

Welsh European Funding Office
Cross Cutting Themes Environmental Sustainability Fact sheet
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What are the Cross Cutting Themes?

In Wales, to qualify for European Structural Funds under the current programmes, projects must incorporate actions to address the Cross Cutting Themes (CCTs) which are considered essential for the achievement of a well balanced, sustainable and innovative economy. There are two CCTs integrated into the 2007-2013 Structural Fund Programmes for West Wales and the Valleys and for East Wales.

The Environmental Sustainability is one of two CCTs integrated into the 2007-2013 Structural Fund Programmes for West Wales and the Valleys and for East Wales.

The delivery of the CCTs will differ across programmes and within projects. Objectives and associated indicators and targets have been set to deliver on the themes but outcomes can also be delivered outside of the indicators and these are captured through project and programme evaluation. In most instances, the mainstreaming of the CCTs adds value to the main activity of the project, i.e. through 'horizontal integration', but they can also be the focus of the activity i.e. through 'vertical integration'. This is the case with some environmental projects and projects with specific target groups or outcomes.

Why have fact sheets?

Many project sponsors and deliverers of activity have asked for examples and ideas of how other projects have integrated the CCTs. This factsheet concentrates on the opportunities some projects have taken up to integrate the CCTs and add value to the main activity of the project and will hopefully act as an aid to others carrying out similar activity.

It covers activity in both the ERDF Convergence and Competitiveness Programmes across all priorities, except regeneration which can found in a separate fact sheet.

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ERDF Priority 1 – Knowledge and innovation for growth

I-Pad App

Communities 2.0 encourages members of community groups, voluntary sector organisations and social enterprises to use ICT and other technologies. The project also raises awareness of environmental sustainability and encourages participants to develop environmental action plans.

The project has developed an iPad App (application) to assist staff in working with SMEs on environmental sustainability. The App consists of a series of questions that the organisation answers and generates a report that identifies areas that the business needs to focus attention on.



Software Tool

SEREN aims to deliver new and innovative ground engineering technologies that will address the low carbon agenda. In short, the project is commercialising innovative ideas.

In order to encourage the adoption of environmental action plans, the project team developed a software tool that would also enable businesses to cut their costs and carbon emissions from utilities, transport and waste. The tool was developed with smaller organisations in mind and assists in tracking the costs associated with utilities, business transport costs and waste produced.

The concept was designed around the Green Dragon environmental standard and this tool can be used by a company to prepare for adoption of formal EMS.

The software is easy to use and only includes information readily available from sources such as utility bills, or data that can easily be monitored by the enterprise, such as the number of waste/recycling bags filled weekly.

The travel plan section allows users to easily calculate the amount of CO₂ they generate from their travel activities. A large variety of different transport options are available to the user with extra options selectable if required.

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SBBS Health-Check

WISE 2 uses the Synnwyr Busnes Business Support (SBBS) health check document to obtain a baseline of a business' compliance with the cross cutting themes. Companies collaborating with the WISE Network project are sent a link to the SBBS mini health check document and asked to complete a short questionnaire. They are provided with detailed feedback from the health-check and for those that don't already have them, policy templates that can be tailored to their business needs are provided.

Information about the SBBS mini health check can be found at:
<http://www.sbbs.org.uk/english/taster/>

Advanced Sustainable Manufacturing Technologies (ASTUTE)

A key element of ASTUTE industry support is to provide specialist advice and assistance to companies in developing new or improved provision for environmental and equal opportunities strategies, policies and management systems. These elements of the project are collectively known as the Cross Cutting Themes (CCTs). A very robust formal method for integrating the CCT elements of the work into the delivery of ASTUTE has been established by Cardiff University, who are leading the delivery of CCTs on behalf of all the partnering Universities. Data capture for CCTs commences from day one of working with an Enterprise, with regular updates throughout the project, a formal review at project closure and follow up activities to assess progress once the initial intervention has been completed.

Delivery of CCT in the ASTUTE project typically follows the template below but can be modified based upon business requirements:

- A half day meeting is arranged to ascertain requirements of the Enterprise and to present support services offered for CCTs through ASTUTE. For the environmental strand of CCTs, ASTUTE can offer support to adopt or improve formal Environmental Management Systems inclusive of ISO14001, EMAS, BS8555 or Green Dragon. Where enterprises opt for a less formal route, environmental Improvement Action Plans are offered.
- Once requirements have been agreed, forms are signed for the first stage of data capture and the company arranges with the team member for a full day review to cover the areas requested. Reviews are documented and submitted to the client with recommendations for improvement together with a bullet point Action Plan report.
- A further meeting clarifies the next stages for implementation of the Action Plan and up to five days of further support is offered, depending on individual requirements. Adoption of the plan is formalised through signing of the CCT form and implementation commences
- Following implementation, enterprises are required to complete an Exit Survey for file closure during another half day meeting.
- The data captured using this Exit Survey will then be used by the team member as evidence when reporting on formal WEFO targets completed as well as identifying additional benefits achieved through the intervention, such as energy or waste reduced, water conserved or carbon emissions saved.

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- This method of engagement and exit survey with businesses has enabled ASTUTE to demonstrate not just its achievement of overall CCT targets to date but also has enabled the capture of data relating to how these targets have been achieved and what benefits the support has provided to each enterprise.

To date, 29 companies have adopted an environmental improvement plan or implemented an environmental management system. The delivery of CCTs has remained on target throughout, demonstrating that the work is fully integrated into the support services offered to enterprises and that support is effective.

As an example, Qualitek Engineering Ltd, a manufacturer of a range of custom built jigs, tooling and machines based in Bynea, Llanelli joined ASTUTE to adopt a formal Environmental Management System. As a result of CCT support provided by ASTUTE, the company has recently been awarded Level 3 of the Seren Scheme BS8555, a formal phased Environmental Management System.

“The support we have received on our journey towards BS8555 has surpassed our expectations. The guidance helped us to focus on key issues and plan a path of improvement. Cost savings and a start of a culture change are ongoing outcomes and we are confident of achieving our environmental management objective which is critical to our plan for continuous growth” Paul Oram, MD.

Further information regarding the ASTUTE project and the Cross-Cutting Themes support can be found at <http://www.astutewales.com/en/cct.htm>

ERDF Priority 2 - Business competitiveness and growth

Working with businesses to improve environmental sustainability

The North East Wales Strategic Business Park project provided two business co-ordinators to work with SME's on Wrexham Industrial Estate (Wrexham) and Deeside Industrial Park (Deeside).

All companies engaging with the scheme were encouraged to assess, manage and improve their environmental impacts and resource use. At the time of writing, 84 had adopted or improved their Environmental Management Systems as a result of the Project.

Environmental Forums were established and meet regularly on both estates. As well as allowing businesses to learn from each other, forums disseminate information on environmental legislation and key messages including waste reduction, green energy use and reducing carbon emissions.

“For some of the smaller businesses the project has drawn their attention to a subject that they largely have been aware of but have not taken any action on previously.” – Rebecca Morgan, North East Wales Strategic Business Parks Project Team.



ERDF Priority 2 – Improving business competitiveness

Supporting businesses to achieve Green Dragon

The Social Enterprise Support Project worked with 39 social enterprises across Wales helping them to achieve Green Dragon Level 2. Five, one day training sessions were held. After each training day social enterprises were given seven hours of implementation advice and support from a Green Dragon assessor and a further half a day for an Environmental Audit to be undertaken.

“Incorporating environmental sustainability has allowed us to improve the quality of the support that can be provided to our clients and has led to clients considering issues around sustainability, which has helped strengthen their business and provide them with a competitive edge.”

– Nia Wright Morgan, Social Enterprise Support, Wales Co-operative Centre Ltd.

ERDF Priority 3 – Sustainable transport

Travel plans

The Valleys Cycle Network Project has promoted travel plans by providing basic walking and cycling networks linking to workplaces, schools and public transport interfaces.

Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone and Felindre Strategic Business Park have produced Green Travel Plans to encourage people using their facilities use fewer cars, to car share more frequently and to make greater use of cycling, walking and public transport.

Sustainable travel

The Valleys Cycle Network Project is developing and promoting integrated transport through interfaces with the bus and rail network. New physical links with other transport services and routes have been constructed where required.

Felindre Strategic Business Park provides 12 Hectares of serviced sites suitable for development. This project has negotiated a new bus route to serve the site once occupied.

Bwcabus uses the latest technologies to provide demand responsive, flexible local public transport. The system provides communities with a local bus service which connects people directly with strategic bus routes, to enable them to travel further afield, as well as local towns and villages not connected by conventional public transport. Bwcabus only operates on demand and therefore avoids unnecessary vehicle movements and empty buses travelling around. This is therefore an efficient and environmentally friendly operation, cutting emissions for the bus.



Stagecoach has re-routed bus services to pass through the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone site and will provide regular bus services throughout the day. Within the next 2-3 years, the site will have the benefit of a rail station within easy walking distance of the Learning Zone itself. In addition, a mechanical link will be built near the main entrance to the Learning Zone, which will carry people to Ebbw Vale Town Centre as part of an EU funded Town Centre Improvement Scheme (ERDF). The work is likely to be completed by 2014.

ERDF Priority 3 – Physical regeneration

Delivering best practice through CEEQUAL

Parc Cybi is a development of speculative offices, logistics and manufacturing units. Conygar set out to ensure that the development exceeded the levels of sustainability set by the Welsh Government. As well as buildings within the development being constructed to BREEAM Excellent standard, the project obtained 97% for CEEQUAL.

“Environmental sustainability and economic success should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. In delivering truly sustainable buildings Conygar will be able to offer a “product” which will be increasingly attractive to businesses where energy costs for example will be more and more important.” – John Adshead, on behalf of Conygar.



Felindre Strategic Business Park provides 12 Hectares of serviced sites suitable for development. The site is split in to 8 plots with installed services, landscaped gateways and key areas. The project has committed to obtained CEEQUAL registration.

Demonstrating best practice through BREEAM

The Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone is built on the site of the former Corus Steelworks at Ebbw Vale and provides a educational facilities for all those aged 16 and over. Development took place after the remediation of the brownfield site that was formerly the 80 hectare steelworks. Remediation involved the recycling of materials following de-contamination of the site. The Learning Zone has been designed to BREEAM ‘Excellent’ standard (2006 Regulations).



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ERDF Priority 4 – Environment for growth and energy

Efficient use of natural resources

The Communities and Nature (CAN) project incorporated environmental sustainability in its core aims. This meant that environmental sustainability had to be addressed in any applications to CAN, and addressing this cross cutting theme was a requirement in the scoring criteria during initiative selection. Once selected, CAN worked in conjunction with the organisations delivering each initiative to develop action plans that included environmental sustainability, and these plans are monitored and updated on a regular basis. Environmental considerations vary depending on the site and the initiative, which has led to a diverse range of outputs including the use of sustainable and traditional building practices, the incorporation of compost toilets, and green energy production. The project has also promoted the efficient use of natural resources by incorporating elements of habitat management and by reusing wood harvested during the project to create benches, bird hides, and other infrastructure.



Wood fuel suppliers, supported through WEBS 2 are required to identify their sources of raw material to ensure that clean virgin wood is sourced from sustainable sources. The project provides a local and sustainable market for wood. This provides the opportunity for private and farm woodland owners in the medium term to realise the economic benefits of this new market and so provide incentives to manage their woodlands.

Sustainable transport

The Wales Coast Path is an 870 mile continuous path around the coast of Wales running from Chester to Chepstow with links with Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. In 2013, the Wales Coastal Path was the overall winner of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) for Planning Excellence. The path provides improved and new access opportunities for walkers, cyclists, individuals with restricted mobility, wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs. This complete network of paths around Wales contributes to sustainable transport aims, encouraging better transport links between

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communities and reducing carbon emissions.

In Pembrokeshire, the Communities and Nature project connected two traffic free routes that facilitated cycling and walking in and around Neyland and Pembroke Dock. By removing the need to use a busy main road, the project has helped to promote sustainable transport.

Raising awareness of environmental sustainability

DeltaStream had to obtain statutory licenses and consents for the demonstration and testing stages of the project. Deltastream used this process as an opportunity to raise awareness of the benefits of renewable energy and to highlight the issues associated with climate change and energy generation. The high level of awareness raising and public consultation undertaken helped the Sponsor to develop a good relationship with the local people but also provided a good reputation for the marine renewable energy industry in Wales.

WEBS2 through its awareness raising events, web site and literature promotes and recommends that interested individuals and businesses seek further environmental and energy efficiency advice this will include sign posting to the Carbon Trust and towards Environment Management Systems.

Annex A

Advanced Sustainable Manufacturing Technologies (ASTUTE)

ASTUTE is a £27m, 5 year project involving a consortium of eight Welsh Universities and part funded by the European Regional Development Fund via the Welsh Government. ASTUTE enables businesses in the Convergence area of Wales to grow by adopting more advanced technologies and business processes, while at the same time, improving the sustainability of such firms by reducing their environmental impact. A major focus of this work is in supporting the aerospace, automotive and high value added manufacturing sectors. Led by Swansea University, the strong collaboration brings together the universities of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, Glyndŵr, Swansea Metropolitan University of Wales Trinity St David, Cardiff Metropolitan and the University of South Wales which together enable the ASTUTE initiative to provide industry with access to a wide range of complementary skills, experience and specialist facilities across a broad spectrum of engineering, business and scientific disciplines.

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Environment & Sustainability

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Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone

The Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone is a 21st century learning environment for all those aged 16 and over, combining a broad curriculum of vocational learning with academic development, from basic entry to degree level. Built on the site of the former Corus Steelworks at Ebbw Vale, it is critical first step towards an ambitious vision to transform learning and thereby achieve economic and social sustainability in one of the most deprived communities in Wales.

Contact details:

Clive Hamersley

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

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Ebbw Vale,

NP23 6XB

Tel: 01495 355453

E-mail: clive.hamersley@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/index.asp>

<http://www.coleggwent.ac.uk/index.php?Pid=3396&Mid=3396>

BWCABUS

The Bwcabus project involves the integration of demand responsive transport to connect with conventional bus and train services. Bwcabus uses the latest technologies to provide flexible local public transport. The system provides communities with a local bus service which connects people directly with strategic bus routes, to enable them to travel further afield, as well as local towns and villages not connected by conventional public transport.

Contact details:

Karen Williams

Carmarthenshire County Council

Parc Myrddin

Carmarthen SA31 1HQ

E-Mail: KLWilliams@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.bwcabus.traveline-cymru.info/?force=1>

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Communities and Nature

This project brings together two of Wales's key assets – its natural heritage and its tourism industry. CAN improves green infrastructure and the facilities for visits to natural heritage sites, so bringing economic benefits to Wales from green tourism. This work in turn supports the creation of valuable and sustainable jobs, as well as opportunities for work experience and volunteering.

Contact details:

Helga Dixon

Natural Resources Wales

Tel. 01248 387185

Communities 2.0

The project aims, through community groups, voluntary sector organisations and social enterprises, to engage people with technologies by breaking down barriers, and supporting them to exploit technologies for economic outcomes.

Contact details:

Andrew Jacobs

Welsh Government Digital Inclusion Unit

Rhyd-Y-Car

Merthyr Tydfil

E-mail: andrew.jacobs@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 0628299

Deltastream

To design, manufacture, deploy and test the DeltaStream demonstration tidal stream turbine off the coast of Ramsey Sound, Pembrokeshire.

Contact details:

Tidal Energy Limited

Vision House

Oak Tree Court

Mulberry Drive

Cardiff Gate Business Park

Cardiff

CF23 8RS

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Felindre Strategic Business Park

This project aims to undertake infrastructure works to provide serviced sites as part of the development of a Strategic Business Park serving South Wales. Specific works, include the provision of 12.0ha net of serviced sites suitable for development and the creation of 8 serviced plots for development.

Contact details:

Neil Ranft

City & Council of Swansea

Oystermouth Road

Swansea

SA1 3SN

Tel. 01792 636000

North East Wales Strategic Business Parks

This Project aims to introduce Business Park Co-Ordinators, who would be responsible for co-ordinating a range of activities and events that will enhance, develop and support the economic, financial and environmental prosperity of areas of major employment importance at Wrexham Industrial Estate (WIE), Wrexham and Deeside Industrial Park (DIP), Flintshire.

Contact details:

Allan Taylor

Wrexham County Council

The Guildhall,

Wrexham

LL11 1AY

Tel. 01978 667300

Parc Cybi

This project will develop high quality speculative business space comprising 1800 sq m of offices and 4902 sq m of logistics and manufacturing units

Contact details:

Conygar Investment Company PLC

4th Floor

110 Wigmore Street

LONDON

W1U 3RW

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SEREN

The aim of the project is to deliver new and innovative ground engineering technologies that will address the low carbon agenda. These technologies will be showcased and promoted globally with a view to encouraging organisations with low carbon initiatives to move to Wales. The thrust of the project is to create new companies and jobs, support existing companies, and increase profitability in companies within the Convergence Area. In short, the project is commercialising innovative ideas.

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Social Enterprise Support Project

This project has been designed to provide an overarching structure to support the development and growth of social enterprises in Wales. It aims to increase the number, sustainability and growth of new and existing social enterprises through marketing, networking, research and through a programme of organisational development.

Contact details:

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Wales Cooperative Centre

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CF5 2XP

Tel. 029 20556151

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Valleys Cycle Network

The project aims to assist regeneration of the greater Valleys area through provision of a multi-user path network to facilitate economic growth through sustainable tourism, provide access to local amenities and opportunities for promoting active travel modes for everyday health and wellbeing through both leisure and utility journeys.

Contact details:

Ryland Jones

SUSTRANS

123 Bute Street

Cardiff

CF10 5AE

Tel: 0292 062 0602 E-mail: sustranscymru@sustrans.org.uk

WISE 2

WISE Network aims to embed sustainability at the heart of all businesses through the facilities and expertise available within both industry and the academic institutions in Wales. Collaboration with WISE Network will help to future proof businesses and enable them to thrive and grow in an increasingly resource-efficient environment. In addition those businesses operating in the Environmental sector will be better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the current growth in Green industries.

Contact details:

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Aberystwyth University

Commercialisation and Consultancy Services

Visualisation Centre

Penglais

Ceredigion

SY23 3BF

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WEBS2

The project will provide capital grant support to micro-businesses SMEs and social enterprises for the further development of the emerging wood fuel market.

Contact details:

Paul Morgan

Natural Resources Wales (Forestry Commission Wales)

Victoria House

Victoria Road

Aberystwyth

SY232DQ

Wales Coastal Path (Coastal Access)

This project completed the All Wales Coastal Path, enhanced promotion and interpretation of the route, with the intention of increasing local socio-economic benefits.

Contact details:

Sue Rice

Natural Resources Wales (Countryside Council for Wales)

Maes y Ffynnon

Ffordd Penrhos

Penrhos Garnedd

Bangor

LL57 2DW

Tel. 0300 065 3000

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How has the integration of the cross cutting themes enhanced the project?

SEREN: CCT has widened the scope of SEREN to working with enterprises /organisations that would not normally have been involved in the project hence widening viewpoints and increasing social impact (e.g. WCVA/3rd Sector).

Interactions with organisations and companies approached via CCT: - already resulted in number of collaborative projects that would deliver not only assigned to SEREN targets but also wider benefits to the society.- are recognised by the Project as very valuable source of innovation.

WISE 2: The integration of the cross-cutting themes has enabled the project to add real value to its interactions with businesses. It provides a basis for assistance that goes beyond the initial goals of the project that the company is working on and helps to ensure that the research and development work is truly integrated and as effective and sustainable as possible.

In fact, there are now numerous examples of businesses that have approached us with a technical challenge and are subsequently working with us to develop an Environmental Management System or to embed process improvement or behaviour change into their business.

Valleys Cycle Network:

- Strengthened the project's environmental outcomes.
- Responsibility as a lead sponsor to commit to sustainable development, equality and inclusion etc.
- Ability for lead sponsor to positively influence best practice among joint sponsor partners through a formal framework.

Anglesey Sites and Premises: Despite the project only being in its infancy, Cross Cutting Themes is seen, and recognised as a critical element to ensure that all stakeholders – both public and private – secure the maximum benefit from the scheme.

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Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone:

- By reinforcing the vision and purpose of the Masterplan for The Works site and ensuring that the cross-cutting themes were carried through to individual projects such as the Learning Zone.
- By linking funding to environmental sustainability and equal opportunities and thereby ensuring that the key Partner organisations are fully 'signed up' to the cross-cutting aims and objectives.
- By impacting on the design of the Learning Zone, specifically the integration of vocational and academic learners, thereby achieving parity of esteem amongst learners.
- By ensuring that environmental sustainability and equal opportunities do not fall foul of 'value engineering' processes (they are otherwise easy targets).

What, if any, have been the drawbacks of integrating the cross cutting themes?

WISE 2: There really are no drawbacks that we can see in integrating the cross cutting themes.

On the contrary, it has become an integral part of our early project discussions with potential partner business and due to the interconnectedness of all these themes it is often already an integral part of their concerns and the challenges that they wish to address. The project views the cross cutting themes as a vital consideration for business and economic sustainability and it seems that the businesses with which we collaborate are increasingly taking this view also. It has been and continues to be an undeniable asset to be able to offer this added value of cross cutting themes through our Health-Check and associated support structures.

Valleys Cycle Network: There are no checks in place to ensure that projects are meeting those themes and it is not just a tick-box exercise.

Parc Cybi: During times of continuing economic weakness when the demand for new business space remains very uncertain some elements of cross-cutting themes could be seen as adding an additional financial burden on a developer.

Unfortunately not all business occupiers are sufficiently "enlightened" to recognise the benefits which, for example, a BREEAM excellent building may offer their company and its employees. Those that do may still not be prepared to pay any additional rental costs even if it can be demonstrated that there is a long term saving or benefit to the business.