

## Employer supported volunteering – a guide

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# Employee volunteering

## Introduction

Society benefits greatly when businesses share their resources through employer supported volunteering programmes. Clients also increasingly expect their suppliers to bring 'additional value' above and beyond their commercial commitments. Our volunteering programme often includes participation with some of our clients and suppliers because we believe that these events provide excellent opportunities for us to enhance our commercial relationships at the same time as supporting local communities.

Our volunteering programme enables our people to utilise their skills and expertise for the community in many ways including participating in world of work events in schools, fund-raising for charities, helping schools attain Eco-school status, refurbishing community buildings and charity high street shops, providing homeless people with food, clothing and work experience and through bio-diversity related conservation work. Our volunteering activities are appropriately resourced and assessed for potential risks and carefully planned and co-ordinated with our community partners, taking care to respect their boundaries and meet their expectations.

We evaluate the effectiveness of our volunteering activities, learning from experiences to continually improve our engagement. Our employee volunteers consistently give very positive feedback, stating how much they value the volunteering experience and how much it has improved their understanding of our sustainability objectives and increased their pride in the company.

To find out more about volunteering opportunities please visit our intranet or [www.mitie.com/sustainability2011](http://www.mitie.com/sustainability2011).

## Planning and carrying out volunteering projects - things to consider

1. **Obtain necessary permissions**
  - Obtain line manager approval before detail planning starts;
  - Ascertain the available budget, resources and volunteer team size.
2. **Select an appropriate community/charity host**
  - Avoid potentially controversial host organisations that promote political, militant or extremist causes;
  - Be sensitive to the host's requirements, especially if working with disadvantaged community groups / charities and ensure that appropriate CRB requirements etc. are met;
  - Ensure that the host organisation provides appropriate supervision; especially if you will be working with vulnerable people and children (e.g. teachers must be present when MITIE volunteers are working with pupils).
3. **Identify projects and manage risk**
  - Avoid potentially hazardous tasks/projects e.g. those at height or near water;
  - Ensure that the task/project is within the capabilities of the volunteers;
  - Ensure that the task/project is within the time constraints available.

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#### 4. Plan the project thoroughly

- Obtain any necessary specialist professional advice from colleagues, especially for providing health, safety and environmental guidance, method statements and risk assessments. MITIE's Corporate Sustainability team can also provide guidance;
- Ensure that any necessary licenses, permits to work and permissions are obtained beforehand;
- Obtain appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE);
- Order MITIE branded corporate wear if required (shirts/tops etc.);
- Keep records of (work) time spent and expenses incurred;
- Consider volunteer's special dietary requirements when purchasing catering etc.

#### 5. Carrying out the project

- Ensure that a full briefing is given to the team before work begins, explaining potential site specific hazards, host requirements, welfare provisions, project programme etc.;
- Allow time to 'warm-up' and give manual handling/use of tools advice etc. as necessary beforehand;
- Check weather forecasts and re-plan the event accordingly. Advise volunteers to bring medication, sun cream, insect repellent etc. as required.

#### 6. Recording and promoting the event

- Take photographs of the event (before, during and after) to demonstrate the value of the work undertaken and complete MITIE's Community Investment Summary form;
- Send the completed form and photographs to Corporate Sustainability team soon after the event so that the community investment value can be and wherever applicable matched;
- Contact our Investors Relations team before approaching the media to promote the event to agree press release statements etc;
- Send brief reports and photographs of the event to Corporate Affairs for inclusion in internal communications including MITIE Life, Buzz etc.

#### 7. Obtaining feedback from the volunteers

- Soon after the event ask the volunteers to complete a feedback form and collate the results to assess the value and effectiveness of the project on the Volunteering event feedback questionnaire.

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