

## **The Environmental Review**

Although each school might decide to start from any point in the EkoSkola process, the first task of the committee is the design, implementation and evaluation of the school's environmental review. The review aims to:

- ✓ provide an opportunity to address environmental issues that are relevant to the school community,
- ✓ inform the school community about the state of the school's environment and the environmental impact of the school on its surroundings,
- ✓ identify aspects of the school's environment that are not usually addressed,
- ✓ help the school community to prioritise its needs re-environmental management,
- ✓ facilitate the drawing up of an environmental action plan, and
- ✓ provide the tools necessary for monitoring the school's progress re the implementation of the action plan.

## **Environmental Review Checklist**

An environmental review checklist spanning the main areas of environmental concern is provided in the following pages. The school can either adopt them as they are or adapt them to its particular needs or even add new areas of concern.

- (a) The selection of the items to be reviewed can be facilitated by asking staff and students: "What do you like and dislike about your school?"
- (b) Children, with the help of adults, can gather the information presented in the checklist from the school grounds. To facilitate the review process, it might be a good idea to assign different areas of the school to different 'reviewers'.
- (c) The data gathered is compiled into a report that is circulated among the school community.
- (d) The committee meets to discuss the report in detail, to identify priorities and to plan for the next phase of the programme – the Action Plan.

The checklist included in the following pages is sub-divided into seven main sections that reflect the seven EkoSkola themes:

**Litter**

**Transport**

**Waste minimisation**

**Healthy living**

**Energy**

**The School**

**Water**

Since the major activities occurring in schools concern the curriculum, another section, entitled **School Environmental Policy**, is also included.

Nevertheless, the school is free to choose other areas of environmental concern that are more relevant to its needs and to devise appropriate checklists accordingly. That is why each checklist has a couple of blank rows and why the last grid has been left blank.

Children, with the guidance of adults, can use the questions contained in these checklists to gather information about the state of the school's environment.

The sections marked **Action needed**, **Action to be taken** and **Cost involved** need not be filled in during the review ... although they may come in useful for jotting notes and bright ideas. These sections can serve as discussion primers during the following EkoSkola committee meeting and are also good indicators for items to be considered in the formulation of the action plan.

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Requests for more information and queries can be referred to the EkoSkola national co-ordinator:

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## Environmental Review Checklist

				Action to be taken			Cost involved			
Litter	Yes	No	Action needed	Immediate	Soon	Later	High	Medium	Low	None
Is there litter in the school grounds?										
Is the litter found at school coming from the school?										
Is the litter found at school coming from outside the school?										
Are there enough litterbins inside the school?										
Are they placed in the right places?										
Are there enough litterbins outside the school?										
Are they placed in the right places?										
Does the school have a clear policy about litter?										

It would be a good idea to draw a plan of the school and mark on it the sites where you find litter ... MEPA can provide school site maps. This will help you answer the questions that follow.



				Action to be taken			Cost involved			
Waste minimisation	Yes	No	Action needed	Immediate	Soon	Later	High	Medium	Low	None
<b>Reduce</b>										
Are letters sent to families/households instead of individual pupils?										
Does the school use email messages to contact families (who have the facility)?										
Are copies of documents kept on disk rather than on paper?										
Does the school tuck shop avoid the use of disposable containers?										
Are long-life products chosen over short-life ones?										
Does the school avoid buying disposable products (e.g. cups, plates)?										
Are materials bought in bulk to avoid excessive packaging?										

				Action to be taken			Cost involved			
Waste minimisation (cont)	Yes	No	Action needed	Immediate	Soon	Later	High	Medium	Low	None
<b>Reuse</b>										
Are used envelopes saved and reused?										
Are handouts printed on both sides?										
Is waste paper used on both sides?										
<b>Recycle</b>										
Is waste paper saved for recycling?										
Does the school has or uses recycling facilities?										
Does the school practise composting?										
Does the school use recycled paper?										
Is the toilet paper made from recycled paper?										

				Action to be taken			Cost involved			
Energy	Yes	No	Action needed	Immediate	Soon	Later	High	Medium	Low	None
Does the school use any renewable energy source (e.g. does it use a solar water heater)?										
<b>Electricity</b>										
Are lights kept turned on in empty rooms?										
Are low-energy bulbs used for lighting?										
Are shades/diffusers/bulbs kept clean to maximise light?										
Are windows kept clean to admit natural light?										
Are computer monitors, projectors, televisions, videos and other similar equipment switched off when not in use?										
Are photocopiers and other office equipment switched off when not in use?										
Does electrical equipment switch on to stanby mode when not in use?										

Energy consumption can be measured by reading the electricity meter and keeping a record of the readings. How does energy use vary during the day? ... during the year? Records can be compared, plotted on graphs and exhibited on the school notice board.

				Action to be taken			Cost involved			
Energy (cont)	Yes	No	Action needed	Immediate	Soon	Later	High	Medium	Low	None
<b>Hot water</b>										
Are there any hot water taps at school?										
Are hot water taps and tanks properly insulated?										
Are hot water taps drip-free?										
Is the hot water comfortably hot (not higher than 43°C)?										
<b>Heating/Cooling</b>										
Are rooms kept closed while they are heated?										
Are doors/windows used to create draughts instead of switching on fans?										
Are air-conditioned rooms kept closed?										

				Action to be taken			Cost involved			
Water	Yes	No	Action needed	Immediate	Soon	Later	High	Medium	Low	None
Is the water pressure too high leading to an excessive waste of water?										
Are press-taps fitted?										
Are there any dripping taps?										
Are dripping taps repaired quickly?										
Does the urinal flush work cease at night?										
Are WCs fitted with low-flow flushes?										
If not, have water hippos (bags to reduce the volume of water flushed) been installed in the flushes?										
Is rainwater collected?										
If yes, is the collected rainwater used?										

Water consumption can be measured by reading the water meter. How does water use vary during the day? ... during the year? Records can be compared, plotted on graphs and exhibited on the school notice board.



				Action to be taken			Cost involved			
Transport	Yes	No	Action needed	Immediate	Soon	Later	High	Medium	Low	None
Do staff and pupils mostly come to school by public/school transport?										
Do most private cars bring two or more people to school?										
Do most cars, coming to school, run on diesel?										
Is there anyone who cycles to school?										
Does the school have proper facilities for the storage of cycles?										
Does the school promote walking and cycling as a way to come to school?										
Is there a network of safe routes to the school?										
Are pupils made aware of these networks?										
Does the school provide information to families about school transport facilities?										

Most of the answers can be obtained through surveys. A map of the locality (obtained from MEPA) might come in useful to resolve certain issues.

				Action to be taken			Cost involved			
Healthy living	Yes	No	Action needed	Immediate	Soon	Later	High	Medium	Low	None
Does the school have a policy for healthy eating?										
If yes, is the policy followed faithfully?										
Do the pupils' packed lunches contain healthy food?										
Does the school tuck shop sell healthy foodstuffs?										
Do pupils understand the need for healthy eating?										
Does the school have a 'No Smoking on Premises' policy?										
If yes, does it apply for EVERYONE?										
Does the school have an effective 'Anti-bullying' policy?										
Does the school have an effective 'Buddy' system?										
Do teachers actively promote healthy lifestyles during their lessons?										

				Action to be taken			Cost involved			
The School	Yes	No	Action needed	Immediate	Soon	Later	High	Medium	Low	None
Are the school grounds free from safety hazards?										
Do the school grounds provide a rich environment for play?										
Are there games painted on the playground?										
Does the school have quiet, shaded places for people to sit and talk?										
Are there murals and artwork in the school?										
Does the school have a garden?										
Does the school have a pond?										
Does the school have trees?										
Does the school have soil patches that are allowed to grow wild?										
Is there equipment (e.g. nest boxes, bird tables) installed in the school to attract animals?										

				Action to be taken			Cost involved			
<b>The School (cont)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Action needed</b>	<b>Immediate</b>	<b>Soon</b>	<b>Later</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>None</b>
Are the corridors used to display pupils' work and other school activities?										
Are there places where pupils can sit comfortably indoors (besides classrooms)?										
Is the work done by the pupils adequately displayed in class?										
Are plants kept in classrooms and corridors?										
Does the main school entrance have a welcoming feel?										
Is the EkoSkola notice board placed in a prominent position?										

				Action to be taken			Cost involved			
<b>School Environmental Policy</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Action needed</b>	<b>Immediate</b>	<b>Soon</b>	<b>Later</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>None</b>
Does the school have an environmental policy?										
Does the school have an environmental educator?										
Does the environment feature regularly in the school's calendar of activities?										
Does the environment feature regularly in the teaching/learning activities?										
Are environmental topics used for projects and theme teaching?										
Are pupils involved in the care of the school's environment?										
Has the school joined an environmental organisation?										
Does it encourage 'green' practices at home?										

