

Case study: Understanding the Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Parliamentary Publications

TSO distributes a range of publications for Parliament, including daily reports of debates (Hansard), Bills from both Houses, the Vote Bundle, Lords Business Papers, Public Bill Committee Papers, and Commons and Lords Select Committee Papers. The publications are all printed at TSO's Parliamentary Press in London.

The challenge

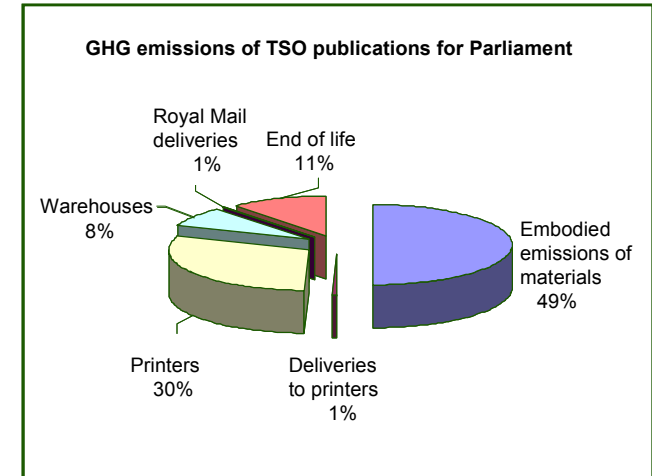
TSO and Parliament wanted to identify the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with these publications, from the 'cradle to grave,' with the aim of identifying opportunities to reduce emissions throughout the product lifecycle.

The solution

The Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management was commissioned to conduct a study into the emissions created throughout the lifecycle of these publications. This lifecycle starts with forest cultivation and follows publications through the paper production process, transport of the paper to Parliamentary Press, printing, delivery of the completed publications and to final disposal at the end of their lifetime.

The findings

The total greenhouse gas emissions from the lifecycle of these publications equated to some 1500 tonnes/year. The results show that 49% of these emissions are associated with the embodied emissions of materials, particularly paper. A further 30% of emissions are associated with TSO's printing operations and 11% with end-of-life disposal.



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Opportunities

The study highlighted areas where TSO and its paper suppliers could reduce emissions, including:

- Implementation by TSO and its suppliers of an internal system for recording and submitting the data required for a GHG emissions assessment. This is designed to improve the ease and efficiency of data collection and the accuracy of future emissions assessments.
- Implementation of an energy monitoring and targeting programme to identify further energy reduction opportunities.

- Switching to a 30% recycled-content paper which has been tested and approved by House officials for their publications. All Parliamentary publications will be printed on this paper by the end of 2009.
- Energy efficiency initiatives within the raw material supply chain.

Taken together these opportunities could potentially yield a reduction in the GHG emissions of up to 17%, equivalent to 225 tonnes a year.

Further measures

In addition to implementing the recommendations of the study, at the request of both Houses, TSO has also sourced a recycled plastic which is used in the packaging of all Parliamentary publications. This has further reduced the GHG emissions that can be attributed to Parliamentary publications.

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