



GREEN WORKPLACES A GUIDE FOR UNION REPRESENTATIVES



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INTRODUCTION

This guide aims to encourage union representatives to get going on greening their workplaces.

Trade unions across Europe face the triple challenge of austerity, climate change and energy costs and security. We are consuming energy and natural resources at a totally unsustainable rate. We burn more energy, consume more resources, and generate more waste at the workplace and while commuting than we do at home. So the workplace is an excellent place to start.

This Guide provides advice on good practice from trade union activists across the EU. It shows how union representatives and Works Councillors have tackled saving energy for heating and light, travel to work, recycling and other initiatives.

The Guide was produced with the support of funds from the European Commission for the ETUC's Green Workplaces Network. The trade union partners who contributed have piloted new green workplace projects and provided workplace training on environmental issues, adding to their experience of green initiatives.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) welcomes the EU's 2020 targets to increase renewable energy and cut carbon emissions from industry and power companies. And the EU's Energy Efficiency Directive should start to fill a vital gap and strengthen our efforts to green our workplaces.

But climate change is accelerating. NASA's chief climate scientist, James Hansen, estimates we have fewer than 10 years to take action to work together to 'green' our infrastructure and jobs, before climate change becomes virtually unstoppable. Global warming is caused by burning fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas) through power generation, transport, in industry and at home. This releases carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other 'greenhouse gases', which collect in the earth's atmosphere, trapping heat. We are already seeing more extreme weather across Europe as a result.

It is vital that we tackle climate change. As Lord Stern, the leading climate change economist, said in 2008, actions delayed today will mean far more costly interventions tomorrow. Action at global level is important. But we all have to play our part.

Partners

The ETUC; FGTB (Belgium); Arbeid & Milieu (Labour and Environment), a Flemish organisation of the three main unions (ACV, Vlaams ABVV and ACLVB) and the environmental movement (BBL); the Trades Union Congress (TUC) UK; the European Metalworkers Federation (EMF) which became IndustriAll in the course of the project integrating manufacturing workers from the metal, chemical, mining, energy and textile sectors; and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU).



Where should I start?

1. Gather information

Use the *Quick Walkround Checklist* to identify the main issues...

If employers are reluctant to share information with you – on energy bills, for example – consider your rights to receive information under the EU's Information and Consultation Directive. At the British Museum, London, the union found that management was more willing to share information relating to energy bills, once they shared with them a survey showing that most staff was unaware of the organisation's current environmental targets! A union-led event at work also helped raise awareness: see Extra 2: *Organising a «green event»*.

2. Make a plan

Identify the main concerns and opportunities. Union reps could start with 'quick wins'. Most workplaces could reduce their resource use with free or low-cost measures, such as awareness campaigns/behaviour change and simple technical fixes.

3. Joint actions with management

Think about how to use existing union-management arrangements. New issues like energy and resource use can be added to the agenda – see: *Greener Deals - Negotiating on Environmental Issues at Work* – TUC.

www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-18200-f0.cfm

European Works Councils

Employers on joint Works Councils in Germany are legally obliged to report plant-level environmental pro-

tection measures. Works Councils have responsibilities to promote and implement environmental protection measures, which may include plant-level agreements. See Works Council constitution at: www.eurofound.europa.eu/emire/GERMANY/WORKSCONSTITUTION-DE.htm

About half of European Works Councils (EWCs) are now discussing environmental issues. The chemical and motor vehicle industries have many examples of EWCs: e.g. the *Europa-Forum* of the Bayer Group and the *Charta for sustainable development and social responsibility* of the Solvay Group. This includes the commitment to develop products that improve environmental performance. The Charta covers key areas for action: business travel, energy efficiency, resource use, and products with a long life-cycle.

4. Get going!

Remember to tell people what you are trying to do, and why, through meetings, publicity materials, events and training. People want meaningful facts and figures. Are you going to express energy use or savings in cash, tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) or Kilowatt hours (KWh)? For advice, see www.tuc.org.uk/extras/gogreenatwork.pdf

Green union networks

The TUC-UK has set up a Green Workplaces network and publishes a regular Green Newsletter (www.tuc.org.uk/green_workplaces_network).

In Germany, *Network Resource Efficiency* is a partnership between the German Environment Ministry, IG Metall and environmental organisations and employers (Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety). Focusing particularly on the metalworking, craft, textiles and electronics

industries, it raises awareness of resource-efficient good practice, through training courses, meetings and conferences, and public awareness campaigns. It promotes and researches more resource-efficient product design, through MaRes (Material Efficiency and Resource Production). http://ressourcen.wupperinst.org/downloads/MaRes_AP10_2_ExecSummary.pdf

5. Organise a union 'green event' or 'green fair'

Events can encourage staff to find out more about green issues. Such events can also be used to collect staff surveys, or encourage staff to sign up for environmental training.

6. Involve union members

Does your employer recognise the importance of staff and union involvement? What will they do to support that? You might suggest:

- * Time off for training and union environmental activities.
- * Joint awareness events
- * Access to information, such as energy use, waste contractors.
- * Discussing an environmental policy, or focusing on one area such as travel to work.
- * Setting up a joint committee – or green an existing one.

7. Environmental training

Advice and training sessions for union members and union reps help raise awareness and build support for environmental initiatives. This could include:

- * Short lunchtime meetings on a particular issue, perhaps with an outside speaker.
- * Environmental training courses to help union reps

and members wanting to green their workplace. Unions can arrange workplace-based courses and provide a trainer.

8. Measure and review what does and doesn't work

Don't get too hung up on quantifying 'footprints' in a numerical way. But do remember to try and record your starting point and achievements, and share them with your colleagues and your union – others can then learn from your success!



Getting organised

Find out more about how your organisation manages energy and environmental issues.

Responsibilities

- * Which personnel or department oversees energy and resource use?
- * Does your employer publish an environmental policy statement or 'corporate social responsibility' report?
- * What are others (on the internet, in the news, in your community) saying about your employers' environmental performance?
See: www.foeeurope.org/

Energy bills

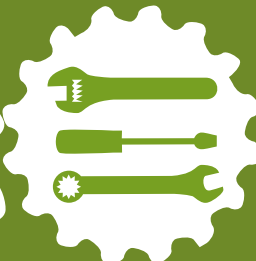
- * How much does your company pay for electricity, oil, gas, water, and waste disposal?
- * If you work for a heavy industry, how much are the environmental taxes?
- * Who is in charge of purchasing? Do they buy products to last?

Environmental audits

- * What audits or good practice guidance (including 'best available technology') does the employer rely upon to guide its energy and resource use?
- * What solutions did these audits propose?

Environmental management schemes

- * Find out if your employer takes part in an accredited environmental management scheme. The two main schemes are:
 - (1) ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation) www.iso.org/iso/home.html. ISO standard 14001 covers environmental management systems at work.
 - (2) EMAS - the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm.
- * Both ISO and EMAS involve external audits.
- * The EMAS scheme is preferable because it requires the '*active involvement of employees [and] employee representatives*', and public reporting.
- * The EU Commission is reviewing its accreditation schemes in 2012. *Arbeid & Milieu* encourage the use of tools that are robust and user-friendly, and benefit workers.



Taking practical action in the workplace

This section suggests actions you can take to reduce the environmental impact of your workplace. It includes real life examples from union reps in workplaces across Europe. Low cost actions or 'quick win' solutions are listed first. If your employer has taken little or no action, these are the best activities to start with.

ENERGY SAVING

Improving energy efficiency saves money and is often the quickest way to green the workplace. Equipment and lighting left on when not in use, including at weekends and overnight, means unnecessary emissions and wastes money. Guidance for employees on switching off

equipment helps. Sticking labels to equipment or light switches is a good start. Heating and cooling are a large part of employers' bills: See p33-5 at: www.tuc.org.uk/extras/gogreenatwork.pdf.

The ETUC supports the EU's draft *Directive on Energy Efficiency*. It includes a legally-binding 20% efficiency target which all Member States will have to comply with. It will help cut energy bills for business and households and reduce our dependence on energy imports. Key proposals include energy-proofing buildings, especially offices and energy audits in all large companies: See: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/efficiency/eed/eed_en.htm



Area for action	Good practice
Energy audits	Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, London: union reps on the joint union-management environment committee get time off to conduct energy walkrounds. They use environment checklists to audit the entire hospital: UNISON case study. At the Port of Felixstowe, UK: the joint union-management environmental committee (which includes union 'green reps') cut 10% off the Port's carbon footprint over four years. The workforce received an annual bonus.
Working time	SEIU cleaners' union, US: negotiated cleaning shifts to take place during the day. They saved on night-time lighting and ensured cleaners enjoy more sociable working hours.
Insulation and draught-proofing	Centre de Competence, Wallonia, Belgium: provides free training and apprenticeships for unemployed people to learn how to install energy efficient systems and insulation.
Lighting, office and electrical equipment	London head office of the public services union, PCS: environment reps (GMB union) negotiated an ethical and green procurement policy. This ensured the most energy efficient IT equipment was purchased, backed by staff training.
Heating and cooling	AVE Regina, Belgium: double glazing and more efficient heating systems installed in this large social care centre at the suggestion of union reps. Heating bills were cut significantly, covering the cost of the substantial investment involved.
Automation	Steel company Ellimetal, Belgium: ABVV union negotiated automatic gates remotely controlled by forklift truck drivers. This cut heat loss and oil bills, and improved the comfort of workers nearby. Scottish Power: management and unions agreed to automatic energy controls: motion sensor lights; and automatic power down of PCs after working hours.
Energy intensive manufacturing and processes: saving excess heat from inefficient equipment	Nyrstar, Belgium: a union rep at the zinc smelter is developing tools to measure environmental impacts (particularly energy), looking at product life cycles from production to distribution. The aim is to gain accreditation and to benchmark best available technology. A & P Marine, Falmouth, UK: a wider range of energy saving measures led by the GMB union and the workplace energy team includes new energy efficient pumps, which self-finance every 9 months.
Co-generation: combined heat, cooling & power	Centre Reine Fabiola, Belgium: at the residential centre for disabled people, unions initiated a co-generation project to heat and power their crèche and workshops. It works well in large workplaces using power 24/7.
Onsite renewable energy	BT (UK) and Magor Brewery (South Wales): union reps have made proposals for on-site wind turbines.

CUTTING WASTE, SAVING RESOURCES

Wasted resources are more visible than wasted energy – we can't see wasted energy piling up in bins. And it's an issue for employers because waste costs money (£15bn a year in the UK alone) and can lead to legal problems if waste pollutes the environment. The European Waste Framework Directive says employers must take preventative action to reduce waste and pollution, and correct problems at source.

According to European Friends of the Earth, employers could recycle twice as much waste as they currently do. See: www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/gone_to_waste.pdf
Natural habitats, biodiversity and wildlife are damaged through over-harvesting and mining of resources.

Dumping waste releases toxins into air, soil and water. As waste rots in landfill, it creates a greenhouse gas, methane, a powerful contributor to global warming.

Trees reduce or 'mitigate' climate change by absorbing CO₂. But vast forests are chopped down every year just for paper. Harvesting, mining and processing of raw materials uses considerable energy and fossil fuels, and this has a direct impact on climate change.

Recycling is labour intensive and creates jobs – ten times as many as traditional waste disposal – but we must work to ensure these are good quality jobs in what can be a hazardous industry.

Area for action	Links and good practice
Waste reduction – awareness raising and recycling	Centre Reine Fabiola, Belgium: staff worked with residents to audit waste and provide training on waste management. New jobs were created through the design and introduction of new bins and waste separation. National Library of Scotland: union-led projects include a waste audit and clear signage and recycling facilities: 60% of waste now recycled in 18 waste streams, some of which are recycled via local social enterprises, others (e.g. perspex) are returned to manufacturer for recycling. Port of Felixstowe: joint environmental committee boosted recycling rates from 10% to 65% of all waste.
Paper	TUC head office, London: reduced landfill waste by 40% in 18 months through raising awareness, double-sided printing improved recycling facilities: See www.tuc.org.uk/extras/gogreenatwork.pdf
Packaging	Delhaize retailer, Belgium: union negotiated cuts in product packaging (switching from plastic to cardboard) and from bottled to tap water in the canteen. Argos distribution, Bridgewater, UK: UNITE reps negotiated cuts in packaging.
Manufacturing raw materials	IG Metall: works with the aluminium trade association to increase resource efficiency through scrap management and heat recovery, to be implemented by German Works Councils. Benefits include less pressure on labour costs: See www.aluminium-ressourceneffizienz.de/download.htm

<p>Water is a scarce and expensive resource. Water treatment is an energy intensive process. Wasting water represents a significant environmental cost.</p>	<p>AVE Regina: unions worked with management on compliance with new water saving regulations. Tata Steel, UK: Community-led low-cost initiative saved 20% of water used at the Trostre steel works, with substantial cost savings. At BT, UK: union reps reviewed water usage. BT replaced 59 water coolers with tap-plumbed chillers, saving the delivery and replacement of 3,500 18 litre bottles a year. Magor brewery, South Wales: UNITE led negotiations with management to identify resource wastage; achieved a 10% cut in CO₂ emissions and a 10% reduction in water use. Reine Fabiola Centre: invested in a 20,000 litre tank to collect rain water, used to flush toilets.</p>
<p>Food</p>	<p>Honda plant, Belgium: union reps campaigned for 'Thursday veggie day' where the canteen provides a vegetarian alternative lunch to carbon-intensive meat options. AVE Regina: introduced animals on site to take care of food waste. Guys Marsh Prison, UK: PCS led an anaerobic digester project to dispose of food waste, saving £18,000 a year on waste contracts. The digester produces electricity and solid waste which fertilises prison gardens.</p>
<p>Work in water and power utilities, and in waste companies</p>	<p>Veolia and Vattenfall EWCs: both have policies on environmental sustainability in the workplace. National Trade Union Federation in Construction, Romania: partners a project to train trade professionals on energy efficiency of buildings, backed by the EU's <i>Leonardo</i> fund. Unions also partners in a study of how energy sector employees are affected by new technologies.</p>
<p>Biodiversity</p>	<p>SWIFT IT financial services, Belgium: flower meadow created.</p>
<p>Recycling</p>	<p>PCS union, UK: union reps negotiated recycling and green procurement policies.</p>
<p>Longer term: consider an ambitious 'zero waste' target.</p>	<p>Eco-Conseil Institute, Belgium: new environmental management training modules established in partnership with unions and local universities. <i>Zero waste</i> policies can be progressed by workers and managers trained in resource and environmental management.</p>

GREEN TRAVEL

Getting to and from work can be one of the biggest worries staff face. Travel is the fastest growing source of carbon emissions in the EU. Not only is the petrol and diesel burnt in vehicles a major contributor to climate change, but particles in emissions are extremely damaging to health, comfort, and biodiversity.

Improved public transport is also an important part of a greener economy and green job creation. Here we suggest green travel solutions, whether you work in a busy town centre, an out-of-town industrial estate, a business park with poor public transport, or do shift work.



Area for action	Links and good practice
'Travel to work' survey to identify baselines and issues	National Museum, Liverpool: the PCS led <i>Green Forum</i> for sustainability and environmental initiatives includes a Green Travel Plan including cycle purchase, cycle routes, safer walking, and interest-free season ticket loans for public transport.
Green travel plans	CC-OO Spain: Comisiones Obreras and the NGO <i>ConBici</i> promote <i>Sustainable mobility</i> in all areas, especially in access to work. Initiatives include cycle routes to reach a level comparable to other EU countries: www.ccoo.es/cscceo/menu.do?Areas:Medio_ambiente Wallonia: FGTB and CSC established <i>Trade union mobility units</i> which provide training and awareness-raising campaigns and liaise with employers to help union representatives get involved and negotiate effectively on travel to work issues. Includes <i>Tousvéloactifs</i> project promoting commuting by cycle, and public campaigns like 'mobility week' organised every September.
Flexible and home working	Rhondda Cynon Taff Council, Wales: UNISON reps report a homeworking pilot project to be extended more widely.
Inter-union cooperation on green travel	CCOO Spain, Vlaams ABVV Belgium, CGIL Italy and ACE- Germany: worked together on mobility to work in these four countries to propose more sustainable and beneficial alternatives for the health of workers, the environment and economy: www.ccoo.es/cscceo/menu.do?Areas:Medio_ambiente:Actualidad:271579
Cycling and walking	Nike European Logistic Centre, Laakdal, Belgium: allowances for workers who cycle, walk or jog to work, including consultations with health and safety representatives on safe routes. Hackney Council, London: UNISON negotiated a 20p per mile cycle allowance.
Car sharing	Port of Felixstowe: free breakfasts for car sharers.
Improved facilities to enable cycle use	SWIFT: installed showers, lockers, cycle parking and a cycle mileage allowance to encourage cycle use.
Subsidised work bus	SWIFT: union representatives negotiated a workplace shuttle bus to reduce commuting costs and improve sustainable transport.
Eco-driving	Wincanton distribution, UK: UNITE negotiated for all drivers to have training on fuel efficient driving. Bristol City Council, UK: UNISON led talks on eco-driving training for high mileage drivers. Training 60 drivers saving £350 per van a year. Also cut driving stress.
Greener fuels –biomass/ hybrid vehicles	Parcelforce mail distributor, UK: CWU reps are working with management on greening the vehicle fleet.

The bigger picture - beyond the workplace

The ETUC has called for a *Just Transition* to the energy and resource-efficient economy we need. There are 5 pillars to our *Just Transition*, including participation and dialogue at all levels involving trade unions, business organisations, communities and government. For the ETUC, *Just Transition* includes campaigns for green jobs and skills, respect for trade union and human rights, and social protection for workers negatively affected by the transition.

Building alliances is essential to a *Just Transition*, as these two ETUC examples show.

* **Green jobs**

Alliance for Jobs, Germany: A network of government bodies, unions and employers work together to promote the green economy. Since 2011, 13% of the 100bn euro fiscal stimulus package has been allocated specifically to green jobs. In Germany, 235,000 people work in the renewable energy sector, predicted to grow to 710,000 by 2030. Government investment has stimulated green

job growth, for example, 3bn euros from 2009-11 on improving household energy efficiency. The Alliance has focussed on vocational training (jointly with universities) and on 'greening' existing vocational training, to meet the necessary skills' requirements for a greener economy.

* **Green skills**

South Thames College UCU, UK: The Universities and Colleges Union (UK) is leading a community-based green skills and apprenticeships campaign in south London. Working in partnership with South Thames College, local employers, trade unions, and community organisations, the project hopes to develop 'greener' curriculums for students, and improve their employment prospects in the construction, home insulation and renewables industries. UCU has produced training materials and a short film on its work with students and the partners in the alliance. The project influences national policy through a Green Skills manifesto:

See www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNRx6tNFG8U
www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/p/i/Green_skills_manifesto.pdf

EXTRA 1 - QUICK WALKROUND CHECKLIST

Energy	Comments
Does heating or cooling keep workers comfortable without wasting energy?	
Is the workplace properly insulated and draught-proofed? Are outside doors frequently left open, creating draughts? Are there any areas where comfort is poor?	
Are the thermostats in the right places, set to the right temperature? (19°C for heating, 24°C for cooling), and fitted with timers? Are the times right?	
Are heating or ventilation sources blocked by furniture or equipment, or poorly located in relation to the workplace design?	
Are there automatic power-reducing features, e.g. motion sensor lights, timers, power downs? Are they enabled and do staff know how to use them?	
Are controls and switches clearly labelled and accessible, including when they should/can be turned off?	
Are all bulbs low energy?	
Are all computer monitors flat-screen?	
Is all equipment turned off fully when not in use? If not, why not?	
Resources, waste and biodiversity	
Is everything recycled that can be, and is everything bought recycled where possible?	
Are water saving measures in place, such as rainwater harvesting, low flush toilets, water saving taps, and audits of industrial water use?	
Are the catering arrangements satisfactory or is food over-processed or packaged?	
Are there attempts to protect biodiversity or establish wildlife habitats and natural garden areas at or around the workplace? Are these areas that workers and clients can access and enjoy?	
Travel to work	
Have you completed a travel to work survey?	
Has a travel to work plan been negotiated with the employer?	
Good questions to ask workers include: How do you travel to work? Has this changed over time? Would you like to change it if other options were available? What problems does your current mode of travel cause (e.g. congestion, delays, long waits)? What stops you changing to public transport/cycling/walking if you don't use these options already? (cost/lack of availability/family commitments/other) What would you like your employer to do?	

EXTRA 2 - ORGANISING A 'GREEN EVENT'

What is the event for?

- * Consider what the activity is for and how many people you are hoping to reach. An all-day event with speakers and a range of stalls? Or a single stall in the canteen at lunchtime to start with? Is it a general 'green' event, or is there a focus on a particular issue, e.g. energy saving, transport, etc.?
- * Is there an existing work activity (either union- or management-led) that might take this on? For example, has your workplace run events on learning in the past, or does it have a regular staff 'briefing' session?
- * Running a survey in the lead-up to an event is a really good way of publicising it. Ask people to return the surveys at the event, if not before – see Extra 3: Model workplace survey.
- * Is there an external 'green' event you could tie in with, such as World Environment Day in June, or EU mobility week in September?

Management buy-in

- * Talk to management to secure support for the event and ensure people will be able to attend – ideally, in company time. It would be a good opportunity for the management to tell employees about the organisation's carbon footprint and its attempts to reduce it.
- * Ensure that a suitable venue will be available and, if possible, refreshments.

Attract new members

- * The event is a great opportunity to attract new members and activists who may not have realised that the union is interested in environmental issues. Remember to have membership forms available on the day.

Setting up

- * Consider outside speakers: even a small event will gain credibility and interest from outside participation, which can also help make the link between work and home. Most 'green' organisations are very keen to reach new audiences, and welcome the opportunity to attend workplaces.
- * Consider what contacts you already have. Is there a union member who is also an active member of Friends of the Earth (FOE)?
- * Speakers are probably best for lunchtime events. But try to ensure speeches are brief and practical.
- * Organisations can usually supply printed materials, and maybe 'freebies' like badges, bags, mugs, pencils, posters etc. Even small things can really boost interest and attendance.
- * Ask both union and management for help with publicising. Ideally, put the organisation's logo and the union's logo on publicity materials.
- * Make sure you have enough people to set up stalls, display materials etc.
- * If you can get a little funding from the employer or union, at the end of the event you could do a prize draw from all completed surveys for a 'green' prize.
- * Try to make sure the event itself is run in a sustainable way – e.g. fresh water is provided in jugs rather than in plastic bottles.

Follow-up

- * Collect names of people who want to be actively involved on the day, and consider holding a follow-up meeting.
- * Write-up the event, analyse the survey if you've done one, and publicise the results to staff and management.

EXTRA 3 – MODEL WORKPLACE SURVEY

What are your main concerns about the environment at work?	
ENERGY REDUCTION	
Main concern	
How I'd like to see it addressed	
RESOURCE USE (WATER, RAW MATERIALS, FOOD) AND RECYCLING	
Main concern	
How I'd like to see it addressed	
TRAVEL TO AND FROM WORK AND TRAVEL FOR WORK	
Main concern	
How I'd like to see it addressed	
IF YOU HAD TO PICK ONE OF THESE TO PRIORITISE, WHICH WOULD IT BE?	
Are you aware of the employer's environmental policies?	
Are there things you could do yourself to be greener at work?	

"Green investment at production sites makes relocation difficult. When you invest in sustainability, you also invest in sustainable jobs" (Pascal Lussiez, Works Council representative at Bombardier Transport France)

"We pressed management hard to achieve improvements such as automatic warehouse doors, but in the end we convinced them. As a worker who's there each day on the factory floor, you can pinpoint the opportunities that will make a difference, both in terms of energy savings and for enhancing worker's comfort" (Frank Maggen, ABVV Union representative at Ellimetal steel company in Belgium)

"There has been a far greater appetite amongst rank and file members to get involved with tackling environmental issues than there is for the other traditional trade union work areas. We have no problem recruiting green reps and even had a waiting list initially. Aligning ourselves with the green agenda has meant we now have another direct line to senior management through a corporate environment group" (Steve Crawshaw, UNISON Chair of Bristol City Council's Green Reps Committee)

"True sustainability is a team effort and cannot be achieved without the active co-operation and interest of all. The unions have a strong history of helping BT and its people in meeting the challenges brought about by our modern world. I am pleased to see their active involvement in the challenge of making a significant reduction in our carbon footprint" (Phil Dance, MD at Adastral Park, BT's research and development headquarters)



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