous chemicals	22,6 %	101
5	Water usage	16,1 %	72
6	Travel	11,0 %	49
7	Purchasing	10,3 %	46
8	No audit has taken place	7,2 %	32
9	Other	1,3 %	6
-1	Don't know	61,0 %	272
Total			446

Member surveys are also essential in the build up to any environmental campaign. Surveys serve a number of purposes; they build collective consciousness about environmental issues, they can educate members about issues or solutions that they may be unaware of such as smart buildings technology or paper free working and they also gather together useful information and statistics for negotiating purposes later on in the campaign.

Surveys themselves can be used to demonstrate more environmentally friendly practices. A number of programs allow users to create and distribute surveys online or through email, saving paper and energy.

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## **NEGOTIATING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

Once issues have been identified the campaign can progress onto the next stage. It is important to develop a worker-friendly response to environmental issues, drawing together environmental policies and solutions that have additional progressive benefits for the workforce.

***“We had a petition to move work hours to reduce traffic congestion in the area as many workplaces finish at the same time.”*** Unite member, Panasonic

Below are some suggested areas for negotiation that balance trade union demands with the move towards a greener workplace: Trade Union Demands for a Greener Workplace

### **TRADE UNION DEMANDS FOR A GREENER WORKPLACE**

- Shorter/Flexible working hours to cut carbon emissions from transport
- Interest free public transport season ticket loans
- Loans and grants for purchasing cycles
- On site bike storage and shower facilities
- Consultation rights for union representatives on purchasing decisions or changes to office equipment and facilities
- Increasing the availability of homeworking
- Providing bonuses linked to environmental improvements such as introducing paperless offices, recycling (paper, batteries, computers, phones, furniture and more) and reducing energy use.

Union representatives will have to identify who, in their workplace, has responsibility for making decisions. In some cases negotiations may have to take place with a number of management representatives with responsibilities in areas such as purchasing, human resources and facilities management as well as managers with specific responsibility for environmental matters, if in place.

### **NEGOTIATING AN ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENT**

In a number of workplaces, Unite members have concluded negotiations with the formation of environmental agreements, which set out commitment from management and workers towards greening the workplace. The TUC advises that an environmental agreement should contain the following as a minimum:

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENT CHECKLIST:**

- A commitment to employee involvement in environmental matters
- Agreed objectives such as targets for reducing the carbon footprint of the workplace, the establishment of recycling practices and so on
- Mutual responsibilities for management and workers in improving environmental performance
- Agreed procedures for dealing with environmental issues as and when they arise
- The election of union environment representatives
- Facilities and training for environmental representatives

- A timeline for reviewing environmental targets and policies
- Systems and procedures for monitoring the operation of the agreement
- Links with other applicable policies and structures, for example, with health and safety policies

An environmental agreement can be debated at union meetings and ultimately voted on by union members in order to gain consent and increase involvement. A suggested model environmental agreement is included in the Appendix.

### **ENVIRONMENT REPRESENTATIVES**

The appointment of environmental champions/ambassadors/representatives is a good method of ensuring that environmental issues are kept on the workplace agenda. In individual workplaces members may prefer to elect a standalone environment activist or to integrate environmental duties into the role of other existing union representatives. ***“We voted on having an environmental rep.”*** Unite member, Fujitsu

Unions have been campaigning for union representatives to have the same statutory rights to negotiate on environmental issues as they do on health and safety issues. A number of tailor-made courses are available from third sector organisations, UnionLearn and the TUC Green Workplaces project for union members to gain skills and training about environmental issues in their workplaces. Agreed facilities for representatives could include time off for this sort of training.

### **FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNING**

Unite members may wish to engage in further environmental campaigning which extends beyond the immediately apparent issues in individual workplaces, encompassing fields such as energy generation, education, globalisation and procurement.

### **MICROGENERATION AND GREEN ELECTRICITY**

Large workplaces such as manufacturing plants could benefit from the installation of renewable sources of power generation on site. Government grants may be available to assist companies who undertake such projects. In addition, organisations such as the Carbon Trust can undertake to investigate the viability of installing and running wind turbines and other such technology. In smaller workplaces, employees can also campaign for their workplaces to install combined heat and power generators or use green electricity which is already widely available through existing energy suppliers.

### **AN ETHICAL SUPPLY CHAIN**

Unite has been working with several third sector organisations to highlight the importance of ensuring an ethical supply chain in the EEEIT sector. In particular, groups such as the Good Electronics Network and third sector organisations including CAFOD and War on Want have been alerting consumers and governments to the humanitarian and environmental effects of sourcing components and materials from areas where unscrupulous employers disregard international labour standards and environmental responsibility.

Unite believes that there should be statutory rights for union representatives to gain access to environmental impact information on companies and that there should be an attendant statutory duty for employers to report on their global carbon footprint and labour standards, including that of their supply chain and transport costs.

**RELOCATION AND OFFSHORING**

In recent times the threat of offshoring has increased for many workers. Employers have been keen to state that factors such as energy and labour costs and availability of raw materials are driving them to relocate to ‘lower cost’ economies. Unite has been campaigning strongly for a better deal for workers faced with this predicament, including better redundancy payments, rights to negotiation over job losses at the earliest possible stage and funds for retraining and redeployment. Companies increasingly close sites in the UK in order to transfer to lower cost locations. Whilst the company may make a saving in costs, the price is borne by others, whether the workforce, the local community, the local economy, the government or the environment.

**Case Study: Electrolux and Indesit**

In one two week period in December 2007, both Indesit and Electrolux announced the closure of their cooker manufacturing sites in Stoke and Spennymoor respectively, with the transfer of production to Poland. However the finished cookers previously manufactured in Spennymoor will have to be transported back to the UK for distribution, resulting in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and the company’s carbon footprint. In the case of Electrolux, Unite calculations suggest that transferring production from Spennymoor to Swidnica in Poland would result in nearly 33,000 tonnes of carbon emissions per year, compared to just under 6000 tonnes for UK production, an increase of nearly 6 fold. Clearly there is a climate change cost borne by the environment rather than by the company.

The McKinsey Global Survey: How companies think about climate change (February 2008) included questions to company executives about relocation of operations in the face of increasing climate change regulation. The survey found that 11% of executives consider relocation due to increased environmental regulation likely or very likely. Of those surveyed the executives in the manufacturing and high tech industries, who represent companies in the EEEIT sector, were slightly more inclined than executives in other industries to say that relocation would be somewhat or very likely in response to environmental regulation by governments. In addition to these rights, Unite believes that in cases of site closure or transfer of production, employers should be held accountable for the environmental impact that ensues from relocating operations. In order to avoid companies effectively escaping their environmental and social responsibilities there should be internationally applicable regulations for employers. Such regulations, for example in the form of a European Directive, could ensure that companies are not using relocation as a means of avoiding robust environmental regulation or labour standards.

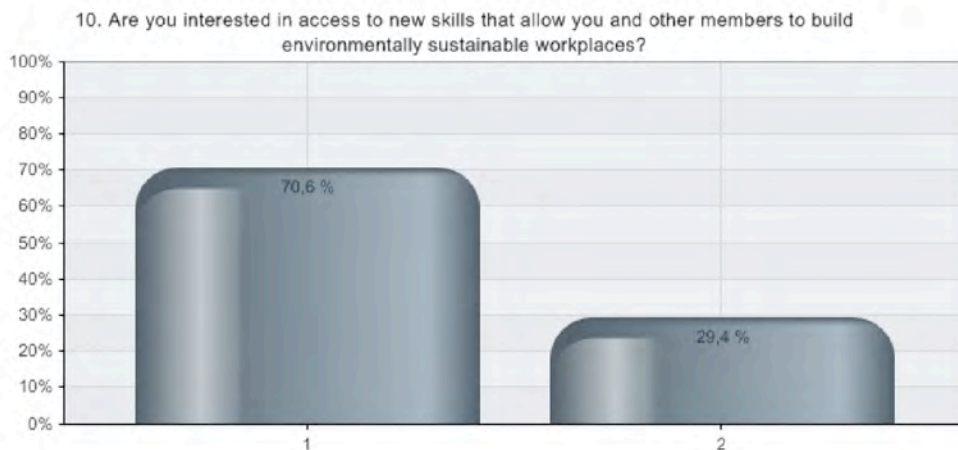
**PROCUREMENT**

Many Unite members in the EEEIT sector are working on contracts directly or indirectly for the public sector. Public bodies have an important role in shaping the behaviours of other organisations and can use their budgets to invest in environmentally sound procurement. Unite members can campaign within workplaces to establish best practices in public and private procurement, perhaps

by encouraging those who make procurement decisions to support emerging environmental technology businesses based in the UK.

**EDUCATING WORKERS**

A clear majority of respondents to the Unite survey said that they would value gaining skills to tackle environmental issues in the workplace.



Alternatives	Percent	Value
1 Yes	70,6 %	315
2 No	29,4 %	131
Total		446

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Despite an already high level of education among members and an awareness of the dangers of climate change, there remains a strong demand for practical training on how to take action to reduce workplace emissions. Unite members can encourage education in their workplace by exploring the possibilities that the Union Learning Fund can offer. Some workplaces have already been working to introduce training on making behavioural changes at home and at work, such as making more efficient use of IT and electrical appliances.

Educating members can go also much further. In some Unite workplaces members have been arranging viewings of 'An Inconvenient Truth', the documentary about climate change by former US Vice President Al Gore, in workplaces. For more information on the film go see: <http://www.aninconvenienttruth.co.uk/>

## **CONCLUSION:**

### **10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A GREENER WORKPLACE**

1. There should be statutory rights for union representatives to gain access to environmental impact information on companies and an attendant statutory duty for employers to report on their carbon footprint, including that of their supply chain and transport costs.
2. In cases of offshoring, companies should be made to report on the environmental impact of relocation to ensure that companies are not avoiding robust environmental regulation or labour standards by relocating.
3. Employers should seek to reduce travel to work transport emissions through increasing cycle facilities, providing loans for public transport costs, encouraging car pooling schemes, and allowing workers to be home based for part or all of their working time where appropriate. Flexible working should be a right for all workers, not simply a right to request.
4. Time off and access to learning and education should be available to all workers in order to raise awareness and understanding of environmental issues.
5. There should be statutory rights, facilities and recognition for the work of trade union environmental representatives and activists in the workplace.
6. Trade union representatives should have consultation rights on purchasing and supply decisions which can affect the environmental impact of the workplace.
7. Company executives should have their pay and bonuses linked to meeting environmental performance targets.
8. Corporate social responsibility should include duties to report on practices throughout the supply chain and to source materials and services from suppliers who adhere to core labour and environmental standards.
9. Government and industry must promote cleaner and greener manufacturing and employment in environmental services and technology sectors through increased public funding for research.
10. There should be a positive procurement strategy for government departments embracing environmental responsibility and respecting core labour standards.

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## REFERENCES:

- High Tech: Low Carbon, The role of technology in tackling climate change. Intellect (2008) Available from <http://www.intellectuk.org/content/view/775/84/>
- How companies think about climate change: A McKinsey Global Survey (2008)
- The Stern Review Report on the Economics of Climate Change (2006) Available from: <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk>

## Further sources of information on climate change and environmental technology:

- The TUC Green Workplaces Project

<http://www.sustainableworkplace.co.uk>

This project is a joint initiative with the Carbon Trust. It is designed to tackle climate change and energy issues and to raise awareness and build capacity within workplaces to campaign on environmental issues.

- The Carbon Trust  
<http://www.carbontrust.co.uk>

The Carbon Trust is a government funded, not for profit body that works with other organisations and businesses to reduce carbon emissions and develop commercial low carbon technologies.

- The Good Electronics Network  
<http://goodelectronics.org>

GE is a network of human rights (including labour rights) organisations, environmental organisations, unions, universities and individuals that aim to improve human rights and environmental conditions around the world.

- The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)  
[www.berr.gov.uk](http://www.berr.gov.uk)
- UK Climate Impacts Programme  
[www.ukcip.org.uk](http://www.ukcip.org.uk)
- The Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC)  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/tusdac/index.htm>
- The Environmental Industries Commission (EIC)  
<http://www.eic-uk.co.uk>
- CAFOD's Climate Change Campaign  
[www.cafod.org.uk/campaigning/climate](http://www.cafod.org.uk/campaigning/climate)
- Greenpeace  
[www.greenpeace.org.uk](http://www.greenpeace.org.uk)

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## APPENDIX: MODEL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENT

The parties to this agreement in the spirit of partnership and with a desire to act in the best interests of the company and its staff also recognise the benefit to the environment in agreeing a positive way forward on environmental action. To this end we affirm the following.

### 1. Policy Statement

In line with UK Government policy the company and Unite are keen to encourage management, employees and trade union workplace representatives to take responsibility for 'greening' their workplace. This will include a positive dialogue between management, Unite workplace representatives and staff about ways in which their workplace can make better use of energy, implementation of waste management initiatives and seeking to promote an ethical and environmental sustainable procurement policy with the aim to reduce CO2 emissions in line with UK statutory and international obligations.

### 2 Application

The success of this initiative is only viable if the company, trade union and staff work in partnership together and engage in a commitment to improving environmental performance and create a sustainable workplace.

All parties aim to reach agreement on how objectives will be implemented, monitored and assessed for success or failure. These will include:

- a) Addressing the issues of energy conservation, waste management and the prevention of pollution.
- b) Continuing to measure the total "carbon footprint" of the company by calculation of utility usage including electricity, gas, oil (or other carbon emitting sources), water, waste and seeking to reduce waste and inefficient energy or other systems.
- c) Sourcing and supplying environmentally efficient heating, lighting and waste systems and adopting of environmentally and biologically friendly technology.
- d) Seeking to reduce the excessive consumption of materials in the operation of the company and promoting reuse and recycling whenever possible.
- e) Seeking to achieve improvements in environmental performance whilst giving consideration to the needs and requests of the company and staff.
- f) Complying at all times with relevant environmental legislation and influencing the wider environmental agenda with the use of best practice and examples.

- g) Working with suppliers and partner companies to obtain the lowest environmental impact and best environmental supply or service to ensure there is a minimal impact on the environment while carrying out the work of the company
- h) A commitment to future building programmes which consider environmental impact and minimise the impact of structures (and where appropriate plant and machinery) to minimise visual and noise impact on the local environment
- i) Aiming to source procurement/purchasing materials from local sustainable sources.
- j) Ensuring that the whole workforce is engaged in this initiative. This is crucial to ensuring that any policies developed are implemented fully and carried forward in a positive and proactive way
- k) Encouraging trade union representatives to become environmental champions, encouraging representatives to undertake training in sustainable development and the creation of a green workplace

### 3. Implementation

The company and Unite will work together on issuing a written publicly available environmental policy statement.

As part of the ongoing work and commitment the company and Unite will through a dedicated environmental manager set up a joint environmental committee and shall include within it dedicated Unite environmental representatives.

The environmental committee shall consider ways of continually reducing the company's "carbon footprint" including a carbon reduction plan with time bound targets for continual emissions reductions.

It shall also consider other related issues such as:

#### a. Transport

- i. Balanced sustainable transport policy and was of reducing excessive travel to from and within the company. Such considerations shall seek to engage local authority and other local transport providers.
- ii. The introduction or maintenance of a car sharing scheme
- iii. Car park facility provision.
- iv. The provision of a low cost cycle scheme for use by staff
- v. Other integrated transport provisions.

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**b. Energy**

- i. Provision of sustainable energy efficient lighting
- ii. Provision of "green tariff" sourced electricity
- iii. Systematic utilities and building monitoring system (BMS)
- iv. Micro generation (e.g. installing wind turbines or solar panels on buildings)
- v. Construction of a combined heat and power (CHP) plant
- vi. Movement sensor switches, safe automatic power down equipment

**c. Recycling**

- i. Provision of localized recycling and better sorting of waste at department or office level.
- ii. Planned segregation at source
- iii. Consideration of equipment exchanges and resource records to avoid the need for re supply or new purchases.
- iv. Use of outside community agencies for old or redundant equipment.

**d. Data Collection**

- i. Maintain a comprehensive database of utility and carbon use by building, floor, department and office level.
- ii. Maintain a comprehensive database of numbers of staff, contractors or members of the public using each facility.
- iii. Plan by to reduce utility, carbon usage over time to the lowest level for effective use of a facility.
- iv. Apply ISO 19011 auditing guidelines

**e. Other innovations**

- i. Consideration of home working policies to reduce travel
- ii. Flexible travel
- iii. Fair trade procurement to advance international economies

- iv. Provide re-skilling opportunities for employees connected to carbon based energy systems into newer greener based micro generation or combined heat and power plants
- v. Use of biodiversity to give added value to a working environment.
- vi. Set up workplace environmental champions to input into planning and implementation of agreed processes.

**f. Outside Agencies**

- i. Ensure all outside contractors or suppliers are aware of the company's policies.
- ii. Ensure contractor or service provider compliance with ISO 14001 certification
- iii. Seek the active involvement of all contractors and suppliers to reducing their own environmental waste or carbon footprint.
- iv. Encourage use of those companies that have an active publicly available environmental policy.

We the undersigned recognise that this agreement is only a start to a long term strategy for a safer greener environment.

The proposals formed within this agreement are not an exhaustive list and we will seek to develop further as better facilities, finance and research allow.

We recognise that the world has finite resources and that we are guardians of our environment for future generations. We pledge to do what we can to protect our world and its environment for the better.

**Signed**

..... **On behalf of the company**

..... **On behalf of Unite**

..... **Date**

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**NOTES:**







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