



GENTOO PUT THEIR BEST FOOT FORWARD INTO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Sunderland based people and property business, Gentoo, is aiming to create a benchmark to measure and therefore effectively manage their environmental impact in order to contribute to the UK's Carbon Reduction Commitment.

Environmental accounting experts, Best Foot Forward, have been commissioned by Gentoo to carry out a comprehensive footprint assessment (both carbon and ecological) of its entire business as part of its ongoing work aimed at improving the efficiency of the Group and lessening its impact on the environment.

Gentoo takes its environmental impact seriously and has created a specialised division called Gentoo Green, to ensure delivery of Environmental Sustainability across the business.

Gentoo manages around 30,000 housing units for approximately 70,000 thousand residents, which means they can have both a direct and indirect impact on carbon savings through policy changes and awareness programmes. For some time Gentoo have been offering a personal footprint service to its staff and are now involving its customers through Its EASI (Environmental Awareness Sustainability Impact) campaign.

Gentoo's office footprint for all their bases is just over 6,000 tonnes of CO₂, over half that is from energy consumption and business travel equates to 24%.

Energy efficiency of buildings is closely monitored but one area often missed is the carbon costs of construction and maintenance. Gentoo identified the need to consider these impacts and one of the most effective approaches is quantitative measurement of carbon dioxide emissions.

The results of Gentoo's carbon footprint assessment showed that the largest single impact comes from construction materials, with waste also being a significant factor. In order to maximise resource efficiencies within the area of construction Gentoo are planning to undertake a follow up, comprehensive analysis of construction related activities.

Simon Miller, senior analyst at Best Foot Forward commented, "Gentoo has raised the bar in the sector by demonstrating to other developers, house builders and constructors that sustainability strategies should be quantitative and draw wide boundaries which account for all operational impacts. Successful businesses develop by changing and the drivers for sustainability create a new market environment where adapting businesses can thrive."

Sally Hancox, Director of Gentoo Green said: "This has been a really interesting project for us to be involved in and has been a great learning curve for us. This process has provided us with a benchmark for us to measure our future environmental performance upon."

Gentoo will be using the Footprinter™ carbon accounting package to monitor performance next year, and is planning to undertake a follow up, comprehensive audit for 2008/09.

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About Gentoo

Gentoo is a group of businesses aiming to provide holistic solutions for a range of customers.

The divisions of the Gentoo Group are:

Gentoo Living – the social investment, independence and enterprise division

Gentoo Homes – the innovative new homes brand

Gentoo Construction – the design and build business

Gentoo Ventures – the property management and development company

Gentoo Sunderland – the Housing Association in Sunderland

Gentoo Green – set up to oversee improvements in environmental performance

Ambitious growth plans are seeing the Group working in several local authority areas from small scale consultancy, through to larger maintenance and construction work. Its social investment arm has received national recognition for a range of work-based learning initiatives and its RSL's focus on customer service means over 4,000 customers are now actively involved.

Gentoo's vision encompasses far more than property alone – they aim to have a tangible, positive effect on the way people and communities live, develop and improve. For further information visit www.gentoo.com

About Best Foot Forward

Founded in 1997, Best Foot Forward has worked with over one hundred organisations and has carried out projects ranging from measuring the ecological footprint of a single apple to the entire city of London. It has worked with businesses in many different sectors including manufacturing, construction, transportation and commerce. In 2005 Best Foot Forward was awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development for its work in this area. For more information visit www.bestfootforward.com or www.footprinter.com