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Green Offices cut carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 2,000 tonnes

Workplaces within WWF Finland's Green Office programme reduced their carbon dioxide emissions during 2007 by a total of 1,999 tonnes compared to previous figures, by curbing their consumption of materials and energy. This reduction corresponds to the emissions that would be generated by 10,000 car journeys the length of Finland. WWF's Green Office programme is an environmental management system designed for workplaces, which aims to mitigate climate change, promote sustainable policies, and increase environmental awareness. Over the last two years the number of Green Offices has doubled.

Green Offices report on their consumption levels annually to WWF, supplying at least three different figures for indicators chosen together with WWF to describe their most important environmental impacts. Examples of such indicators include paper use, heat consumption, electricity use, consumption of vehicle fuels, numbers of flights, and quantities of mixed waste. During 2007 the most common areas for savings were electricity, paper and heating.

More than half of the Green Offices reporting on their electricity use had successfully reduced consumption, and many had also changed over to suppliers selling electricity generated from renewable sources. "It's possible to save a lot of electricity through small actions such as turning off lights, computers and other electrical equipment when they are not needed. Leaving appliances on stand-by really uses a lot of electricity unnecessarily," says WWF Finland's Green Office Specialist **Mikko Kuiri**.

Green Offices have also reduced their paper consumption, by 11%* over the last year. This total saving corresponds to more than ten million sheets of office paper, and greenhouse gas emissions from the whole paper production process amounting to 146.8 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. "All of the saved paper would make a pile one kilometer high, weighing 50 tonnes. In financial terms the total savings amount to around 61,600 euros," adds Kuiri. "Paper can be saved by for instance avoiding unnecessary printing, by changing over to electronic documentation procedures, by printing double-sided, and by making documents fit space effectively."

Over the same period Green Offices have cut their heat consumption by almost 12%*, as part of overall reductions in carbon dioxide emissions from heating of some 25% (1,960 tonnes). This amounts to the annual consumption of around 490 single-family homes heated by district heating,

whose heating costs would add up to some 184,000 euros. A similar reduction in emissions could be achieved by saving 834,000 litres of petrol.

The Green Office programme has been set up by WWF to help workplaces reduce their environmental impacts while also making savings on material and energy costs. It has been designed as a simple and practical environmental management system, based on the general principles behind the ISO 14001 and EMAS systems. WWF also grants rights to use Green Office labelling to workplaces that meet the programme's criteria.

So far approximately 200 offices belonging to 80 different organisations have joined the Green Office network. Green Office labelling rights have recently been granted to offices including the headquarters of the Finnish Social Democratic Party, Ericsson Finland, and the Finnish Meteorological Institute. The programme has already gone international, and is currently also in use in China, Indonesia, India and Pakistan.

"Offices and other workplaces have a key role in curbing energy consumption and creating sustainable solutions," says **Helka Julkunen**, Head of WWF Finland's Green Office Programme. "Over the last two years the number of Green Office organisations has doubled, and today around 20,200 people work in offices that are part of this growing network. The Green Office programme motivates employees to act ecologically and collaborate, while at the same time improving other aspects of their organisation's operations. It is rewarding that so many firms and organisations want to get actively involved in promoting sustainable consumption and combating climate change."

For more information:

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*Emission reduction figures have been compiled only for offices where comparable emission figures were available from previous years.

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