



Towards Sustainable Business Practice

An introduction to the
Green Business Environmental Rating
Programme by Heritage





Only after the last tree has been cut down; Only after the last fish has been caught; Only after the last river has been poisoned; Only then will they realise that money cannot be eaten.

Cree Indian Prophecy—1800's

A Moral Imperative

With Africa now enjoying a renaissance in business, the business sector of our economy plays an increasingly important role in the development of South and southern Africa.

From multi-national corporations to owner-managed businesses, the impacts that we have on our environment are often misunderstood or ignored. From the way the business is promoted or incorporated into local community activities to the impacts that are felt through the daily use of resources, we often have lasting impacts on our world.

In response to this, more and more companies are beginning to acknowledge their responsibility in ensuring that their activities leave as little impact as possible. Internationally, the move towards responsible business practice has established a moral imperative for local businesses and it is now expected by your key clients and markets that you make an effort to recognize, manage and mitigate the impacts that your business has and to ensure effective steps are taken to reduce and manage the 'footprint' created by your activities.

The role you play in promoting your products or services can positively influence the long-term sustainability of your business and your choices today - and the way in which you operate on behalf of your clients, will determine the legacy we leave future generations.

The Competitive Advantage

The debate on sustainable development has over the past few years focused on how the business services sector is responding to the growing challenge of shareholder and stakeholder expectations on social and environmental performance. In the opinion of many commentators, the role played by environmentally responsible businesses within economies - and their potential contribution toward sustainable development, is enormous.

Indeed, the conclusion that corporate sustainability has become an 'investable' concept that increases long-term shareholder value is becoming difficult to deny. Added to this is a growing need to recognise and manage the environmental risks posed by daily operational issues. However, many organisations and business enterprises have been slow to examine their exposure to risk (the environmental and social performance of their products and clients) and the business opportunities created through sustainable development (the products and services they offer).

Going Green - A Strategic Tool

By committing yourself to the principles of sustainable and responsible business management, you will be seen as playing an active part in the protection of our environmental heritage for future generations. The African Continent is enjoying a renaissance in international exposure and the field of environmental certification of products and services is relatively uncharted. By promoting and managing business activities that care for the environment your business can benefit from the growing international awareness of responsibility.

The media love a good story and environmental irresponsibility makes good reading. By committing to a greener approach to your business activities, the reputation and good name that you have developed over many years can be protected and enhanced.

Greening your business is not simply a process of switching lights off. It requires a commitment to identify every aspect of business activities that could impact on the environment or local community and then, taking meaningful steps to mitigate and manage these impacts and to leave a lasting legacy. Going Green is about making a difference!

Introducing Heritage Green Business

Green Business® has been developed by Heritage Environmental to recognise the changing face and focus of the corporate sector. It recognises that both risk and opportunity have become accepted elements towards environmental sustainability in modern business policies and practice, and that the corporate sector worldwide have begun to take notice of and address their own environmental performance.

Through the use of practical operational processes and a detailed evaluation of the performance levels within each branch or office of participating businesses, **Green Business®** evaluates and assists with the management of the environmental performance of your business.

We review and measure the importance of transparency and communication with your stakeholders, environmental and ethical business activities, current practices by service providers with regard to environmental risk management and, finally, the key processes towards creating sustainability.

Green Business® has been developed to provide the corporate sector with an easy-to-implement and managed environmental management system. The programme has been developed from the successful Heritage Environmental Programme and other international initiatives in this field to provide a hands-on solution to the application, evaluation, management and reporting of environmental compliance by businesses and organisations in the non-manufacturing sector.



One of the most difficult things is not to change society,
but to change yourself

Nelson Mandela



The difference between animals and humans is that animals change themselves for the environment, but humans change the environment for themselves

Ayn Rand

Towards Responsible Business Practice

To ensure the most effective implementation process and improved corporate reporting standards, **Green Business®** provides full training, monitoring and support services to all participating businesses. Our permanent team of specialist auditors are on hand to assist with the in-house implementation of the Environmental standards, while those businesses operating a network of branch offices can opt to receive the dedicated support of group-specific Environmental Officers to ensure confidence, effectiveness and independence across the group.

Our standards are constantly benchmarked against best international practice in corporate governance to ensure that participating businesses achieve a globally competitive reporting standard and meaningful environmental compliance. The programme provides measurement of environmental impact in a number of areas including:

- Administrative services
- Contracts and agreements
- Operating processes and systems
- Development and management agreements
- Events and activities
- Supply Chain audits and processes
- Sponsorships and branding

Becoming Part Of The Solution

Contact our Heritage Certification office. They will give you advice and assistance on the standards and procedures that you will need to follow. This includes identifying the correct category and the relevant standard which will set reflect the characteristics and performance criteria of your company.

We then review your operating and reporting practices and identify potential shortcomings, omissions and opportunities. An SABS ISO 14001 system or similar international standard has advantages, but is not a prerequisite for membership. The Green Business® Programme provides a fully integrated, ISO compliant, incremental environmental management system which offers practical, objective and measurable results. The Programme provides comprehensive consulting, auditing, training and monitoring support to ensure that the systems and procedures that are implemented are managed and viable for long-term growth.

In meeting the certification standards of Heritage Green Business, certain minimum performance standards will be required in respect of the economic, environmental and social impacts of the event under consideration.

Once application is made for certification, the Heritage team becomes an active partner in the development of your internal environmental management systems. Our team assists in the development of strategies and systems to monitor and record resource use; waste and other environmental impacts and regular on-site visits monitor the application and implementation of the steps that have been taken towards certification.

Once a business reaches the Gold Class level of compliance, Heritage will collate the data and compile an annual environmental report from information gleaned throughout the process before determining and certifying the status of the business itself.

In our experience – and based on the existing models that we have established with other members of this environmentally responsible products and services, the actual recognition status achieved will depend on the extent to which internal management systems are applied and managed.

Environmental certification has become the way of the future and whether your decision to participate is based on marketing or cost-savings benefits, the long-term benefits that you will achieve for your clients, your business, your community and ultimately, your children, makes your decision to certify all the more worthwhile.

Why Going Green Makes Business Sense

The Green Business® Programme is a powerful marketing tool which reinforces your company's environmental commitment. It strengthens your point-of-sale impact and gives your company greater credibility in an increasingly eco-aware marketplace.

Because the Green Business® Programme provides an independent third-party certification, it recognises that companies certified by Green Business® conform to specific South African or International environmentally responsible business standards.

An ongoing environmental management strategy by organisations is an essential part of the Green Business® Programme and a clear endorsement that your company is dedicated to environmentally responsible operating standards.

There are many reasons why businesses and organisations offering services or products into the South African marketplace should be awarded Green Business® status:

- You get real product differentiation, resulting in greater revenue and recognition from an increasingly selective market.
- Independent certification provides assurance to the public that your company is operated and managed in an environmentally responsible manner and associating with your commitment provides peace of mind and respect.
- You are proud of your services. Having your company independently audited and certified proves that you care about the impacts your services and operations have and that you have achieved environmentally responsible operating objectives.



The moral imperative to make big changes is inescapable...that what we take for granted may not be here for our children

Al Gore



Humans merely share the Earth. We can only protect the land, not own it

Chief Seattle

The Cost of Recognition

The cost of the Green Business® Programme is highly competitive when compared with similar international initiatives. The fee consists of two parts; an **Application and Certification Fee** and an integrated **Licence Fee**. The fee is based on the degree to which your company participates in the programme, and is highly adaptable to your specific needs.

The fees charged by Heritage Green Business® are dependent upon the size of your business; the number of personnel; the number of branches or participating offices; your potential environmental footprint and the location of your offices and business premises.

For a detailed costing, please contact us and we will be pleased to present a proposal that accounts for all of these aspects.

Evaluating Your Performance

Our Primary Objectives —

- **Identification** of existing environmental policies, strategies and systems within the corporate sector in South Africa and internationally;
- **Analysis** of existing corporate systems and procedures, policies and strategies to determine their accuracy, relevance and competitiveness in terms of the project requirements;
- A full **evaluation** of all existing policies and procedures applied by our client to determine gaps and omissions, opportunities and potential threats in accordance with accepted Reporting Standards;
- **Benchmarking** of competitive reporting strategies to determine gaps and opportunities for improvement;
- **Development** of a comprehensive report and recommendations for change by the client;
- **Creating** a comprehensive and validated quarterly and annual environmental reports on behalf of the client.

Our Secondary Objectives —

- **Recommendations** on shortcomings and potential reporting constraints;
- **Recommendations** on changes that may be necessary to improve the competitiveness of the facility;
- **Identification** of opportunities that could be exploited to achieve the long-term goals of the organisation;
- **Development** of appropriate reporting and implementation standards to ensure the long-term environmental sustainability of the business as a whole.

The Heritage Green Business Commitment

The business community has begun to acknowledge the importance of environmental issues and has engaged in a series of initiatives to improve their management in core business processes. Several companies have implemented systems to manage environmental risks in their service-based businesses. Other companies have engaged in initiatives aimed at improving accountability and governance or the integration of environmental and social aspects in project financing.

Until now, the industry has not developed a common understanding on ways to improve the integration of environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) aspects in business management, and associated business research functions. This is due partly to the complexity and diversity of many of the issues involved.

Sustainable business reflects how the services sector responds to the growing challenge of shareholder and stakeholder expectations on social and environmental performance.

The corporate sector plays a fundamental role in public policy and economic performance as well as in all forms of commerce and industry. They are crucial in determining whether society- from governments to individual consumers - succeed in following an environmentally sustainable path.

At the 1992 Earth Summit, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) brokered a Statement by the corporate sector of the United States on the Environment and on Sustainable Development. Three years later, with UNEP's support, another survey was undertaken to see how its activities had changed since the signing of the Statement. Among the key conclusions reached:

- The sustainable development challenges facing the corporate sector are increasingly long-term, which often makes them harder to anticipate and manage.
- There are important – and often unrecognised – links between the sustainable development agenda and the nature and level of risk assessment carried out by businesses.
- Most service-based businesses still need to establish effective environmental management systems.
- There is a growing need for appropriate indicators/performance measures, for use right across the corporate sector.

A Commitment And Shared Vision

No greening initiative can work without commitment and focus by all those businesses and participants involved. Heritage Green Business is about encouraging and guiding you and your team to ensure your own sustainable management systems.

After all... don't future generations have the right to expect nothing less than our total commitment today?



Poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns, and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development are overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for sustainable development

"The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development"



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