

Action Planning for the ESTA

Project

Developing an Environmental Sustainability
Checklist

ESTA



Environmental Sustainability
Technical Assistance

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Project Overview

As part of the award winning ENWORKS programme, the Environmental Sustainability Technical Assistance (ESTA) project is supporting four of the North West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas to embed environmental sustainability into their economic development priorities and work streams.

The project stems from a Technical Assistance call from the ERDF Northwest Operational Programme. ENWORKS responded to this call and secured match funding from the Environment Agency to deliver an environmental sustainability technical assistance support programme, with specific resources aligned to each of the four LEP areas;

- Cheshire & Warrington
- Cumbria
- Greater Manchester, and
- Liverpool City Region

The project runs from April 2012 to December 2014.

ENWORKS has been working regionally across the LEP areas for the past decade and has a strong track record in delivering environmental sustainability support programmes.

This Technical Assistance project supports LEPs and their partners to bring forward activity which will increase their capacity and knowledge so as to ensure more effective engagement with the current North West Operational Programme (ERDF) and maximise the draw-down and impact of future EU structural funds.

The four key work streams are:

- Support the strategic input of LEP's and other local partners – establishing an environmental sustainability evidence base and priorities for sustainable growth to inform the transition to a low carbon and resilient economy,
- Support applicants in developing ERDF eligible projects,
- Support the delivery of ERDF Communications, and
- Capture lessons learnt and best practice.

Support to the LEPs is provided through a number of project resources:

- Experienced environmental practitioners work with the local areas providing expertise and knowledge,
- Commissioning additional technical research as required,
- Supporting collaborative activities between LEP areas, and
- Bringing in further specialist skills.

Our Approach to Action Planning

As part of our initial engagement with the LEPs, the project team developed a 'checklist' approach to identifying gaps through a process designed to review economic development strategies, priorities and activities against a broad set of environmental sustainability issues. This was used to identify both risks and opportunities that the ESTA project could help to mitigate or maximise.

This process enabled bespoke ESTA project action plans to be developed for each of the individual LEPs reflecting the key priorities and opportunities for each area. It is a methodology that could be replicated for other environmental sustainability action planning processes.

Ten Themes for Environmental Sustainability

In order to provide an effective framework for the engagement/review process, ten environmental sustainability themes were identified to ensure the scope of the gap analysis was comprehensive, yet relevant; they are:

1. Sustainable Consumption and Production
2. Energy Infrastructure
3. Buildings
4. Transport
5. Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services Sector
6. Skills
7. Climate Change Adaptation
8. Natural Assets
9. Pollution
10. Monitoring and measuring

These categories have proved to be a useful tool to promote discussion and debate with LEPs and their partners. In particular they have established a common ground for the consideration of prioritised action plans and enabled the LEPs' to broaden their understanding of environmental sustainability.

To assist and develop this process further, the ten environmental sustainability themes were further broken down into practical issues to enable focused consideration of the strategic policy framework and project responses that would be required to address the gaps identified. For example the 'Climate Change Adaptation' theme was further split into the following '**In Practice**' headings:

- Risks and resilience planning
- Green and blue infrastructure
- Transport infrastructure and key employment sites
- Understanding flood risks, and
- Impacts on business sectors

Existing Policy, Strategy or Initiatives.

Following the same 'In Practice' headings, an assessment of existing policy, strategy, projects or initiatives relevant to the subject was undertaken. This was simply an objective assessment of what currently had been developed to address the identified issues. This information was analysed in distinct 'policy and strategy' and 'projects and initiative' columns, to distinguish between words and action.

Gap Analysis

Based on the information collected, each subject line was then the focus of a graded gap analysis carried out by triangulating the information collected and highlighting where knowledge, evidence, policy or action was missing. Given the scale of the risk or opportunity identified by this process, the subject area was then graded - red for a significant gap, through amber and then green where there were no or an insignificant gaps. The evidence supporting the grading of the gap was listed in terms of either a lack of, or insufficient evidence, and also in terms activity.

Prioritisation

Dialogues were held with each of the LEPs, based on the information collated in the checklists, to understand the relevance and importance of the identified gaps and to establish whether these were a priority for the LEPs and their partners to address, from the perspective of both risks and opportunities.

Funding

Once the prioritised gaps for potential action were identified, the next element in the checklist established the availability and eligibility of funding for the proposed activity that would be required to fill the gap. This analysis included a review of ERDF, ESF and other environmental funding sources.

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Once the financial viability of the suggested subject area was confirmed, the final stage in this process was to determine what action could be developed by the ESTA project to help fill the gaps identified. As part of this process the potential partners that could be engaged to help deliver appropriate activities were also identified.

From this basis prioritised work programmes for each LEP could be developed and then cross referenced between LEPs to establish areas of commonality.

The Checklist Framework used by the ESTA project can be found at Appendix 1. The process and headings used have been tried and tested through the life of the programme across four LEP areas covering large urban conurbations; Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region, as well as the more rural areas of Cheshire & Warrington and Cumbria. The checklist framework has also been used to refresh the Action Plans periodically.

The methodology employed has proved invaluable to prioritise limited resources for this important agenda and the basic framework checklist approach should have utility for similar Environmental Sustainability Action Planning processes well beyond the life of the ESTA project.

A single worked example of the Checklist Framework can be found at Appendix 2.

Appendix 1 - Environmental Sustainability Checklist for LEP and their partners

Environmental Sustainability Criteria	In Practice	Importance	Evidence	Existing Policy or Strategy Document	Existing Work Progs & projects	Red/Amber/Green	Gaps	Funding Eligibility	Actions for TA project	Potential Partners
Sustainable Consumption and Production	Business resource use: Materials, water, energy and waste Business supply chains Domestic consumption Eco design Eco-innovation Food Public sector procurement Transport Waste (commercial, industrial, municipal) Water									
Energy Infrastructure	Large scale renewable and low carbon energy generation eg offshore wind, nuclear and carbon capture and storage (CCS) Small scale renewable energy production such as photovoltaics (PV), solar hot water heating, microCHP and biomass Heat networks Smart grids and smart meters Energy storage									
Buildings	Commercial - public sector including local authority owned buildings, hospitals, universities and schools. Commercial - private sector Public realm Domestic properties									
Transport	Business logistics Leisure Commuting									
Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services Sector (LCEGS) development	Business support to existing suppliers Diversification advice to new entrants Innovation Inward investment International trade									
Skills	LCEGS skills - schools LCEGS skills - further education LCEGS skills - higher education Skills for the LCEGS sector Environmental skills for other sectors Environmental awareness education									
Climate Change Adaptation	Risk and resilience planning Green and blue infrastructure Transport infrastructure and key employment sites Understanding flood risks Impacts on businesses sectors									
Natural Assets	Understanding the value of natural assets to economy, environment and socially Planning and development Agriculture and land use Marine management and water-ways Ecosystems and biodiversity Forestry and woodlands Environmental management									

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Pollution	Air									
	Water									
	Ground									
	Noise									
Monitoring and Measuring	Carbon emission data									
	Energy consumption									
	Cross-sectoral impact data									
	Climate change predictions									

Appendix 2 – A single worked example using the ETSA Environmental Sustainability Checklist

Environmental Sustainability Criteria	In Practice	Importance	Evidence	Existing Policy or Strategy Document	Existing Work Programmes & projects	Gaps (Evidence & Activity)	Funding Eligibility	Actions for TA project	Potential Partners
Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)	Business resource use: Materials, water, energy and waste	Defra research highlights £23 billion of annual business savings available through improved resource efficiency, requiring no/low investment; Projected residential and employment development up to 2025 stands to increase the City Region's energy consumption by 685 GWh a year; Over 80% of chief executives of manufacturing companies said that raw materials shortage was a risk to their business in 2012. Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership (MHWP) residual waste arisings in June 2010 were 10.51 kg/hh/wk;	Oakdene Hollins for the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2011) The Further Benefits of Business Resource Efficiency; Defra 'Resource Security Action Plan: Making the most of valuable materials' 2012 ; SEAP; Environment Agency; EEF; Resources Merseyside (2011-201)	SCP is covered to some extent within the Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) with a focus on energy efficiency and energy from waste (efw); Behavioural change measures identified in SEAP; One of the aims of the SEAP is to improve the efficiency with which energy is used; Covenant of Mayors' target of 20% carbon reduction by 2020; GI Framework includes an action to 'cultivate conditions under which bioenergy can develop as a viable and self sufficient energy source'	ENWORKS Business Support programme covers Merseyside area - to March 13; Research Centre for Electrical Energy Efficiency at JMU;	Business resource use - What are the specific risks to LCR businesses and other organisations of rising energy and resource costs? Business support programmes - risk to future delivery. i.e. ENWORKS ceases delivery Apr 2013. No other business support activity on the group linking to SCP agenda. Support can be ad-hoc and not always well joined up or communicated;	ERDF; New European Commission Energy Efficiency Fund, Green Deal, CERT, RGF;	LCR level data on scale of opportunity for business resource efficiency; Develop evidence base / case study on economic benefits of Sustainable Consumption and Production and potential risks/opportunities for LCR;	ENWORKS; Energy Saving Trust; CRed Wirral; WRAP; Defra; Daresbury Science & Innovation Campus; MRWA, Carbon Trust.

Adapted from the Environmental Sustainability Checklist for Liverpool City Region LEP and partners.



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