

Combating climate change: best practices in the postal service

Certain Posts have already begun work on combating climate change. For some years, postal operators have been seeking in particular to achieve cleaner postal delivery, concentrating their efforts on improving the performance of their vehicle fleets. Some, on the other hand, have opted to make their buildings a priority in efforts to improve their energy balance. Others have decided to focus on responsible procurement, offering their customers the opportunity to buy "green" or recycled products, or ones that can be offset. Others again have opted for the tactic of raising awareness of the causes and effects of climate change, particularly through the circulation of stamp issues on the theme of energy saving or global warming.

1. Improvement of vehicle fleet performance

For example, in July 2008, the Dutch operator, **TNT**, acquired over 100 electric-powered or hybrid trucks worldwide.

In August 2008, **United States Postal Services** ordered 200 electric vehicles and 300 vehicles running on natural gas. These changes in the USPS fleet should enable the operator to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by around 1,800 tonnes of CO₂ a year.

In 2009, after purchasing 250 electric scooters, **Swiss Post** also played its part by acquiring 110 new vehicles powered by natural gas; this brought its fleet of vehicles of this type to 140, making Swiss Post the business with the biggest fleet of natural gas-propelled vehicles. Its greenhouse gas emissions are 10% lower than those of diesel vehicles, which represents a reduction of over 59 tonnes of CO₂ a year.

In July 2009, **Japan Post** announced plans to replace its entire delivery fleet with electric vehicles. 22,000 replacement vehicles were to be phased in.

Operators' subsidiaries and private express mail deliveries companies are also doing their bit: for example, **Fedex** has supplemented its fleet with 92 hybrid trucks, bringing its total fleet to 264. These new acquisitions should enable it to reduce its CO₂ emissions by about 1,500 tonnes a year.

For its part, **DHL** has, for over a year, been testing a wind-propelled ocean-going cargo vessel equipped with a giant sail to transport freight between Germany and Venezuela. The German company reports that, depending on the strength of the wind, fuel costs can be reduced by between 10% and 35%.

Meanwhile, **Chronopost** is undertaking to cut its CO₂ emissions: in December 2008, the French Post subsidiary signed the Charter of voluntary commitment to reduce CO₂ emissions from road transport. In this connection, Chronopost has already launched a programme to modernize its fleet and decided to train its drivers in green driving.

2. Improving the performance of buildings

Energy-saving measures often mean low environmental impact. With this in mind, Posts are taking an interest in new insulating materials to reduce their use of heating and air-conditioning, turning to innovative building methods, and testing energy-saving techniques.

In 2007, after carrying out several energy audits in numerous buildings, **New Zealand Post** put in place energy-saving action plans to significantly reduce consumption by around 5.4 GWh a year. In

addition, New Zealand Post now uses solar energy and has constructed new buildings that allow natural light to be used all day long.

In 2008, **DHL** had all its sorting and delivery sites certified as conforming to standard ISO 14001, which guarantees that the daily management of buildings meets environmental standards. The criteria for obtaining this certification relate mainly to fuel and electricity consumption, and to harmful emissions.

Since 1 August 2008, **Swiss Post** has used hydropower to provide all its electricity. This measure has already enabled the Swiss operator to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 8% a year. This should allow it to meet its objective of reducing its global emissions by 10% in 2012.

In July 2009, **USPS** installed a green roof on one of its main buildings in the heart of New York, at a cost of 4.4 million USD. The investment should pay off by providing better insulation, thus cutting the air-conditioning bill (estimated reduction 30,000 USD a year).

3. Responsible procurement and tendering

Some Posts have adopted green procurement policies for their operations and the products they offer their customers. Products that are green or environmentally-friendly have little or no impact on the environment throughout their life cycle (design, distribution, use, recycling). Other operators add a “green” tax to a range of products, or make their customers aware of environmental protection issues via dedicated websites.

In May 2008, **USPS** launched a website focusing on four “green” themes: buying eco-friendly products and services, offsetting the environmental effects of your mail, mail recycling and cleaner direct marketing. Through these four concepts, USPS hopes to attract or retain a broad, environmentally-aware customer base of private individuals and businesses.

Canada Post has done likewise with its website: it offers its customers a more environmentally-friendly postal range (green products) and has created special pages devoted to broadening awareness of nature conservation issues.

Since February 2009, **Swiss Post** has offered to offset the CO₂ emissions generated by its customers' mail, against payment of a “ProClima” surcharge of between one and ten centimes. This supplement will be used to fund projects to combat climate change.

4. Climate protection

As a public service organization in contact with millions of citizens worldwide, the postal sector is ideally placed to participate in major campaigns to raise awareness of climate change.

Correos de España is continuing its *Linea Verde* programme, which offers a range of postal products made from recycled materials, allocating part of the proceeds to environmental projects. For each *Linea Verde* product purchased, 0.20 EUR is paid to an association which replants areas affected by deforestation. Since the programme was launched in 2000, 350,000 m², the equivalent of some 20,000 trees, has been reforested.

For its part, **Swiss Post** has offset the CO₂ emissions generated by its own correspondence in order to finance climate protection projects, such as wind farms and solar energy installations.

5. Awareness-raising through philately

More and more Posts are taking environmental protection and global warming as themes for their philatelic issues.

Stamps featuring global warming/melting ice caps/protecting the polar regions

	<p>Indonesia 5 June 2007, UN Climate Change Conference (Bali)</p>
	<p>Brazil 18 March 2009 Protecting the poles and glaciers</p>
	<p>Ukraine 18 March 2009 Protecting the polar regions and glaciers - Antarctic Station Academician Vernadskyi</p>
	<p>Romania 21 March 2009 Protecting the polar regions and glaciers</p>
	<p>Faroe Islands 23 February 2009 Combating global warming</p>
	<p>Azerbaijan 3 March 2009 Protecting the polar regions and glaciers</p>

Stamps featuring renewable energy or energy saving

		<p>Australia 11 March 2009 Earth Hour – Save energy</p>
		<p>Costa Rica 26 July 2006 Energy saving</p>
		<p>Chile 29 September 2006 Energy saving</p>
		<p>Indonesia 17 August 2005 Energy saving</p>
		<p>India 14 December 2004 Energy saving</p>
		<p>Tunisia 7 April 2007 National Energy Efficiency Programme</p>
		<p>Korea 1 August 2008 Using energy-saving products</p>

For more information ...
<http://www.wnsstamps.ch/en/>