



Pre-course Reading

Safeguarding the Future

sustainable development training
for the professional business



Environmental Management for the Future

sustainable development
training for the Environmental
Management sector

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Environmental Management for the Future

A training programme for use in workshops to help small and medium-sized businesses integrate sustainable development principles into their business practice.

Pre-course reading

Sustainable development is often seen as an environmental issue but it is just as much about wealth creation and tackling poverty and injustice¹.

Purpose of the workshop

Thank you for signing up to find out more about sustainable development and ways in which your business might respond to the challenges it presents. The Welsh Assembly Government is obliged to promote sustainable development, and is planning actions that will affect everyone in Wales, including large and small businesses. Working towards sustainability presents many business opportunities and can improve profit margins, but businesses may also find it necessary to change the way they operate to meet more exacting government requirements.

The workshop will help you to integrate sustainable development principles into your business practice. You will be able to keep ahead of the increasing demands to operate in more sustainable ways. In particular you will be more competent to:

- Explain the terms 'sustainable development' and 'sustainability' to your colleagues and customers
- Assess how challenges from government, employers and customers for sustainable development might impact on your business
- Apply 'joined-up' thinking to working out solutions to business and sustainability issues
- Apply techniques that help you integrate sustainable development principles into your business planning
- Prepare a sustainable development action plan
- Obtain further advice and support.

Context of the workshop

The Government of Wales Act 1998 placed a duty on the Welsh Assembly Government to promote sustainable development. The Assembly published its Sustainable Development Scheme *Learning to Live Differently* in November 2000, and this was followed by an Action Plan to implement the Scheme in March 2001. Since then annual reports monitoring performance have been published.

Starting to Live Differently (2006) states, "the principles and vision of the Sustainable Development Scheme will drive everything we do. We will integrate these into our work and actively require or influence others, for example local authorities, public bodies, business, the voluntary sector and communities, to do the same to deliver change. We will seek to enable them to do so".

The Assembly has an ambitious vision of a sustainable Wales that will require all people to take part if it is to succeed. The Assembly states its plans will be based on:

- promoting a diverse, competitive, high added-value economy, with high-level skills and education, that responds to sustainable development opportunities, minimises demands on the environment and maximises the distribution of the benefits;
- action on social justice that tackles poverty, poor health, and consequences of disadvantage and provides people and their communities with the means to help themselves break out of the poverty trap;
- action in our built and natural environment that enhances pride in the community, promotes biodiversity, promotes local employment and minimises waste generation, energy, water and transport demands;
- strengthening Wales' cultural identity and helping to create a bilingual country, while looking confidently outwards and welcoming new cultural influences;
- creating a place which values its children and where young people want to live, work and enjoy a high quality of life, and where future generations enjoy better prospects in life and are not landed with a legacy of problems bequeathed by us;
- supporting people to live healthy and independent lives,

¹ <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/?lang=en>

irrespective of income, location or disability;

- valuing everyone in society and promoting equality of opportunity;
- promoting openness, partnership and participation, so that people can play a part in taking decisions that affect them;
- contributing to sustainable development at a global level as well as locally and taking account of the global impacts of decisions made in Wales.

The Assembly has stated the sustainable development principles it will follow, and sees businesses as necessary partners in achieving a sustainable Wales. It will work with business by:

- influencing their activities through the goods and services bought by the public sector in Wales;
- consulting on new policies, including working closely with business representative bodies;
- promoting ways businesses can contribute to sustainability objectives, for example resource efficiency (eco-efficiency);
- being clearer and more open on matters that affect businesses;
- providing support to help Welsh businesses adapt to new challenges e.g. through the Assembly's Business Environment Campaign;
- ensuring sustainable development objectives are central to business support and advice programmes.

Wales and SMEs²

- Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, or SMEs, are defined as employing between 0 and 249 employees. In the UK there are 3.75 million active businesses, 85% of them in England. In all the regions of the UK, SMEs make up over 99% of businesses.
- In the UK as a whole, 55% of the workforce are employed in SMEs, and SMEs account for 51% of turnover.
- In Wales, 67.1% of the workforce are employed in SMEs and they account for 61.4% of turnover. Agricultural businesses are highly represented. This is to be expected, as 79% of Wales is agricultural land, 14% forestry and only 8% urban land.
- SMEs providing goods and services to the public and private sectors are likely to find their operations will be required to meet certain sustainability criteria before they can tender for contracts. This workshop will place businesses in a better position to integrate sustainable development principles into their activities and hence meet these requirements.

Pause for thought

Some local issues to think about

Reading the following information taken from the UK Army website³, you might think that military activity is the best way to protect the uplands of Sennybridge in mid-Wales. On the other hand you might have other ideas. Do you think nature conservation and military activity are compatible in Sennybridge? Are there any other issues to consider if *sustainable* use of the area is the objective?

1 Is military training in a conservation area a sustainable activity?

At Sennybridge, the use of Mynydd Epynt (Epynt Mountain) as a military training area has enabled Army Training Estate Wales (ATE W) to preserve a substantial landscape – still a home to a wealth of fauna and flora already lost in other parts of the country. It also has interesting archaeological remains. The Ministry of Defence therefore gives careful attention to managing this special heritage to preserve it for generations to come.

² SME statistics from Small Business Service of the Department of Trade and Industry

³ <http://www.army.mod.uk>

The vegetation is typical of upland moorland and peat bogs. The stream valleys harbour more lowland species, however, and most of the ancient woodland is to be found here. About 28 miles (45 kilometres) of original hedgerows have been re-laid and enclosed.

Bird-life is fairly typical of upland moorland. Over 100 species have been recorded. For rarity the most interesting species is the magnificent Red Kite, frequently seen hunting over the moors, with up to nine flying together. The new plantations and hedgerows provide habitats for many small birds and encourage small mammals. Red squirrels are sighted quite frequently in the Crychan Forest.

Nearly 200 sites of archaeological interest have been identified, from a Bronze Age stone circle to the sites of old farmsteads, some dating from medieval times. Fifteen sites have been scheduled by CADW as Welsh Historic Monuments. A number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) have been identified by ATE W, and their Integrated Land Management Planning process is designed to ensure the twin imperatives of sustainable military training and environmental protection are accommodated.

Conservation interests are safeguarded by management agreements with statutory bodies such as the Countryside Council for Wales, and with further help from the Sennybridge Conservation Group, which meets twice a year. This involves a partnership between the Commandant and his staff, Defence Estates, the Countryside Council for Wales, local farmers and

groups representing archaeologists, botanists, geologists, ornithologists, and several other interests.

There is a presumption in favour of public access to the Army Training Estate on Public Rights of Way, balanced against the over-riding national requirement for safe and sustainable military training and conservation. At Sennybridge, red flags fly continually along the range boundary, indicating that the whole area is potentially dangerous. Live shells and mortar bombs dating from the Second World War onwards are found regularly during clearance operations. Because of this risk, unescorted public access into the training area itself cannot be allowed other than on appropriately signed roads. A new conservation centre has been recently opened at Disgwylfa, near Sennybridge, and descriptive plaques erected at three entry points from which public roads cross the area. Co-located with this centre are walks for the disabled and able-bodied, with magnificent views across the Epynt.

2 Pipelines across Wales

Building pipelines across Wales to carry water and fuel, often for consumption outside Wales, is a controversial subject as this press release from a national non-governmental organisation in February 2007 shows. While it may be difficult to defend pipelines on nature conservation grounds, could this pipeline be justified as sustainable development?

CPRW Press Release: 8th February 2007



The sustainable face of Welsh landscapes in the future?

The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW) today expressed its utter dismay at the Government's decision to approve a major pipeline across South Wales. It is also increasingly concerned at the undemocratic way in which projects like this and others which continue to blight the landscape of Wales, are approved.

Despite the environmental concessions within the consent, CPRW is alarmed that less than three months after the UK Government committed itself to taking fully into account the importance of all landscapes in their decision-making procedures, the principles of the European Landscape Convention have been conveniently ignored.

In commenting on the decision of Energy Minister Lord Truscott, Peter Ogden, Director of CPRW said

"This decision represents yet another example of the death by a thousand cuts which the landscapes of rural Wales seem destined to suffer. Not only will landscapes in the Brecon Beacons National Park be blighted by this development, so will many others within the 196 km pipeline corridor, as it ploughs its way through South Wales."

CPRW is also alarmed that the sustainability credentials of this whole energy project, namely the pipeline, the gas storage facility at Milford Haven and all its associated infrastructure, have never been proven, nor even subject to a comprehensive or proper Strategic Environmental Assessment as should have been the case for a project like this.

In questioning the Government's approach, Peter Ogden also said

"Despite a chorus of objections from us, the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, local environmental organisations and many individuals, with everyone stressing the inappropriateness of this scheme and the environmental damage it will cause, the Minister has denied us all the opportunity to have our views heard through the democratic public inquiry process. This is yet another example of convenience decision-making, labelled in the public's interest and shrouded under the Government's veil of a so-called sustainable energy master plan."

The National Grid website⁴ presents an alternative view.

Why do we need more pipelines?

"National Grid needs to expand its network of high-pressure natural gas pipelines through South Wales and onwards into Herefordshire and Gloucestershire [England]. This work is important to ensure reliable and economic gas supplies to homes and businesses across the UK.

The programme comprises the construction of a number of separate pipeline sections, compressor stations and associated works over a period of approximately three years. These are large engineering projects and each pipeline section went through a rigorous process of consultation and environmental appraisal before consent to construct was granted by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Until now the UK has been self-sufficient in gas, thanks largely to abundant supplies from gas fields, predominantly in the North Sea. Unfortunately this situation will not continue. At the moment, the UK has more than 21 million gas customers and this number is rising daily. The reality is that the offshore fields are decreasing in output and demand for gas from homes and businesses is growing at such a rate, that analysis shows that the UK will become increasingly dependent upon imported gas over the coming years. Two new terminals to import Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) are being built at Herbrandston and Waterston, both of which are near to Milford Haven [South Wales]. Although the terminal developers are independent from National Grid, under the terms of our operating licence we have a duty to connect them to our National Gas Transmission System, to ensure that the gas they export is safely and economically delivered to where it is most needed by users throughout the UK.

We therefore need to expand our National Gas Transmission System to connect the terminals at Milford Haven. In addition, the capacity of the existing National Gas Transmission System eastward from Aberdulais is limited by the relatively small-diameter pipes that were installed in the early 1970s. Sections of new pipeline of the same diameter as that planned for Milford Haven to Aberdulais need to be put in place through South Wales and onwards into Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.

⁴ <http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/Gas/Pipelines/milfordhaven>

Crucially, with the exception of a few Above Ground Installations, once the individual pipelines are in place they will be buried underground, returning the countryside to its natural beauty.”

Points to ponder before the workshop

Please think about these questions before you arrive. Your answers will help you to participate more effectively in the discussions that follow each activity during the workshop sessions.

What are the sustainability issues with which your business already engages?

Are there any sustainability issues with which you still need to engage?

What is the biggest challenge for your business to become more sustainable?

What is the cause of it being such a challenge?

**What external developments would make it easier for your business to become more sustainable?
For example, education, legislation, grants?**

About the project

This initiative being delivered by a team of academics based in Swansea University's School of the Environment and Society, aims to benefit SMEs.

Professional Practice for Sustainable Development – PP4SD for short – is a national project that has designed and published training materials, and runs training courses for professionals in sustainable development.

The Swansea project has targeted four business sectors over a one-year project: (Aquaculture, Environmental Management, Fisheries Management and Agricultural Manufacturing) and can be adapted to any SME in the land-based sector.

As part of the Higher Education sector's commitment to working with industry and the wider community, the aim of the PP4SD project at Swansea is to assist Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Wales to become more confident in putting sustainable development principles into their working practice.

Project Director, Dr Jane Claricoates, said:

“PP4SD can help SMEs to move towards complying with increasingly stringent legislation about employment, health and safety, and the environment, as well as with increasing demands from customers and consumers for environmentally-friendly practices and products. Sustainable approaches to business planning and reporting can help small businesses to become more efficient, cost-effective and competitive.

The PP4SD project was another mark of Swansea University's commitment to sustainable development, and is just one of a number of initiatives taking place on campus.”

The PP4SD project was supported by the Welsh Assembly Government's Knowledge Exploitation Fund (KEF) and the European Social Fund under Objectives 1 & 3.

In addition, the Swansea-based project worked closely with Lantra, the Sector Skills Council advising the government on training for environmental and land-based industries.

For further information on PP4SD and the Swansea University project, please visit <http://www.pp4sd.org.uk/>