

Compilation of Best Practices for Sustainable Lifestyle

a program

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has drawn up an Environment Protection Calendar (EPC) to maximise efforts to protect, preserve and conserve the environment. The Ministry plans to launch a public outreach programme, as the task of environment protection needs active public participation at the ground-level. Government by itself can only draw up the policy and initiate implementation efforts. The success of the implementation at the ground-level depends heavily on mass-scale participation at the ground level.

It is proposed that besides the usual outreach through community radio/print/electronic/social media, the Ministry must involve Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) and Directorate of Advertising & Visual Publicity to take the EPC and simplified environmental issues to people at the ground-level.

Through the Environment Protection Calendar and the Public Outreach Programme (PoP), the Ministry plans to:

- (a) Simplify environmental issues for the common man, spell out the challenges before the government and the people and to make the campaign to protect the environment into a truly mass-base movement;
- (b) Lay down what the Government proposes to do;
- (c) Suggest simple, practical steps that every person must implement in day-to-day life that make a visible difference to the environment.
- (d) Break down the population into different age groups and target messages through chosen mass media (different for every age group).
- (e) Bring out a pamphlet/App/short documentaries laying out what a common can do to protect the environment and on other environmental issues. Inculcate a sentiment among the people that they feel compelled to practically carry out at least one environment-friendly deed/act every day.

Simple things you can do to help reduce your environmental impact, save money, and live a happier, healthier and greener life.

1. Save energy, save environment.

- Set your thermostat a few degrees lower in the winter and a few degrees higher in the summer to save on heating and cooling costs.
- Install compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) when your older incandescent bulbs burn out.
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- Wash clothes in cold water whenever possible. As much as 85 percent of the energy used to machine-wash clothes goes to heating the water.
- Use a drying rack or clothesline to save the energy otherwise used during machine drying.
- Switch off all appliances at the plug point and not just with a remote.
- Replace incandescent bulbs with LED lamps. LED lamps are available at a reduced cost.
- Try bathe in quick succession without letting the hot water in the geyser cool. Set geysers at an optimum temperature.
- Yoga is beneficial to the mind, body, pocket and the Earth. Do an hour of yoga instead of running on a treadmill.
- Spread the concept of 'Energy Soldiers' in the schools.
- Use a table lamp for studying-better task based lighting.
- Allow hot food to cool off before putting it in the refrigerator.
- Investing in energy efficient products and making small changes in our daily activities can substantially reduce our electricity bills and contribute to a considerable reduction in emissions.
- Install a solar water heater at your home.
- Install a solar inverter / power your home through solar energy.
- Dry your clothes in the sun instead of using a dryer. Frequent use of a tumbler dryer adds to energy bill.
- Install water efficient showers and faucets. Use water carefully.
- Go out and play instead of watching TV or playing on electricity operated device.
- Replace domestic and electrical equipment with energy efficient recommended models. Buy 5 star label and higher star rated product as recommended by BEE.
- Try implement traditional science and knowledge of architecture under 'Vastushashtra' - takes care of energy flow pattern including sunlight and fresh outside air and utilizing space for kitchen, living rooms, washrooms, etc efficiently leading to energy conservation.
- Invest in your own sources of renewable energy. Buy shares in new cooperatively owned wind, solar or hydroelectric plants that are looking for finance. The financial returns won't be huge – but the income is far better than leaving your money in a bank.

- Tradition of passing down of old clothes and books to younger siblings. This saves money for the family and saves energy at the producer end.
- Try Applying Green Building practices in new constructions.
- Don't leave your good environmental habits at home - take them into the office too.
- Take public transport to work or walk rather than take your car, or share car journeys with colleagues.
- Turn off appliances, equipment and lights off when finished using.
- Shut down your computer rather than just logging off when done with the work.
- Replace old desktops with energy efficient laptops.
- Do not use bottled water for corporate events and in the office.
- Speak to colleagues on energy conservation practices and spread awareness.

Use Solar Energy

- Using solar energy to dry clothes in an efficient and eco-friendly process. Reduce annual Co2 emissions by 371 kg (equivalent to 37 additional trees) Reduce annual electricity bills by Rs. 2692.
- Install a solar water heater.
Reduce annual CO2 emissions by 687 kg; Reduce annual electricity bills by Rs. 4896
- Install a solar inverter / power home through solar energy: With a 1 KW. System.
Reduce annual CO2 emissions by 984 kg; Reduce annual electricity bills by ` 7140 A
1 kWp systems generates 4 units of electricity if there is sunshine for 5 hours of the day it occupies an area of 10 m2.
- Deployment of solar cookers to reduced CO2 and methane emissions.
- Sun Drying to increase shelf life of food: Sun drying is a highly preferred method for food preservation in India.
- Installation of Rooftops Solar on residential industrial, commercial, institutional, wastelands and defense building etc.

Less gas, save money (and better health!).

- Walk or bike to work. This saves on gas and parking costs while improving your cardiovascular health and reducing your risk of obesity.
- Consider telecommuting if you live far from your work. Or move closer. Even if this means paying more rent, it could save you money in the long term.
- Lobby with your local government to increase spending on sidewalks and bike lanes. With little cost, these improvements can pay huge dividends in bettering your health and reducing traffic.

2. Save water, save life.

- Take shorter showers to reduce water use. This will lower your water and heating bills too.
- Install a low-flow showerhead. They don't cost much, and the water and energy savings can quickly pay back your investment.
- Make sure you have a faucet aerator on each faucet. These inexpensive appliances conserve heat and water, while keeping water pressure high.
- Plant drought-tolerant native plants in your garden. Many plants need minimal watering. Find out which occur naturally in your area.
- Making mandatory roof rain water harvesting and recharging wells/tanks and making use of the water for routine needs.
- As per the need, construction of Soak pits in individual households for sanitation and ground water recharge
- Making drip irrigation mandatory (traditional or scientific) for horticulture and A forestation works
- To Utilise the kitchen waste water in home gardening
- Household's water tanks should be provided with Alarm system or auto-off system to prevent overflow.
- To take advantage of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana (PMKSY) and Integrated Water Management Programme (IWMP) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) for conservation of water and agriculture development.
- Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Put a brick or any other device that occupies space to cut down on the amount of water needed for each flush.
- When washing the car, use water from a bucket and not a hosepipe.
- Making a habit to turn off the tap while brushing teeth or soaping face.
- Wash vessels using collected water instead of washing directly under tap.
- Mop the floor instead of washing.
- Making mandatory roof rain water harvesting and recharging of wells and tanks and making use of the water for routine needs.
- Making drip irrigation mandatory (traditional or scientific) for horticulture and Afforestation works
- Conduct a forestation works to conserve water and avoid planting of species like Eucalyptus etc in drought like situation.
- Selection of Village level Volunteers to check whether all the public taps and pipes are leak free.
- In all public buildings, for men - designing urinal and sink in one structure, where the waste water from sink will be utilised for flushing the urinal.
- To promote Eco-san toilets (Eco-San toilet is a closed system that does not need water). Suitable for water scarce areas as well as water flooded areas. Besides human excreta are used as good fertilizer, less water is required for its maintenance.

- The schemes of watershed if implemented needs to be implemented strictly following ridge to valley approach and Water budgeting at village level needs to be made mandatory.
- To develop farmer friendly mobile Apps for getting information on rainfall pattern and recommended crops by the research institutions (coordinating with India Meteorological Department and Indian Council for Agriculture Research, ICAR)
- Village level volunteers to educate the farmers/water user groups/vulnerable stakeholder in climate change matters.

3. Eat smart.

- If you really love nature and animals, turn vegetarian. Don't forget that huge and mighty elephants are vegetarians too Say NO to non-vegetarian food.
- Whatever your diet, eat low on the food chain.
- Use fuel efficient cooking methods.
- Reduce the flame once food starts boiling.
- Use optimum quantity of water for cooking.
- Keep all ingredients ready and at hand before turning on the gas.
- Allow refrigerated food to come to room temperature before heating it.
- Soak rice, dal etc. for some time before cooking.
- Use the pressure cooker daily
- Use fuel efficient biomass cook stoves : In rural areas wood and time will be saved
- Nuke it: Instead of boiling water in a pan; zap it in a microwave instead
- Don't keep frozen foods at temperatures colder than needed - increase the temperature of frozen food and product stores from -25°C to -20°C and save 10% of the refrigeration energy.
- Switching off Kitchen appliances when it's not needed.
- Pre-boil potatoes before roasting.
- Try to eat at least one meat-free meal per day.
- Buy organic and local whenever possible.
- Grow some of your own food: Make your kitchen garden.
- Plan ahead by listing things to be purchased.
- Shop smart and realistically.
- Do not waste food: Change your plate's size and Give the leftover food to needy person.
- Do not order food unnecessary and in large quantity.
- Check the date of Expiry of food before buying.
- Carry a reusable bag when you go shopping. Refuse additional packaging and reuse bags as much as possible.
- Try and buy foods with less packaging.

- Accept more variability in the appearance of your food. Imperfectly round tomatoes can still taste perfect!
- Yoga: It helps in reducing the craving for food.
- Introduce sun dried vegetables
- Due to absence of water food spoilers like bacteria, fungi and molds are unable to grow on the food.
- Due to this the food remains safe and healthy
- A dehydrated vegetable retains more of their nutrients than their other alternative methods of preservation such as freezing and canning.
- Importance of sun: Mushrooms can provide as much vitamin D as supplements - but only if you put them in the sun before you eat them.
- Eat Organic Products: Organic foods are richer in certain nutrients, GMO-free, more fresher, contains fewer pesticides, organically raised animals are NOT given antibiotics, growth hormones, or fed animal by products.

Food Waste Reduction: Restaurant/Office

- Change your menu.
- Make a purchase wisely.
- Educate your staff.
- Invest in high-quality kitchen equipment or Retrofitting old equipment.
- Store fruits and vegetables properly.
- Regularly rotate the food in the fridge and warehouse: A very convenient way of storing food in the refrigerator is the rule “right to left”. New foods always store on the right side of the fridge while existing food you move further to the left. While at using time do “left to right”
- Conduct inventory in the restaurant /office canteen regularly.
- Develop Waste Recycling Unit.

Smart way to utilize leftover food

- Just call these Services to make it reach the needy: There are people or groups, take the excess food from you, and ensure it reaches the underprivileged. Eg. Feeding India, Roti Bank by Dabbawalas, Wrap It. Don't Waste Food etc.
- Convert leftover food into yummy recipes
- Think “ingredients,” not “leftovers”
- Turn dinner into lunch
- Store leftovers smartly: Glass storage containers are not only reusable and sustainable; they allow you to see what's inside. That way, you're less likely to lose track of leftovers.

4. Forestry & Biodiversity

- Use natural and biodegradable products like natural fibre from coconuts, biodegradable leaf plates, coir beds, etc.
- Reduce chemical use to minimize the amount of toxins entering the environment.
- Switch to digital books/e-books to reduce paper consumption.
- Avoid the paper towels, use the hand dryer or handkerchief instead.
- Buy used furniture's to reduce wood consumption.
- Buy and consume more organically grown produce items.
- Support institutions and establishments such as restaurants, shops, etc. which are using forests and biodiversity conservation practices.
- Go for nature walks/bird walks etc. to list local flora and fauna. Encourage others to join with you. This could be linked to People's Biodiversity Registry.
- Control and monitoring of invasive species in and around your home and planting of local plant species will help control migration of invasive species.
- Don't release aquarium fish and plants or other exotic animals into the wild. If you plan to own an exotic pet, do your research and plan ahead to make sure you can commit to looking after it.
- Volunteer at your local park, refuge or other wildlife area to help remove invasive species. Help educate others about the threat.
- Practice green consumerism by buying environmentally friendly and eco-labelled forestry and other biodiversity products such as The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), etc.
- Help conserve biodiversity and wildlife trafficking & poaching by refusing to buy and trade illegal/endangered species and wildlife products. Help create awareness about the issue.
- Celebrating festivals linked to biodiversity and conservation to impart awareness such as Magh Bihu, Chhadakhai, etc.
- Individuals can bring home air purifying plants such as Money Plant (*Epipremnum aureum*) and Bamboo Palm (*Chrysalidocarpus lutescens*), etc. to reduce indoor air pollution.
- Planting of trees and shrubs in your garden, balcony, roof top or a terrace garden can provide shelter to birds and make them feel secure and comfortable. This helps in conserving urban biodiversity.
- Place fresh water bowl or the bath tub for the birds. The water tub and other accessories let the birds drink water, play and relax in the water.
- Install bird feeders or place a bowl with different varieties of foods like cereals, pulses, raw vegetables, flowers, grains and so on.
- Install your balcony or garden with a bird house and provide the necessities for the bird to reside in it.

- Kitchen Garden: Growing of fruits, vegetables, flowers in the available space around bungalows, galleries of flats, open terraces, windows wherever the sun light gets to plants.
- Identify tree-poor and park-poor neighbourhoods in your community and support targeted greening in these areas.
- Support the development of an urban greening plan in your community.
- Support retrofitting with green infrastructure — such as bio swales and permeable pavements — during street construction and repair.
- Incorporate green space into street design, particularly in tandem with development of “Complete Streets” that promote walking and biking.
- Establish Community nursery to collect local seeds and plants and provide stock to green space rehabilitation programs.
- Design and implement a programme of accessible neighbourhood-run flower and vegetable gardens.
- Promote Bio Blitz-style (Canada) citizen initiatives for build collective knowledge in a festive mood.
- Senior citizen volunteer groups.
- Develop a media profile for biodiversity issues to promote interest and enthusiasm amongst the community.
- Introduce a system of environmental awards for the community, targeting those who actively participate in identified programs.
- Enhance the social aspect of conservation activities that involve green spaces and biodiversity by encouraging field days, picnics and outings for interested parties.
- Support efforts to fund and build community and school gardens, parks, and initiate community gardens.
- Funding could also be sought from business through various partnerships, sponsorships of various programs.
- Develop and implement a communication strategy on green spaces, trees and biodiversity.
- Raise awareness about the value of forest and biodiversity among kids, youth and professionals through celebrating forestry/wildlife week, Van Mahotsav, etc.
- Educate citizens in managing conflicts in coexisting with animals based on conservation criteria.
- Open institutional green spaces for public use.
- Set up a volunteer programme for the conservation, information and dissemination of green spaces and biodiversity.
- Organise idea contests related to green spaces and biodiversity open to various groups.
- Corporate can take up responsibilities of urban parks, plantation along streets as corporate social responsibility and brand development.
- Strengthen cooperation with the network of institutions and work hand in hand with the authorities involved.
- Organise eco-trails or trips to eco-tourism spots.

- Use summer holidays as a opportunity to engage students in forestry and biodiversity activities such as Providing Activities for Young People (PAYP). This can involve incentives like stipend or certificates.
- At corporate level, crowd funding initiative could be initiated to generate funds for green spaces and parks.
- Prepare education material to highlight the various vegetation species for the region, or specific areas, to be used as a catalyst for awareness raising and behavioural change
- Maximise the use of the internet and intranet in order to effectively disseminate educational information and target specific groups.

5. Waste Management

- Reduce waste generation: space for landfill could be saved as space for someone's home tomorrow.
- Segregate waste at source: blue green pledge introduced on Environment Day this year.
- Reduce use of plastic bags and reuse old bags.
- Always carry cloth bag for shopping.
- Don't accept plastic bags from shopkeepers.
- Shift to glass/ steel water bottles.
- Reuse the discarded water from water treatment machines for plants/ washing hands at home, workplace or school.
- Dispose e-waste through proper channel.
- Reuse the old books of seniors or older siblings.
- Collect unused sheets from old notebooks to make new ones.
- Stop the use of paper cups and plates.
- Carry your own mug for tea/coffee instead of paper cups from canteen.
- Do not use bottled water for events and in the office.
- Avoid using aluminium can products; instead shift to glass bottle products/ recyclable packaging.
- Don't litter waste: outside of home is space you share with everyone.
- Pick up littered waste and dispose it in bins.
- Do not spit on roads, outside walls, side-walks, building lobby area, elevators.
- Repair and reuse before discarding old furniture, electronic gadgets.
- Be a conscious citizen and buy products with environment friendly packaging.
- Keep a garbage bag while travelling and throw when a bin is available.
- Do not throw waste in rivers/ sea.
- Do not throw religious ceremony waste in rivers.
- Buy religious idols made of biodegradable material.
- In today's era of e-commerce, products are delivered in heavy and bulky packaging; ask for light packaging for non-fragile products.

- If there is a canteen or kitchen in your office or school, start a food waste composting activity
- Operate community biogas plants
- Start an Aluminium can collection campaign: these be sent for recycling instead of disposing off to landfill
- Conduct a department wise paper reduction campaign: double side printing, reuse one side print outs
- Send paper for recycling instead of disposing it in garbage
- Organize community level auctions of old things, your waste could be useful for someone else
- Nominate a Green Champ Committee at School, RWA or office level to monitor waste management
- Waste to energy plants from segregated vegetable market
- Packaging of products should be type and size based to reduce plastic waste
- Develop databank of waste processing contractors for different types of waste like paper, plastic, e-waste, battery waste.

6. Skip the bottled water.

- Use a water filter to purify tap water instead of buying bottled water. Not only is bottled water expensive, but it generates large amounts of container waste.
- Bring a reusable water bottle, preferably aluminium rather than plastic, with you when travelling or at work.

7. Think before you buy.

- Buy only what is most necessary – the more you buy, the more waste you generate in the long run.
- Say NO to plastic NOW – carry a cloth bag/s to the market.

8. Borrow instead of buying.

- Borrow from libraries instead of buying personal books and movies. This saves money, not to mention the ink and paper that goes into printing new books.
- Share power tools and other appliances. Get to know your neighbours while cutting down on the number of things cluttering your closet or garage.

9. Buy smart.

- Buy in bulk. Purchasing food from bulk bins can save money and packaging.
- Wear clothes that don't need to be dry-cleaned. This saves money and cuts down on toxic chemical use.
- Invest in high-quality, long-lasting products. You might pay more now, but you'll be happy when you don't have to replace items as frequently (and this means less waste!).

10. Keep electronics out of the trash.

- Keep your cell phones, computers, and other electronics as long as possible.
- Donate or recycle them responsibly when the time comes. E-waste contains mercury and other toxics and is a growing environmental problem.
- Recycle your cell phone.
- Ask your local government to set up an electronics recycling and hazardous waste collection event.

11. Make your own cleaning supplies.

- The big secret: you can make very effective, non-toxic cleaning products whenever you need them. All you need are a few simple ingredients like baking soda, vinegar, lemon, and soap.
- Making your own cleaning products saves money, time, and packaging-not to mention your indoor air quality.

12. Use Environmentally Sustainable Transport

- Promote voluntary one family one car policy
- Car pooling with neighbours or co-workers (through use of mobile Apps)
- Use of information technology like Google map for avoiding traffic congestion
- Make it a practice to switch off engine at traffic signals
- Use of Non Motorized Transportation; walking and bicycle for short distance travel
- Increase use of public transportation
- Clean transportation technologies should be encouraged: Following are few corporate initiatives:

13. Green activist in daily life, some other innovative ideas.

- Kitchen garden for growing vegetables.
- Herbal garden for common medicinal plants.
- Segregating waste at source and bio-composting. The compost can be used in kitchen and herbal garden.
- Promoting unbaked clay idols for worship.
- Use of Herbal Colours for Holi.
- Using soaps/detergents judiciously.
- Developing a 'Food Forest' by growing different fruits and vegetables at different heights in limited space.
- Seed bank to conserve indigenous varieties for ensuring food security.
- Community water budgeting for optimal utilization of water resources.
- Indigenous animal rising to conserve indigenous gene pool.
- Natural pest management.
- City Farming: growing vegetable on rooftops.
- Use environmental friendly detergents and shampoo.

14. Let's Start from Home

- Use mug instead of running tap while brushing teeth
- While watering plants, instead running hose, use water can
- Use a toilet flush which consumes less water
- Use dustbin for garbage disposal
- Plant a garden in under setting, you can grow herbs and flowers in pots
- Wear extra-layer of clothes at home instead of turning up the heater.
- While Shaving, use mug instead running hose.
- If you have a choice, pick paper bags over plastic bags at the grocer and elsewhere if you do take plastic.
- Do you really need to drive a car everywhere? Walk to work, or ride a bicycle
- Carpool two or four can ride as bicycle
- Get a valid pollution under control certificate for authorized testing center.
- Cleanup your act. Keep automobiles fuel filters clean and save the fuel.
- Clean the air filter and oil filter regularly.
- Clean the carbon deposit from silencer.
- Maintain recommended tyre pressure.

15. Prevention and Control of noise pollution

- Always maintain your motor vehicle and its exhaust silencer in proper condition
- Ensure that your Diesel Generator set is provided with acoustic enclosure which give a reduction of a minimum 25dBA.
- Avoid use of multi toned/air horns in your vehicle.
- Avoid using horns except at emergencies.
- Don't install Diesel Generator sets without prior approval of the competent authority

16. Protect wildlife, Protect nature

- Do inform wildlife authorities, if they notice any illegal activity concerning wildlife.
- Do increase your awareness about wildlife laws and learn ways to conserve wildlife.
- Do encourage your school, office to have talks, debates, skits, painting completion etc.
- Do think of wild conservation as a career if you have the option.
- Do become a WCCB volunteer and help in the fight against illegal wildlife trade and wildlife conservation.
- Do treat all animals with respect and kindness as they also have feelings.
- Do spread awareness about animal behaviour and their stress under captivity
- Do let our transport systems such as railways, airlines, bus and private vehicle becomes messengers of wildlife.
- Don't buy bones, skulls, teeth, skins, trophies or feathers etc. of wild animals.
- Don't keep wild animal as pets such as turtles/tortoises, parakeets etc.
- Don't throw plastic in the wild and destroy ecology.