

3.0 Waste? What Wastes?



3.1 Why this theme?

Typically, 5% of a company's turnover is spent on waste

Like it or not, your organisation produces waste, and it's likely that it costs you more than you think! You may not be aware of all your wastes because some are hidden in your utility bills and overheads. Furthermore, the cost of waste is set to grow as existing environmental taxes are increased and new taxes on wasteful and bad environmental practice are introduced. However, you can reduce the cost of waste by reducing the amount of resources you consume and waste.

This theme presents Corby Waste Not's Community Eco-Check Scheme and describes how it has helped different types of organisation discover and reduce their wastes.

3.2 What we did

3.2.1 About Community Eco-Check

An Eco-Check consists of a free waste and environmental management site visit and report. It is effectively a promotional tool designed to raise awareness of waste and deliver cost savings through waste minimisation in a variety of different organisations whilst:

- providing experience to volunteers in the Eco-Check team
- promoting the Waste Not Scheme and projects
- establishing and strengthening links with cross-community organisations
- linking organisations that can work together to reduce waste

The Community Eco-Check Scheme is a free-standing initiative, continuing after Corby Waste Not has finished (see 3.2.5). The Eco-Check web page is www.ecocheck.org.uk.



Figure 11 Kathy Holley, Helen Sturrock and James Trickett carrying out an Eco-Check at Roulands Codan

Schools

Businesses

Community Groups

Waste Not Partnerships

3.2.2 Origins of Eco-Check

The Community Eco-Check Scheme is based on the Eco Audit 21 project, developed by a StudentForce Projectworker for Cheshire County Council (See 3.3.1). All publicly accessible places are eligible to receive a free Eco-Check. The Community Eco-Check model is aimed mainly at community groups such as community centres, health centres, sports centres, schools, village halls, tenant housing, clubs, churches, restaurants, pubs, shops, parks and farms. Despite the community target, about a third of the Eco-Checks are with small and very small enterprises.

3.2.3 Selling points for an Eco-Check

- Free and quick (2 hours)
- Confidential
- Non-technical, non-threatening reporting
- Highlights cost savings
- Highlights compliance issues
- Improves the environmental profile of an organisation
- Supports participation in local recycling and kerbside collection projects
- Encourages volunteering by young and recently retired people and employees (also see 9.2.6.1)
- Helps volunteers to gain transferable skills, such as communication, team working, problem solving and report writing
- Helps young people and voluntary groups build relationships with local companies (see 6.2.2.1)

“This exciting scheme breaks the mould targeting communities and small businesses with practical, no fuss advice and support. Offering something for everyone involved, a more sustainable way of living is sure to result”

Sarah Gilmour,
Eco-Check Coordinator

3.2.4 Eco-Check method of assessment

The Eco-Check Scheme uses a team of trained volunteers to carry out site assessments. Each Eco-Check consists of a simple checklist of questions and site tour that considers issues like water use, waste production, energy efficiency, transport, biodiversity, site management, purchasing and regulatory compliance. Organisations are assessed using a universal scoring system to establish environmental performance scores. The totals are then interpreted through the chart shown in figure 12. This universal approach allows the project to be used on a wide variety of organisations throughout the community.

A concise and confidential Eco-Check Report, including recommendations and contacts list, and an Eco-Checked Certificate of participation are prepared and delivered to the client. The Report is followed by a phone call and chance to join further phone groups, an evaluation questionnaire and a follow-up Re-Check about 6 months later.

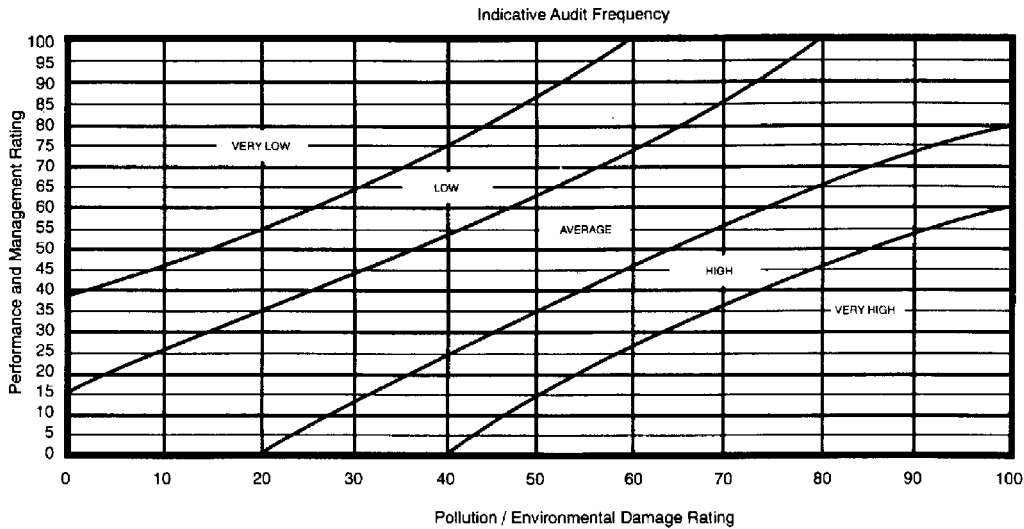


Figure 12 Eco-Check assessment of performance chart

3.2.5 A history of the Corby Waste Not Community Eco-Check Project

Phase One - Development, launch and promotion of a pilot Eco-Check Project

Length: 3 months

Projectworkers: Arancha Gomez; James Trickett; Deborah Scott

- The Corby Waste Not Community Eco-Check model was developed
- Links were developed with Career Path Northamptonshire to help promote Eco-Check in schools
- Presentations on the Eco-Check Project were given to 5 schools
- Eco-Check training was given to 18 sixth formers, 8 of which were recruited as volunteers (also see 9.2.6.1)
- A promotional leaflet was designed and distributed to over 250 community groups and businesses
- The full Eco-Check process was carried out at 6 community premises and 10 local companies
- Funding for a 6-month extension to the Project was secured



*“The Eco-Check helped us to learn about what we could do with our rubbish rather than throw it away...
... we actually scored quite well”*

**Christine Foley,
Teacher,
St Patrick’s Catholic
Primary School**

Phase Two - Extension of the CWN Community Eco-Check Project

Length: 6 months from January 2002

Projectworker: Sarah Gilmour

- Development of an Eco-Check Marketing Plan, utilising local media to recruit volunteers, clients and promote success
- Development of a procedure for recruiting 16-19 year old volunteers for work experience or course projects through Career Path and Connexions, retired people through Reach, general volunteers through the Corby



Volunteer Bureau and business volunteers through local businesses

- Development of a procedure for inducting and training volunteers effectively, safely and fairly, including shadowing a trained Eco-Checker and receiving an Induction and Training Handbook
- Development of Millennium Volunteer accreditation and Eco-Checkers Certificate of Achievement at the end of their service
- Development of Eco-Check Certificate for clients
- Development of a scoring system for Eco-Check recommendations so that it is possible to prioritise action to improve the overall Eco-Check score
- A review, detailing how the Corby approach can be developed more widely across Northamptonshire
- Projected outputs are 20 Community Eco-Checks with reports and 8 Eco-Check Volunteers recruited and trained

“The demand for Eco-Checks is increasing and the scheme is really taking off. Eco-Check has definitely benefited from the good image of Corby Waste Not”

Sarah Gilmour,
Eco-Check
Coordinator

Schools

Businesses

Community Groups

Waste Not Partnerships

Phase Three – Proposed county-wide expansion of the Community Eco-Check Project

Length: September 2002 to March 2005

“ Develop, promote and evaluate the Northamptonshire Community Eco-Check Project in partnership with Northamptonshire local authorities, Connexions and Volunteer Bureau, co-ordinated by StudentForce over 3 years to minimise waste and improve environmental management in a range of public and community buildings, with community volunteers ”

3.3 National examples

3.3.1 Cheshire County Council Eco Audit 21 Project



An Eco Audit is a simple, free environmental initiative that is designed to raise awareness as well as deliver cost savings to organisations through environmental best practice. It can be applied to any type of organisation, for example, private business, industry, retail, schools and community groups. Over 200 audits have been carried out in a wide range of organisations in Cheshire. Eco Audit is not part of an enforcement process, but is a tool designed to raise awareness and improve environmental and financial performance of an organisation.

The process is centred around a desk-based study, but also includes a short tour of the facilities. The entire process takes no longer than two hours, and is designed to pick out the main points, rather than be a detailed audit. The process is conducted by trained volunteer auditors, under the supervision of an experienced lead auditor. A concise confidential report is produced including simple and effective recommendations for

improvement. Every organisation that is audited also receives a certificate of participation and a list of further contacts for guidance on specific issues. See 3.7.1 for further details.

3.3.2 The Eco-Schools Program

See section 10.3.4.

3.3.3 Eco-Congregation

Eco-Congregation is an environmental programme designed to encourage churches to celebrate 'God's gift of creation' and care for it in every aspect of their lives. It has received the endorsement of many denominations and church leaders. The programme, which was developed in partnership with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, includes:



- User-friendly resource modules
- Support for the endeavours of churches
- Award scheme for churches to work towards and have their creditable work recognised

For more information, visit www.encams.org/index.html.

3.4 It's over to you...



3.4.1 Aims

To discover how wasteful your organisation is; to reduce your organisation's impact on the environment by reducing the amount of resources consumed and waste produced.

3.4.2 Actions

If you are a community group or small company, have your organisation Eco-Checked (see 3.4.3.1). If there isn't an Eco-Check project near you, try one of the following:

- Churches can contact the Eco-congregation project
- Schools can contact Eco-Schools programme
- Work with your local Volunteer Bureau to set up an Eco-Check project

If you work for a medium or large company, you may qualify for a free Envirowise Fast Track Visit (see 4.3).

All organisations should examine the waste minimisation studies in sections 4.2.4, 4.2.5 and 4.2.6 to see if any of the suggestions and initiatives are relevant to them.

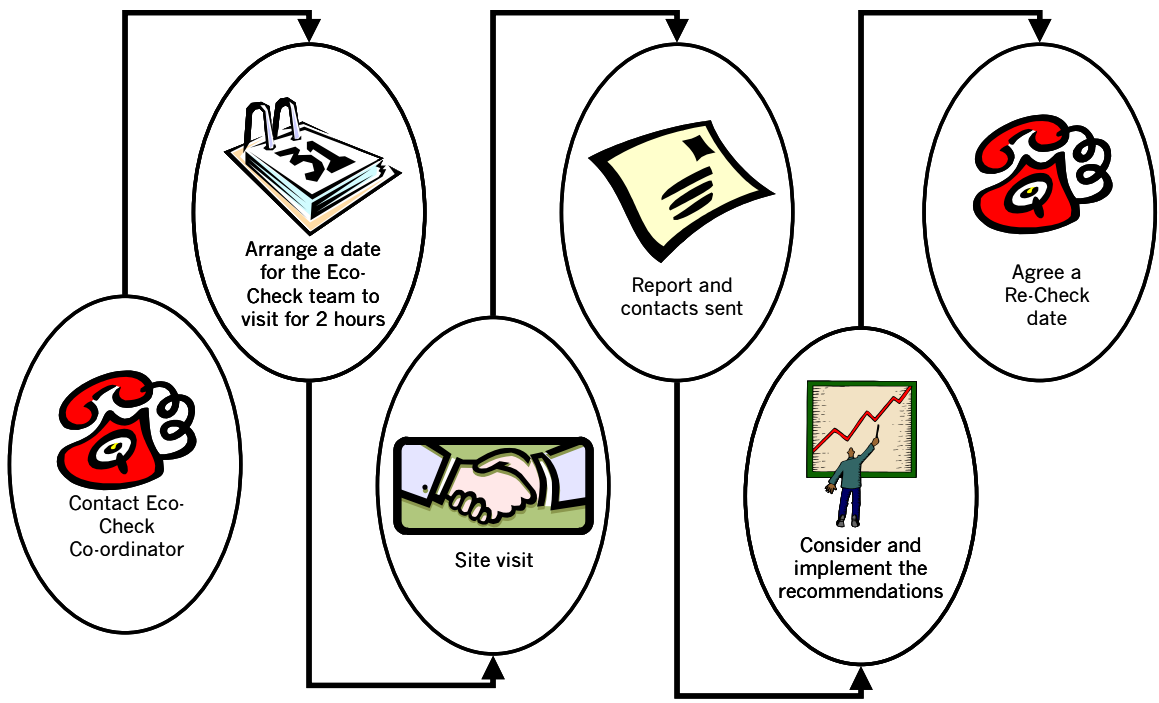


Figure 13 The six client stages of Eco-Check

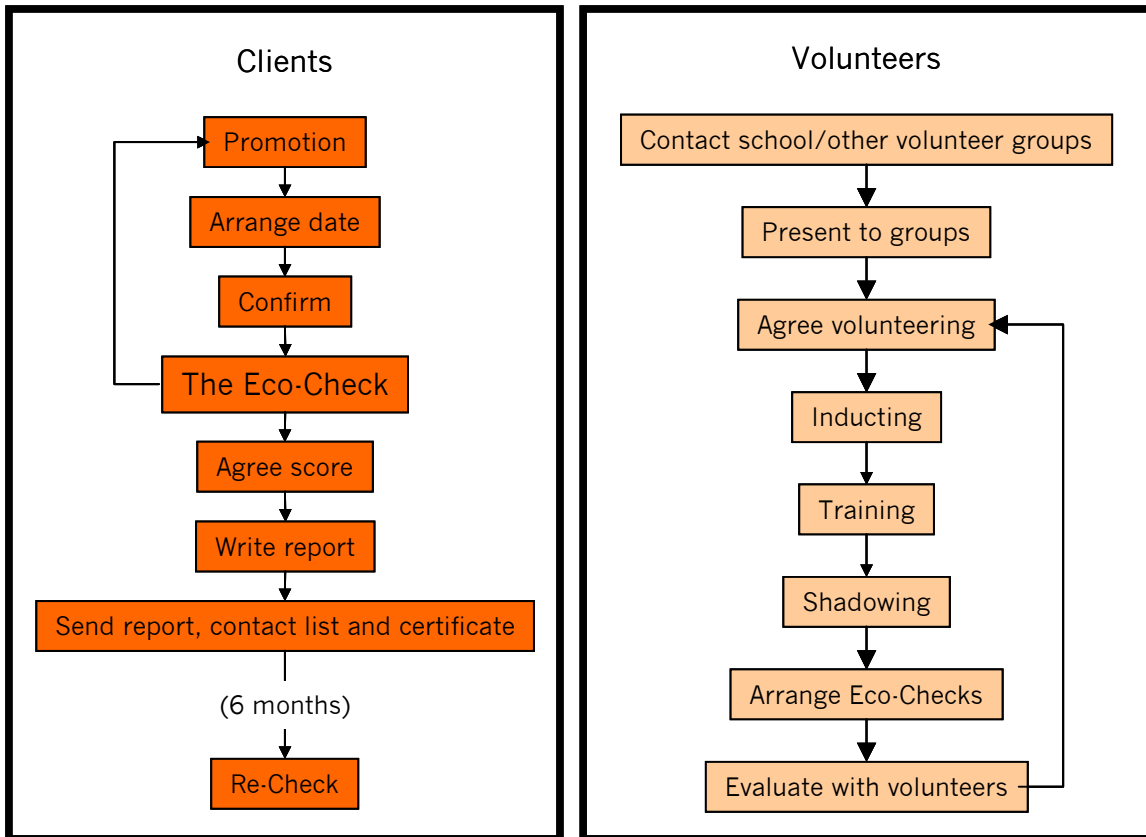


Figure 14 A flow chart showing the stages of managing an individual Eco-Check

Schools

Businesses

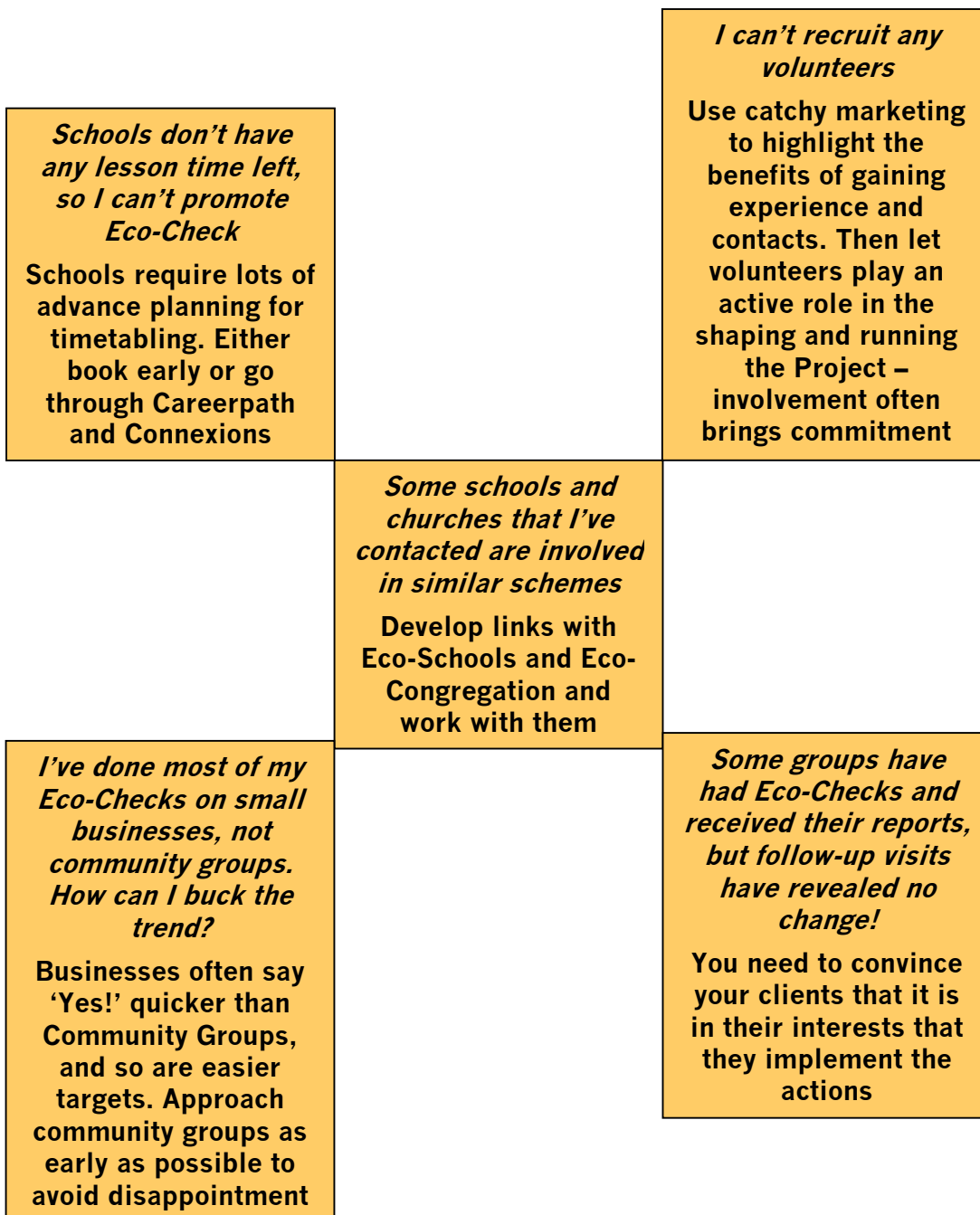
Community Groups

Waste Not Partnerships

3.5 Summary

The Community Eco-Check Project has grown from a small pilot initiative run by Corby Waste Not to become a longer-term county-wide project. The project uses trained volunteers to assess and recommend waste reduction measures at community groups and small businesses. As well as helping smaller organisations to reduce their waste and providing experience for volunteers, the Eco-Check project provides a method of involving and linking organisations that are normally missed by mainstream environmental projects.

3.6 Troubleshooting



Schools

Businesses

Community Groups

Waste Not Partnerships

3.7 Contacts

3.7.1 Eco-Check projects

Eco-Audit  Local Government
Cheshire County Council
www.cheshire.gov.uk/cheshpln/ecoaudit.htm



Eco-Check  Charitable & Voluntary Organisations
StudentForce
www.ecocheck.org.uk


Eco-Congregation
Environmental Campaigns (Encams)
www.encams.org/pages/programmes/programmes_community/programmes_community_ecocong.asp

Eco-Schools programme
Environmental Campaigns (Encams)
www.eco-schools.org.uk

3.7.2 Client contacts


Business Link Northamptonshire  Business Enterprise Agencies
www.businesslinknorthants.org

3.7.3 Volunteer contacts

Career Path (Northamptonshire) Ltd  Careers Advice
www.careerpath.org.uk

Connexions
www.connexions.gov.uk



Corby Volunteer Bureau  Charitable & Voluntary Organisations
01536 267873
National Centre for Volunteering
www.vois.org.uk