

Case study 01

Sharks, seahorses & sustainability!

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(continued on page 7)*



LEARNING THE LESSONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL
INTEGRATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
FROM THE SW OBJECTIVE 2 PROGRAMME 2000—2006



Foreword

Our environment... it's in our nature

We recognise that the environment is one of our region's greatest assets.

An important part of our efforts to protect and enhance these assets - natural, historic and cultural – is to raise awareness of the part they play in our quality of life and how they contribute, and are central to our economic well-being.

This booklet shows how activities funded through the South West Objective 2 Programme have made an important contribution to this aim, whether by raising awareness of the importance of the environment around us, or by providing people with the skills to help protect and enhance both the local and global environment.

The extent of the task ahead of us in tackling climate change is becoming clearer by the day. While we can invest in a range of activity that can contribute to our efforts to reduce energy use in our homes and businesses, it is perhaps through raising public awareness, and through providing people with the relevant skills, that we can make most difference in the long term. This will be one of the enduring legacies of the Objective 2 Programme and is something that we need to build on in the future.

Edward Chorlton,
Director of Environment, Economy and Culture and
Deputy Chief Executive, Devon County Council

Leaving a Legacy

‘To protect and enhance the environmental assets of the region’

Since 2000 the South West Objective 2 Programme has provided support worth £120 million to over 160 projects that deliver new jobs, help businesses start and grow, and raise skill levels in the region. One of its objectives is to protect and enhance the environmental assets of the region, in recognition of the importance of the environment as a key economic driver.

This booklet (one of a series of four) aims to give an insight into some of the untold environmental successes of the Objective 2 Programme. It shows how activity aimed at economic regeneration has had a positive impact on our environment, and how environmental and economic issues need not be mutually exclusive.

Each of the projects featured has made, and continues to make, a positive contribution to the economic vitality of the South West, while also being environmental success stories. As such, they are living examples of the environment driving economic activity. The lessons to be learnt from them are many and varied, but they are lessons that if learnt, will ensure a lasting economic and environmental legacy.





Case study 01

Sharks, seahorses & sustainability!

The completion of the Objective 2 funded Ocean Discovery Zone in 2002 saw Plymouth's National Marine Aquarium become the largest aquarium in Britain with Europe's deepest tank containing a staggering 2.5 million litres of warm seawater.

It is the country's foremost aquarium and in the six years it has been open it has attracted over three million visitors through its doors. However, while visitors enjoy getting up close with sharks and seahorses there is a more serious side to the aquarium – the purpose of education, conservation and research.

The National Marine Aquarium is dedicated to raising awareness of the oceans, the challenges they face and the ways in which we can all help ensure they have a sustainable future. With the world's oceans facing ever more threats from our activities it has never been more important to understand the vast stretches of water that cover 70% of our planet.

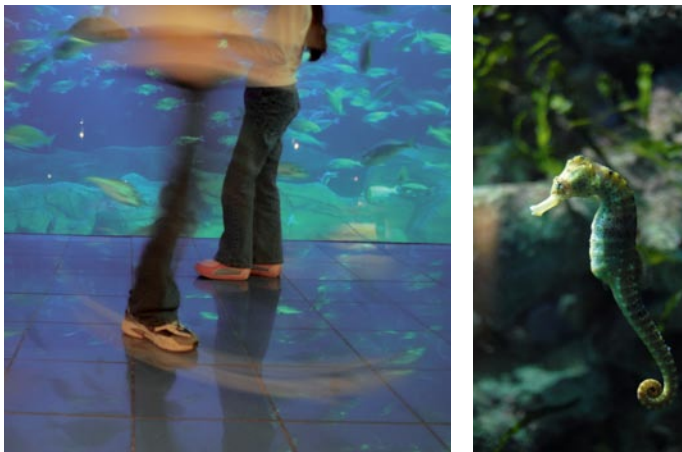
According to Kelvin Boot, Aquarium Director, 'all our exhibits are set up with this in mind, but this does mean that we have to continually evolve to keep our message fresh'. This also has a major local economic impact. Even in a low visitor year the NMA contributes almost £10 million into the local economy of Plymouth and Devon while this can almost double in years when new attractions are opened. This local impact is maximised by the sourcing of local produce and materials.

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Sharks, seahorses and sustainability!

With initiatives such as the creation of an artificial reef ‘from scratch’ with the sinking of the Scylla, and the opening of the ‘hands on’ Explorocean zone, things certainly never stand still at the aquarium, but for Kelvin the central aim remains unchanged.

‘We know that a visit to the Aquarium will inspire a greater understanding and appreciation of the oceans, the life they contain and the ways in which us humans affect them.’

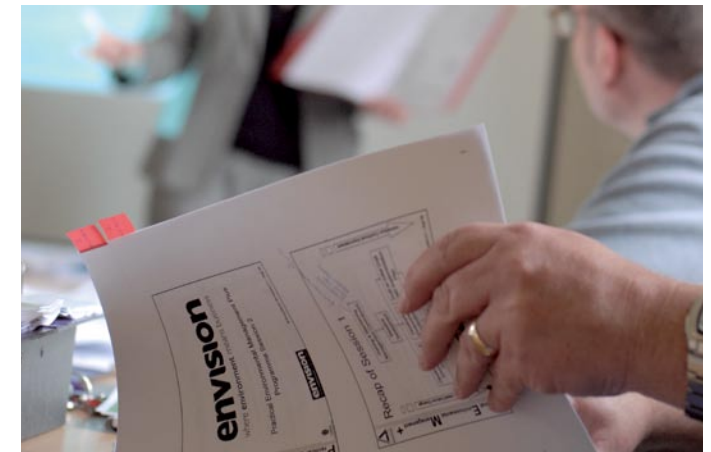
Applicant	National Marine Aquarium
Objective 2 investment	£2,153,000
Total cost of project	£4,887,000
Economic outcomes	20 jobs created, £2.8 million new and safeguarded sales



Case study 02 Environmental training delivers business benefits

In a rapidly changing business world, companies need to remain ahead of the game to stay competitive. So how do you become more environmentally smart, hold onto clients and reap the benefits of new markets?

Envision Training was set up to help businesses do just that, providing a range of environmental training courses to suit the needs of enterprises. The subsidised service is unique to the South West, offering businesses cost saving solutions. Envision Training has a proven track record in a wide range of environmental issues including waste, water, transport, energy and construction.



Case study 02

Environmental training delivers business benefits

Improving environmental performance means you need the skills and knowledge within your organisation to carry on improving in the future. Envision provides short-course training designed to fit the needs of a business whether just starting down the road of environmental awareness, implementing cost saving measures or going on to implement and audit an Environmental Management System.

Jeremy Filmer-Bennett of Devon and Cornwall Business Council is convinced: ‘The business opportunity for those enterprises that embrace the Envision philosophy has proven to be outstandingly profitable in both the short and long term for both small and large business ventures’.

Envision Training has assisted 150 businesses, improving staff skills and providing practical training to help them save money and win more customers. According to John Keyes, the Operations Director for North Devon Homes, who has benefited from the project “training provided practical solutions which have saved us money and made measurable energy savings.” With Envision Training, then, it really can mean both the environment and business wins.

Applicant	Plymouth College of Further Education
Objective 2 investment	£200,000
Total cost of project	£445,000
Economic outcomes	155 people trained

Case study 03

Learning about Lakeside

The striking ‘Lakeside’ building which opened in September 2005, has seen the creation of a new state of the art visitor centre, IT suite and three function rooms, providing facilities for both visitors and the local community, all in a location on the shore of Roadford Lake, in rural Devon.





Case study 03
Learning about Lakeside

South West Lakes Trust's main focus in the construction of the facility has been on local procurement in both materials and labour, and an innovative feature has been the demonstration of traditional building techniques such as cob.

Under impressive, steeply pitched green oak rafters is a visitor centre, which sits at the heart of the building. A central theme of the project is environmental interpretation focusing on the heritage of the Wolf Valley before the Lake was constructed in 1990, and the lake's current environment. The aim is to ensure that the visitor will gain an insight into what makes the area special, and the importance of traditional skills in a rural environment.

In addition an education officer has been employed to run themed events for both visitors and local communities, including courses in traditional building methods.

A 25% increase in visitors is predicted as a result of the development. It is hoped that many of these will depart having learned something new about, and having a greater appreciation of, the special environment at Roadford and the wider region.

Applicant	South West Lakes Trust
Objective 2 investment	£737,000
Total cost of project	£1,533,000
Economic outcomes	13 new and safeguarded jobs, £350,000 new sales



Case study 04

Kingfisher spreads its wings

Tim Argyle is a Farm Conservation Advisor with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), advising farmers and landowners across North Devon on landscape and habitat improvements that will also benefit their businesses.

It was a project called Kingfisher, run by not for profit company Ambios, that got Tim where he is today. As a trainee on the scheme he spent 9 months on placement with FWAG, and it is this 'hands on' element of the project that makes it so successful.

Having completed a degree in Natural Sciences Tim found it extremely difficult to find any paid positions. 'I applied for many jobs with little success, mainly due to my limited experience' he says.

However, while volunteering with a local sustainability centre he saw an advert for the Kingfisher project. 'It seemed like exactly what I had been searching for – the opportunity to get some (paid) valuable work experience in a conservation organisation. I applied for one of the positions within FWAG and was fortunate enough to be offered a place.'

'I was actually doing a real job, rather than learning about theory' says Tim, 'I was heavily involved with the recently launched Environmental Stewardship schemes, helping out at workshops to promote and explain the schemes and then



helping to complete applications and undertake detailed farm surveys. There were many other aspects of work with FWAG including undertaking biodiversity action plans, working at shows, preparing woodland and whole farm management plans, giving advice over the phone, researching specialist issues – the list was endless. I really enjoyed the variety and the mixture of office and outdoor working’.

Other trainees have worked for the Devon Wildlife Trust, the Marine Biological Association and a range of other environmental organisations, and the Kingfisher project has an impressive record in beneficiaries moving into full time employment. Of the 80 who so far have been on placements with project partners, over 85% have gone on into employment within the environmental/wildlife conservation sector and 7% into other positive outcomes.

As Tim’s training period came to a close his hard work paid off and he was offered the opportunity to continue with FWAG in Devon as a permanent farm conservation advisor. ‘I am still in that position, predominantly covering the north of the county, an area I grew up in and know very well’. Having moved on, however, he hasn’t forgotten how he got there. ‘The Kingfisher project gave me the break I needed to gain the experience to find employment in the conservation sector’.

Applicant	Ambios Ltd
Objective 2 investment	£1,175,000
Total cost of project	£2,610,000
Economic outcomes	80 people trained

Leaving a Legacy

The future

Six years ago, when the Objective 2 Programme was launched, the idea of the environment as a cross cutting theme was a new one. There was still the view that it might be a barrier to successful delivery of the Programme. The projects described in this booklet, just a tiny fraction of many with stories no less fascinating, show how far we have come. Not only is the environment now seen genuinely as an important driver of the economy, but project managers have come to realise the benefits of integration.

However, we must now move on. The Objective 2 Programme, and the exemplar projects it has funded, has been a pilot for an approach that shows the value of effective integration. All these projects contribute directly to the economic regeneration of the region, through increasing sales, creating jobs or raising skills, but do so in ways that place the environment at the centre of their activity.

It is now up to all regional partners to apply this on a wider basis, through procurement, through Local Area Agreements, and through local, regional and national funding programmes of all types. Indeed, the need to address climate change means that we no longer have a choice in the matter.

We have to break down the remaining barriers between the environmental and economic sectors where they exist. The challenge is for us all to take inspiration from the stories in these booklets and apply the principles within our own businesses, organisations and partnerships to create a truly low carbon economy. What a challenge, what an opportunity.

**Economic growth within environmental limits.
It's in our nature.**

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There are three other booklets in this series. These are:

Natural environment

Historic environment

Energy and resource efficiency

All four booklets, and further information, are available at www.devon.gov.uk/business

If you would like any further information on the projects in this booklet, or any other aspect of environmental integration in the SW Objective 2 Programme please contact the SW Objective 2 Environmental Sustainability Theme Partnership through Ian Hutchcroft, Sustainable Prosperity Manager, Devon County Council (ian.hutchcroft@devon.gov.uk)



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ENGLISH HERITAGE



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