Sustainable Practices for Enhancing your Remote Office

Here are several questions you can ask yourself to promote sustainability in your home office:

1. **Does your remote office utilize natural light?**
   Utilizing natural light in your remote office can boost productivity, make you feel more engaged in your work, and lower your utility costs.

2. **Does your remote office feature indoor plants?**
   Pollutant gasses and airborne toxins can be emitted from construction materials, mechanical equipment, and even everyday objects. Plants have the ability to capture indoor pollutants and transform them into stored energy, releasing naturally filtered air as a result.

   A few plants that you could include in your remote office are:
   ● **Aloe Vera -** These plants are easy to grow, have stiff leaves filled with gel that has multiple health uses, and it's crucial to not overwater the plant to maintain its health.
   ● **Snake Plant -** These plants have tall, dark green leaves, and do not need to be watered often. This plant could go without water for a few weeks.
   ● **Spider Plant -** These plants are easy to care for and are highly adaptable. Additionally, they have few diseases or pests. They flourish in bright light and do not need to be watered often.

3. **Does your remote office host recycling bins?**
    Recycling is a large part of living sustainably. Recycling reduces the amount of pollution that goes into the environment by a significant amount. Plastic takes around 450 years to decompose and it can have many negative impacts such as poisoning groundwater, damaging soil, and polluting the oceans.

4. **Does your remote office host compost bins?**
    Composting is just a different way of discarding food waste. Taking the organic waste from vegetables and fruits and putting it in your backyard can be very beneficial for plants. By just taking out 5 minutes of your time every day, you are increasing the overall health of your soil and decreasing your environmental impact.

5. **Is your remote office computer set to power save when idle?**
    Power save mode reduces energy consumption by turning off extra components when the computer is not in use. This can result in lower electricity bills and a reduced environmental impact.

6. **Do you turn off powerstrips or unplug devices and personal chargers when not in use?**
    According to the Greenhouse Blog, $3 billion a year is spent on the energy usage of electrical appliances and chargers from just being plugged in. In an average home it accounts for 25% of energy.

7. **Does your remote office utilize personal lamps for lighting?**
    The level of sustainability from using personal lamps is dependent on many different factors such as energy efficiency, longevity, and manufacturing materials. LED lamps are the best option when it comes to having a personal lamp. They are efficient and sustainable as nearly 100% of the emitted energy from an LED is usable visible light.

8. **Does your remote office utilize personal heaters or fans?**
   Personal heaters and fans can both be bad for the environment although heaters have a much worse impact. Heaters emit harmful greenhouse gasses such as carbon dioxide and methane when they are not properly maintained. Putting on a few extra layers of clothes can reduce your carbon footprint and simultaneously reduce your electricity bill.

9. **Is the AC of your remote office set marginally warmer in the summer and cooler in the winter to save on power?**
   During the summer, adjusting your AC settings to be a little higher reduces energy consumption, leading to decreased strain on the power grid. This also minimizes carbon emissions associated with energy production, positively contributing to environmental conservation efforts. Similarly, during the winter, setting the heating a bit lower conserves energy and reduces costs without compromising comfort, while still supporting sustainable living practices.

10. **Does your remote office utilize a renewable electricity power plan?**
    Using a renewable electricity power plan reduces dependency on fossil fuels, contributing to the mitigation of climate change and supporting a cleaner environment. Furthermore, the cost of renewable energy, specifically solar power, is lower than fossil fuels.

11. If your remote office hosts a coffee machine, is it carafe, reusable pod, or other reduced-waste style?
Both carafes and reusable pods significantly reduce the amount of single-use plastic or paper waste generated compared to traditional coffee machines. Using these machines helps reduce plastic pollution and lower carbon emissions. This can also result in cost savings over time as these sustainable coffee machines eliminate the need for purchases of disposable cups or pods.

12. Does your remote office utilize digital filing for university and office documents?
Having digital copies for university and office documents conserves resources promoting sustainability in your remote office. Digital filing systems allow for efficient organization of documents into folders, making it easy to access them quickly.

13. Is your remote office printer set to print double-sided?
Printing paper double-sided conserves paper, lowers costs, and reduces ecological impact by cutting down on waste and minimizing resource consumption.