



case study

environmental sustainability



Objective One is
part-financed by
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The Objective One Partnership
for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

SOUTH WEST INVESTMENT GROUP (SWIG)

Trevint House
Strangways Villas
Truro, Cornwall
TR1 2PA

Telephone: 01872 223883

Email: info@southwestinvestmentgroup.co.uk

www.southwestinvestmentgroup.co.uk

the project

The South West Investment Group provides gap funding loans to small and medium sized enterprises in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to support their start-up, development and growth.

The project has received investments for a number of initiatives developing and supporting businesses; a total of £3,391,095 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) towards a total project costs of £8,595,595.

**SOUTH WEST
INVESTMENT
GROUP**



measures of environmental sustainability adopted

To take advantage of the business opportunities afforded by growing demands for environmental goods, processes and services

All SWIG's promotional materials clearly list the priority sectors which they specifically target, which include Renewable Energy, Environmental and Earth Technology sectors e.g. support has been given to Retyre of Pool (which recycles old tyres), Speiza Organic Care of Helston (which produce organic health care products), Emerson Moore Geosciences (contaminated land investigation and consultancy) and Green River Rafting (eco-tourism and education scheme on the River Fowey).

To increase awareness of residents, businesses and visitors of the value and importance of the environment

Applications for SWIG services and support must outline whether the organisation has an environmental policy. The applicant will also be interviewed on this issue to check policy is appropriate to the nature and scale of the application. All SWIG advisors are aware that applicants will be scored on their environmental sustainability so they ensure the business plan addresses these issues to satisfy the appraisal system.

To promote the prudent use of natural resources

SWIG uses ICT for the majority of its correspondence and a newly created IT network for communication.

Together with the installation of broadband which reduces the need to print out documents (as they can easily be downloaded, stored and read electronically) has reduced the amount of paper being used in the office. The office recycling system collects paper, cardboard, plastic and glass.

To protect and improve the environment

The initiative has set up a local supply chain network to enable greater trading between local businesses; businesses join the Learning Networks Programme which provides a free opportunity to get together once a month to hear from an expert speaker and network over lunch.

benefits of environmental sustainability

A number of clients already recognise that good environmental practice means good business practice, for instance the younger and more technologically advanced businesses are more aware of the importance of addressing the issues and sustainability is more ingrained in their thinking. However to many enterprises environmental sustainability isn't seen as core to their business. Therefore the selection criteria for SWIG support means they are suddenly having to think about putting together a policy and considering what they can do in the future to be more environmentally smart.



The focus on specific environmental sectors has revealed that firms found there is very good business in growth markets, so it is a very good time for businesses to engage in these activities. At the same time highly technical environmental businesses sometimes have less understanding from their bank manager of what it is they're doing so SWIG can help fill this funding gap while feeling confident it is helping a business to enter a sector which offers opportunities for growth and success.

The installation of broadband (via the **actnow**, Objective One project) has really increased efficiency as it is possible to receive more information electronically, saving time and ensuring deadlines are met. Another benefit of the use of ICT is that the communication within SWIG is better as information is easily exchangeable through the communication network even if staff aren't able to meet up face to face.

In summary the economic benefits created through the adoption of environmental sustainability measures include working with growth sectors; being able to provide essential guidance to mainstream business; increased efficiencies and improved communication.

lessons learnt

John Peters, Fund Manager, said:

"There has never been a truer time to say 'where there's muck there's brass' e.g. the environmental waste management sector has got huge potential now that such European directives are requiring us to deal with end of life goods in new ways.

"In a world that's becoming more environmentally conscious it is important for business to increase its own environmental credibility, to impress customers with what they are selling. Consider environmental sustainability as part of your overall marketing strategy particularly if you are looking to deal with the outside world.

"A lot of businesses are micro businesses so the opportunity to step outside their furrow and get opinions from experts or other businesses at the Learning Networks events while also making contacts for trade has been very popular."

For more information about how you can incorporate environmental sustainability into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk.