

Select Committee Recommendations on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources SEEDA Response

Recommendation	SEEDA's Response
<p>Recommendation 1 – SEEDA could achieve greater impact through deeper involvement with fewer projects</p>	<p>The principles of sustainable development are integrated throughout the 2006-2016 RES. As well as guiding the activities of our partners, the new strategy provides a strong steer for SEEDA's own sustainable development activities, including the prudent use of natural resources. We will evaluate existing initiatives against this new framework with a view to identifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities which can be mainstreamed by SEEDA's main delivery mechanisms e.g. Business Link • activities which can be mainstreamed into other SEEDA activities • remaining gaps in activity and knowledge where pilot and feasibility work could add most value • existing activities which add little value and should therefore be discontinued.
<p>Recommendation 2 – The Implementation Plan of the revised RES should set a timetable with actions to explain how sustainability targets will be achieved between 2006 and 2016, with an emphasis on measures to intensify the drive to make business in the South East more prudent users of natural resources</p>	<p>SEEDA recognises the importance of an implementation plan that sets out a realistic timetable and set of measures. This work is under way., and by December 2006 we aim to have agreed a first draft of the implementation plan for endorsement by the Assembly.</p>

<p>Recommendation 3 – SEEDA provides funding to some of the networks and partnerships it sits on. This provides leverage and influence, which should be used to ensure these groups establish an action-orientated approach. Clear, deliverable targets should be set to allow monitoring and to ensure actions are focused.</p>	<p>We will review all the networks and partnerships we support within the context of implementing the new RES. We will be seeking a stronger correlation between our investment and partnership activities that most effectively achieved the objectives and targets in the RES</p> <p>SEEDA's Sustainable Development Team has also recently been re-organised to create greater capacity to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our projects and partnerships in relation to the RES objectives and targets.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 – To maximise the wider impact and effectiveness of its activities, SEEDA should develop en disseminate good practice effectively – for example, through guidance notes showing the practical detail of “how to” or lessons learned. Case studies should be readily available through SEEDA's website and newsletter. This guidance should include robust economic evidence that demonstrates the commercial advantage of sustainable natural resource use to the region's business</p>	<p>SEEDA recognises that we have developed a considerable amount of knowledge, expertise and examples of good practice, and agree we should now capitalise on this by disseminating more widely. We recognise that case studies, backed up with robust statistical information are particularly helpful to businesses and organisations that are seeking to make informed decisions in relation to the use of natural resources.</p> <p>In the re-organisation of the Sustainable Development team we have created a link role which will work with SEEDA's Communications Team, as well as draw together up to date information for the SEEDA website and newsletter, on a regular basis.</p>

<p>Recommendation 5 – SEEDA should aim to demonstrate to the business community, based on its own experience, the benefits of gaining ISO14001 accreditation, including reduced energy use and waste and the financial benefits of adopting environmental management good practice</p>	<p>SEEDA is on track to achieve ISO 14001 accreditation in 2007. This includes investigating the installation a biomass boiler. The externally commissioned feasibility study includes a robust cost benefit analysis and is a specific case study in how SEEDA intends to lead by example.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 – SEEDA should benchmark its own approach to promoting sustainable land management, including an examination of the approach taken by AWM and any lessons for the South East, to identify where it can better encourage innovation in linking rural economic development activities to sustainable land management</p>	<p>SEEDA will look at best practice models of bench marking, including the examination of the AWM approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are already actively seeking to encourage innovation through new products and processes using plants and the potential for commercial growing. We are working with the National Non Food Crops Centre in York and have identified several crops appropriate for the SE. Progress will be monitored and reported by the South East Rural Partners • We will undertake evaluation of our support to farm diversification, biomass and other land-based sectors and its impact on sustainable land management • We are actively looking at the support given to rural based businesses and will be developing new models of support with Business Links