

A COMPANION  
PUBLICATION TO  
*Sustainable  
Lifestyles:  
Options &  
Opportunities*

# ***SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES***

*options & opportunities*

**IN THE WORKPLACE**

Take actions together in the workplace to minimize  
footprints and maximize impacts





IMAGE: ROB BYE, UNSPLASH

# ***INTRODUCTION***

Workplaces can support and motivate tangible shifts in their employees' and customers' lifestyles towards sustainability. These efforts target those working with companies, organizations and individuals who are open and willing to adopt sustainable lifestyles practices but need some help or guidance along the way.

Companies can incentivize employees and customers to adopt sustainable ways of eating, moving, consuming, living and engaging in leisure activities, and demonstrate these actions at work.

## ***DEMONSTRATE***

### **Leading by example through green workplace initiatives**

Workplaces can show their sustainability commitment through leading by example. Implementing and profiling green workplace initiatives can inspire employees and customers to take similar actions at home and in their communities. For example, workplaces can set double-sided printing as a default, buy from local or sustainable vendors, invest ethically, take energy-saving measures, and use sustainable transportation.

## ***INCENTIVIZE***

### **Enabling sustainable lifestyles through employee and customer programmes**

There are also ways a workplace can support employees and customers to lead more sustainable lives. For example, they can offer public transit passes, provide space for goods exchanges (e.g., swapping clothing and lending tools), enable options for more responsible investments, support sustainable habits that can be practiced at home (e.g., re-use), and provide capacity-building opportunities like vegetarian cooking classes and repair skills courses.



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IMAGE: SHANE ROUNCE; UNSPLASH

## ***ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION***

The set of actions presented can support employees and customers to enhance sustainability in their daily lives. The target audience is urban workplaces (and the organizations that work with them) that are developing sustainable lifestyle initiatives and campaigns.

The list is meant to spark discussion, generate new ideas and be a “living document” that is modified with experience. The actions have been prioritized because they are more effective at reducing the ecological footprint. Based on ecological and carbon footprint data, we can identify priority lifestyles areas that contribute to ecological impacts such as reducing wasted food or shifting transportation modes. For the highest impacts, link options together, build on existing activities, and partner with others.

A discussion of the footprint findings and priority action areas can be found in the companion publication, “Sustainable Lifestyles: Options and Opportunities.” That publication shares a fuller list of actions that can be taken by urban level intermediaries who want to develop sustainable lifestyle initiatives and campaigns, have limited resources, and are looking for maximum impact (UN Environment, One Earth 2018).

This listing of options and opportunities was prepared by combining case study and literature reviews, an analysis of ecological and carbon footprint data, and a synthesis of expert insights. In addition, the authors and UN Environment reached out to their network of global experts to share action ideas, insights and review drafts.



## WHY WORKPLACES?

Effective sustainable lifestyle campaigns and initiatives avoid placing the responsibility for change on individuals alone. They identify how personal actions can make a difference when they are combined with the actions of others to produce greater impact. Workplaces are a great context for collective change toward sustainable daily living – people already have strong relationships with co-workers and can be supported to take action.

By harnessing workplace assets, initiatives can become positive examples and test what works and doesn't work in a city context. Workplace teams can experiment with advancing more sustainable living – and create 'roadmaps' based on their experience. For example, efforts to engage staff in lighter living and promoting a lighter ecological footprint culture can inspire people to shift their lives at homes and to support others to do the same in their community. Benefits to workplaces include improvements in organizational reputation as a sustainability leader and increased staff retention through positively engaged employees.

## SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How can the practices at our workplace inspire or contribute to sustainable lifestyles?
- What infrastructure is already in place in our city that we can build on?
- Are there specific skills or practices around sustainable daily living that we can teach our employees (or customers) at the workplace, e.g., through training events?
- How can we celebrate milestones such as birthdays or retirement in ways that lighten our ecological impact?
- Are we measuring our progress toward sustainable lifestyles?

And how can we adopt **integrative approaches to more sustainable ways of living** and catalyze **long lasting behaviour change** rather than just piecemeal and short term actions?



Use the list below to identify with a tick mark the actions you are prioritizing.

## FOOD

### Reduce Wasted Food

- Help make food waste collection more visible by placing compost bins close to where employees circulate in workplaces.
- Make soups from cafeteria or restaurant leftovers that employees can take home.
- Develop the skills of employees in reducing wasted food – for example, [WRAP UK](#) creates mini-training videos on kitchen skills for staff.
- Circulate a pledge to reduce wasted food at home and raise awareness of the scale of the challenge, e.g., [FoodShift's pledge](#); the [Global Footprint Network's food waste pledge](#).
- Organize a competition to reduce food waste between workplaces, across hotel locations, or between restaurants. It could be issued by a high-profile person, e.g., the Mayor or a top chef.
- Given coffee's high footprint (by weight), develop systems for ensuring that the right amount of coffee is brewed for the needs of the employees and / or the clients / customers / guests. Link this to information about alternatives to disposable cups and straws.
- If you have a cafeteria (and the space), devote an area for growing a portion of the vegetables and herbs used in their kitchens.
- Where possible, compost food waste from the workplace / cafeteria / lunchroom.
- Redistribute surplus food by setting up connections between the hotel / cafeteria with non-profits that serve food or with individuals, e.g., a hotel might partner with the local food bank, religious, community services charity, or pilot a community fridge program, where leftover food is placed in a fridge in a public location that is accessible to those in need.
- Reduce waste associated with catering, through a move away from buffet service and towards plate service, or by increasing the use of frozen food to avoid spoilage.

- Use food tracking apps or software to monitor workplace food waste in real time, or conduct a one-week waste audit – see, e.g., [FoodSave](#).
- Organize learning sessions about food safety, which translates to increased awareness of food shelf life at home (e.g., best-before dates).

### Promote Low-Footprint Diets

- Give coupons for sustainable restaurants, local food delivery services or green grocery stores as incentives or gifts.
- Provide vegetarian and vegan cooking classes after hours or as a team-building exercise off-site.
- Establish a place for employees to share more sustainable recipes (vegetarian, vegan, local, organic, etc.) such as a noticeboard or through an employee listserv or Facebook group.
- Demonstrate low carbon food and sustainable food practices in celebrations, such as eco-themed events hosted by hotels / restaurants or catered receptions featuring vegetarian food.

 *Identify where you have influence.*



IMAGE: KATIE SMITH: UNSPLASH

- Recruit individuals to participate in food challenges / pledges and blog about their experience, which can be shared with all staff.
- Develop relationships with local / organic / sustainable farmers, which can work hand-in-hand with efforts like 'Meatless Monday' challenges. This can be organised by inviting local farmers to come give food education sessions and offer food directly to employees, and also by creating a farm-to-kitchen relationship between local producers and a workplace cafeteria or restaurant.
- Support menu changes towards a plant-rich diet in on-site food services or through catering. This can include offering dairy-alternatives such as almond, oat or coconut milk; replacing red meat with white meat and seafood options; and reducing the proportion of red meat in dishes (e.g., burgers made with a mix of mushrooms and meat).

 *Find allies in your community.*

## MOBILITY

### Shift Transportation Modes to Increase % of Trips by Walking, Cycling and Public Transit

- Provide employees with information on public transport options and/or with public transit / car sharing and bike sharing scheme / carpooling passes for commuting.
- Where possible, participate in bike-to-work week as a workplace team.



- Celebrate international **Car-Free Day** on 22 September.
- Celebrate **World Bicycle Day** on 3 June or **World Cycling Day** on 17 September.
- Improve the exterior appearance of the office / hotel to encourage walking (e.g., create points of interest along a walk, ensure there is a safe sidewalk, make a "green way" in larger properties).
- Install bike lockers for employees, as well as change rooms and showers for them to use when arriving to the workplace. Bike locks can be provided as gifts or incentives.
- Make use of existing parking lots / bike locker spaces to communicate about sustainable mobility and bicycle / pedestrian safety – including by installing bike racks.

### Find Alternatives to Personal Car Ownership

- Allow fleet vehicles to be used for personal trips by employees.

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

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