

Sustainability and innovation

Research, events, training, consultancy and information...

The Centre for Sustainable Design® (CfSD) was established in 1995 and is based at University for the Creative Arts (UCA) in Farnham, Surrey. CfSD is a research centre focused on sustainability (environmental, economic, social) and innovation with a strong track record of knowledge transfer. The Centre has worked internationally with policymakers, companies and academia in Europe, North America and Asia, and participated in a range of European and UK-funded projects www.cfsd.org.uk/projects. CfSD offers research, events, training, consultancy and its website provides extensive information. CfSD is led by Martin Charter, who has been engaged in business sustainability issues for 25 years in business and academia.

Conferences

Since 1995, CfSD has been organising a series of international conferences related to sustainability and innovation. Sustainable Innovation 2013 www.cfsd.org.uk/events/sustainable-innovation-2013 will be the 18th in the series and be organised on 4th-5th November 2013 at UCA Epsom in the UK. Previous conferences have been organised in Brussels, Stuttgart, Bonn, Farnham, London, Stockholm, Malmo, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Chicago. Over 2,000 delegates have attended events from over 50 countries from business, government and academia. Details of papers presented at previous conferences can be downloaded from www.cfsd.org.uk/Sustainable%20Innovation/cfsd_si-proceedings.html.

Projects

CfSD has extensive experience in leading



and partnering in European and UK funded projects related to sustainability and innovation (see Table 1).

GreenThink!© is a unique one day green innovation process based on company needs. The course is designed to identify new business opportunities, develop a vision and strategies to capitalise on those opportunities and highlight marketing issues.

Case study: eco-innovation business support in the UK Projects

CfSD and partners provided eco-innovation business support to over 600 SMEs in the southeast of England between 2009 and 2013. 566 SMEs benefited from eco-innovation business support through the CfSD led Sustainable Supply Chains through

Innovation (SUSCIN) project funded by ERDF and DCLG between 2009 and 2012 (see Table 2). In parallel, between 2009 and 2011 CfSD supported 30 SMEs through the INTERREG IVA '2 Seas' Environmental Market and Innovation Development' (EcoMind) project. CfSD is continuing to work with 36 SMEs as part of an EC INTERREG IVA funded eco-innovation project called FUSION (2012-14).

Business support provided by CfSD through EcoMind, SUSCIN and FUSION has enabled SMEs to accelerate the development of eco-innovative products, technologies and services. Typically, this related to:

- Existing eco-innovative solutions: enhancing eco-business aspects, market links; improved market research and marketing material; and
- New eco-innovative solutions concepts: providing external input and referrals, e.g. to potential collaborators, customers (or

Table 1: A selection of projects undertaken by The Centre for Sustainable Design®

Project	Duration	Funding programme
FUSION (www.cfsd.org.uk/sids/fusion) Provision of events and in-depth one to one consultancy support for 36 SMEs on eco-innovation in the southeast of England	2012-14	EC IV A North Seas
Sustainable Supply Chains through Innovation (SUSCIN; www.suscin.org.uk and www.cfsd.org.uk/sids/suscin) Provision of business support on eco-innovation to 566 SMEs in the SE of England through events and one to one consultancy. Linking buyers to eco-innovative SME suppliers through brokerage events and workshops	2009-12	EC European Regional Development Fund /Department of Communities and Local Government
Towards Zero Waste in Industrial Networks (ZEROWIN; www.zerowin.eu) European thematic network focused on zero waste in various industry sectors	2009-14	EC Framework Programme (FP7)
Environmental Market and Innovation Development (ECOMIND; www.cfsd.org.uk/sids/ECOMIND) Organisation of workshops and provision of one to one consultancy support for 30+ SMEs on eco-innovation in the southeast of England	2008-11	EC Interreg IV A North Seas
Civil Society Platform on SCP (DelibProc; www.scp-dialogue.net) Research and workshops related to civil society organisations (CSOs) engaged in sustainable consumption and production (SCP) activities	2008-10	EC Framework Programme (FP7)
'Centre of Excellence' in Sustainable Innovation & Design (www.cfsd.org.uk/coe-sid) Research and events related to the development of an eco-innovation network and lab, procurement as a driver for eco-innovation and 'design for remanufacturing'	2006-7	Defra SE BREW Fund (SEEDA) – project funding
Sustainable Consumption Research Exchanges (SCORE; www.score-network.org) Multi-stakeholder/sector related research and events related to SCP	2005-8	EC Framework Programme (FP6)
Asia Eco-Design Electronics (AEDE; www.cfsd.org.uk/aede) Conferences, research, publications and software developed related to eco-design in China, India and Thailand	2005-7	EC Asia Pro-Eco (Aid)
ECO-Efficient LIFE-cycle Technologies 2 (ECOLIFE 2 www.re-use.net/sat/English/ecolifell.html) European thematic network focused on eco-design and recycling in the electronics sector	2002-6	EC Framework Programme 5 (FP5) – GROW
The 'State-of-the-Art' in Eco-design in the Chinese, Taiwan and Hong Kong Electronics Sectors (www.cfsd.org.uk/aede) Report on the 'state-of-the-art' in eco-design in the electronics sector in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong	2003-4	UK PERA – former Department of Trade and Industry-funded mission – project funding
Integrated Product Policy (IPP), Consumption and Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂) Reduction A research report on the links between IPP, consumption and CO ₂ reduction	2002-3	AIST (Japan)
An eco-design route map for the Taiwan electronics sector A research report on how to take forward eco-design in the Taiwan's electronics sector	2002	Taiwan –Department of Industrial Technology and the Electronics Testing Centre
The 'State-of-the-Art' in Eco-design in the Japanese Electronics Sector (www.cfsd.org.uk/aede) Report on the 'state-of-the-art' in eco-design in the electronics sector in Japan	2001-2002	UK former Department of Trade and Industry-funded mission – project funding

those representing their interests) and potential funders.

Conclusions

Many of the lessons learnt from the EcoMind, SUSCIN and FUSION projects are similar or related. For example:

- There is need for regional catalysts that can provide independent and objective advice and support to eco-innovative SMEs from idea generation through R&D to commercialisation. SUSCIN reinforced the important role that these catalysts play in bringing knowledge and experience to SMEs from a broad network of business, research, technical and funding contacts;

- Intervention early in eco-innovation process using a customer (rather than product) focus is most beneficial coupled with a combination of networking and creativity techniques to stimulate new business/product ideas. This was embodied in the GreenThink!© innovation process organised for 36 SMEs with SUSCIN www.cfsd.org.uk/training1/greenthink innovation process. Feedback showed that SMEs that participated in the GreenThink!© workshops commonly achieved a more strategic and focused approach to development of new eco-innovative products, services and technologies.

"An excellent day that takes you on a chal-

lenging but positive journey that makes you take stock of the business direction and focus on the real issues surrounding the business. Great 'out of the box' thinking. I can't be positive enough about the GreenThink!© process," Anthony Morgan, Managing Director, New Form Energy Limited

CfSD and partners provided eco-innovation business support to over 600 SMEs in the southeast of England between 2009 and 2013.

Training

CfSD provides three training programmes for companies related to sustainability: innovation, design and marketing. Training can be provided face to face or online. For example, GreenThink!© is a unique one day green innovation process based on company needs. The course is designed to identify new business opportunities, develop a vision and strategies to capitalise on those opportunities and highlight marketing issues. The course is a unique mix of commercial content, creativity exercises and processes in a fun environment. An actionable report is provided for the company after the course.

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Table 2: Results of SUSCIN project

SUSCIN outputs, results and impacts	Cumulative value for project
Business won	£2.3m
Net increase in Gross Value Added	£0.99m
Additional employment directly related to SUSCIN (Additional employment among SMEs engaged in SUSCIN)	3.27 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs (114.35 FTE jobs in 31 SMEs)
Number of businesses improving performance	18
Number of businesses increasing percentage of turnover attributable to new and improved products by 5%	17
Number of SMEs tendering for public sector contracts	50
SMEs tendering/bidding for public or private contract opportunities or tenders in next 4-6 months	23 (11 identified indicative values totalling £9.4m)
Number of businesses within the region engaged in new collaboration with UK knowledge base	249 documented links
Number of businesses in the region developing R&D links with other businesses	53 documented SME-SME links
SMEs confirming SUSCIN helped to identify reductions in the environmental impacts of products/services/ technologies	44
Buyers engaged reducing the sustainability impacts of their supply chains	340 buyer attendances from over 120 buyer organisations