

**Bird's Eye overview**

Like any other human activity, doing business has its impact on our physical and social environment. Social Responsibility (SR) is a relatively new concept that evolved out of concerns of consumers and companies to minimize such impacts to a lowest possible level. In principle SR covers both environmental and social concerns. Environmental concerns have a much longer history and are commonly addressed through Environmental Management Systems (EMS). The International Standards Organization (ISO) has defined a detailed set of criteria and procedures for the implementation of EMS ([http://www.iso.org/iso/iso\\_catalogue/management\\_standards/iso\\_9000\\_iso\\_14000/iso\\_14000\\_essentials.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/management_standards/iso_9000_iso_14000/iso_14000_essentials.htm))>ISO14001</a>). The ISO14001 standard is relatively complex and demands a commitment on the part of certified companies to constantly improve their performance over time. This reflects the evolution of international environmental legislation which is becoming more demanding in the light of the ever increasing threats to our environment and our dwindling natural resources. Also consumers are increasingly aware of environmental issues and are more critically selecting products that are less harmful to the environment. ISO14001 requires regular audits by a competent certification agent. Altogether ISO14001 is a big burden for companies, both in terms of time investment as well in terms of costs. Social issues are not fully incorporated in ISO14001 but they will be covered under a separate ISO norm ([http://www.iso.org/iso/iso\\_catalogue/management\\_standards/social\\_responsibility.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/management_standards/social_responsibility.htm))>ISO26000</a>), which will be published in the near future.

**One Planet Living**

One Planet Living (OPL) is proposed as a less onerous and more pragmatic roadmap to help organisations to reduce their environmental and social footprint. OPL was developed by [Bioregional](http://www.bioregional.com/) and [WWF](http://www.panda.org/) and is a relatively new and rapidly evolving concept based on 10 principles of sustainability:

1 Zero Carbon	Eliminating CO <sub>2</sub> emissions from heating, cooling and other electric equipment
2 Zero Waste	Minimising waste and flows of waste to landfill in pursuit of resource-efficiency
3 Sustainable Transport	Reducing the need to travel and providing realistic alternatives to private transport
4 Local and Sustainable Materials	Optimisation of use of materials in terms of their source and their performance
5 Local and Sustainable Food	Maximisation of opportunities for use of local food supplies

6 Sustainable Water	Minimisation of water consumption and addressing flood risk issues
7 Natural Habitats and Wildlife	Protection of the natural environment and the habitats it offers to flora and fauna
8 Culture and Heritage	Protection of the cultural heritage and the sense of local and regional identity
9 Equity and Fair Trade	Promoting employment, equity and fair trade within the community
10 Health and Happiness	Promoting well-being and healthy lifestyles

Initially the OPL concept was implemented for the development of low footprint residential areas (OPL living communities) such as [BedZET](http://www.bioregional.com/what-we-do/our-work/bedzed/) (Beddington Zero Energy Development) in London. However it was soon realized that the 10 OPL principles are universal and could be applied for a wide range of footprint applications. It can be used at micro level to help individuals to measure their personal footprint (One Planet Lifestyle) and it also can be upscaled to manage offices (One Planet Office ) or even corporates (One Planet Business). Although this work is still experimental there are criteria under development to propose for all of these levels.

## What are the benefits of engaging in an OPL project?

- |    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Modular implementation.        |
| 2. | Use of internal resources.     |
| 3. | Bottom up approach             |
| 4. | Reduced overheads              |
| 5. | Corporate culture change       |
| 6. | Increased staff identification |
| 7. | Increased staff productivity   |
- Again, this may not be specific to OPL but there is a promise of increased

productivity because of improved staff welfare and less absenteeism.

8.	<p>Increased brand value</p> <p>As your company engaged itself in a transformational process towards sustainability, your brand will be viewed as a responsible business actor</p>
----	--

◆

## How do you implement an OPL project?

Every company is different and there is no single template that will be fit for every situation. However there are three generic phases that could illustrate how an OPL project would be implemented over a period of 3 - 5 years:

◆

**Assessment phase**

- Obtain senior management support and broadcast this to all company staff
- Consult with senior managers on the scope and ambitions of the project
- Help the company to define a (general) environmental policy, based on 2.
- Get endorsement & support from executive committee

**Gap analysis phase**

- Set up multidisciplinary cross-departmental working groups within the company
- When necessary add outside resource people to these working groups
- Each group is to make a gap analysis of one or more OPL themes (e.g. carbon)
- Prioritize the interventions of all the gap analysis
- Prepare budgets and time lines for all of the interventions
- Get endorsement & support from executive committee of the company

**Implementation phase**

- Integrate priority interventions and time lines in work plans & budgets
- Monitor progress throughout implementation
- Get the executive committee to resolve problems and obstacles
- Celebrate successes

## How can BICGS help implementing an OPL project?

A detailed budget for your company can be established after preliminary discussions between you and one of the BICGS associates. However, to inform yourself beforehand on a range of available options, we would be happy to provide you with a catalogue with pricing of our service portfolio for Environmental and Social Responsibility. [Contact us.](index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6:contact-us&catid=35&Itemid=37)