



**ECODESIGN CENTRE WALES /
CANOLFAN ECODDYLUNIO CYMRU**

**Response to the Welsh Assembly Government's
'Climate Change Strategy, High Level Policy
Consultation'**

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Prepared by Ecodesign Centre 18 February 2009





Ecodesign Centre

The Ecodesign Centre (EDC) is an applied research organisation that aims to build capacity and capabilities to enable effective ecodesign. The setting-up of EDC was supported by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) as part of its statutory commitment to sustainable development. EDC staff are employees of the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC) who manage and administer the funding.

Ecodesign is essential for meeting Wales's environmental challenges of the future – including moving to a low carbon economy as well as reducing waste, encouraging innovation and promoting sustainable consumption. EDC also believe that ecodesign can play a bridging role helping to facilitate intended policy outcomes.

EDC Feedback

EDC would like to commend the WAG upon preparing a very comprehensive but also very comprehensible document. EDC do not have the expertise to comment on the scientific significance of the targets and therefore will only respond to specific questions.

The format of the report is refreshing. The recognition of the role that 'users' or citizens and the community play is commended by EDC. The targets set by the WAG will only be achieved via a shared vision and this will require shared commitments. EDC believe that this strategy document provides a solid foundation from which WAG can develop appropriate actions.

The Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), WWF and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in their study "80% Challenge: Delivering a low carbon UK" (October 2007), state that UK government needs a much more aggressive focus on energy efficiency across all sectors matched with an ambitious implementation programme for renewable energy. EDC hope that the resulting WAG Climate Change Action Plan will be as equally robust and propose radical interventions supported by effective policy learning mechanisms.

EDC believe that the objective of capacity building is fundamental. The WAG could express in the "Vision" a point related to alternative modes of learning. It specifically talks about the need for adaptation to be continuous and for society to be eco-literate therefore; in order for this to be achieved education and learning will no longer have to be seen as a specific fixed activity but more of an integral part of a career / life journey. This will be delivered through new professional development / learning models.



Responses to Consultation Questions

Question 3: Does our proposed approach to broader consumption emissions seem reasonable?

Yes. From EDC's perspective 'Consumer items' was the fourth highest ecological factor in relation to Wales' ecological footprint and therefore EDC would like to see stronger links to the EU Sustainable Consumption and Production action plan. Can the strategy explore how a Welsh Sustainable Consumption and Production action plan could assist with the Climate Change focus areas?

Question 5: Do you agree with the areas we have identified for developing strategic actions?

Yes.

Question 6: Are there other key actions we should focus on developing for inclusion in the consultation on the programme of action to tackle climate change?

EDC believe that the objective of capacity building is fundamental to all fields. This significance needs to be reflected within the strategy. Should 'Education and Skills' be a strategic action due to the fact that this area will require WAG investment (some of which will be required prior to 2011 in order to help reach targets)?

Should 'Innovation and R&D' related to low power services and energy using products as well as renewable energy generation be an emission reduction policy area? Without recognition of this, is there a risk that the actions will not complement innovation related policy development?

EDC believe that eco and social innovation will be key to helping Wales address these significant social, economic and technical challenges. The Strategy will need to promote sustainable innovation and social / eco entrepreneurs in order to encourage small-scale mobilisation and regional responses.

Question 7: How can we ensure that action to deliver our climate change objectives contributes to our wider policy agenda for example on improving health, addressing inequalities, building strong communities and developing strong sustainable economy?



This can be ensured by underpinning all policy interventions with life cycle thinking and ensuring that the WAG have a clearer Sustainable Development strategic plan that acts as a constant reference or guide for effective decision making.

The strategic use of design in non-traditional design environments such as public sector and policy development has been successfully demonstrated. Design methodology such as 'transformation design' could be used successfully by the WAG and its partners to look at regeneration issues holistically.

For example Southwark Circle, is a unique public-private partnership with Southwark Council, Sky Participle and the Department for Work & Pensions who collectively designed new services to improve the quality of life and well-being of older people. Energy issues, fuel poverty and transport poverty are obviously areas that could be embedded into this activity. 'Clinic To Go', working with staff from Birmingham North and East NHS Primary Care Trust (PCT) with an organization called 'thinkpublic' developed a new method for increasing localised health care. This project included looking at how to bring health care closer to the patients home. 'Green Homes Concierge' was a pioneering service, developed over two years by Ten Lifestyle Management Ltd and the London Development Agency to look at home energy use, exploring sources of home energy use and developing new systems of home energy management. This work could become part of a new home-owners package following up upon the Home Information Pack.

By taking a fresh approach and understanding relationships as well as the individual components, projects can co-create effective solutions that bridge all of the above agendas.

The strategy does acknowledge the need for joined up policy development. It would be good to see a common political vision illustrating how this document links to other policy development. Whether it is horizontal – across departments (each minister signs) or vertical – assembly, wag, regional authorities, local authority, intermediary orgs and social partners. This would help to illustrate key policy learning opportunities across the WAG and allow the government to act upon any adverse trends identified.

Question 8: How should the response to the challenges posed by climate change be developed to reflect differences across Wales?

Policy responses will need to use mixed methods that balance both specific targets alongside mechanisms to support an inclusive approach to problem solving.



There is a real need to enable the exploration and development of unmet needs and niche markets. This will require innovation and social and eco-entrepreneurial thinking. Small scale ventures need to be mobilized creating projects that can make a significant local impact and help to inform and influence the whole region. As has been proven, no one size solution fits all and a localised response can make a significant impact as well as being extremely transferable.

To promote eco and social innovation the WAG to need to explore informal support channels including new ideas around risk capital and new commercialisation models. Eco and social entrepreneurs need to be given the tools to evolve and therefore any support or policy 'responses' will need to be dynamic.

Again, design methodology such as transformation design (see response to Question 7) could be used successfully by the WAG and its partners to help to look at the regional climate change issues holistically.

Question 9

Where should we focus action for emission reduction in the residential sector?

Now that all new housing stock will need to meet the Code of Sustainable Home, existing housing stock has to be a priority.

Running parallel to this, EDC believe that energy using products in the home should be targeted and greater work undertaken with organisations such as the Energy Savings Trust to promote low power products and influence user behaviour / interaction. This presents a clear opportunity to use design as a tool to change or inform behaviour.

Question 10

Where should we focus action for emission reduction in the transport sector?

Well designed public transport systems focusing on key hubs such as schools, universities and hospitals.

Question 12

Where should we focus action for emission reduction in the public sector?

Although cited as a strategic action EDC feel that procurement guidance for consumables and energy using products and services across all public service sectors should be included.



The urban environment and its related communities seem to fall between categories but this area does require a guardian. Urban spaces are significant energy consumers due to population density and the intense mix of business and residents. These environments and associated systems will be important for all future planning to match carbon demand with delivery. For this reason, does the WAG think this should be an additional public sector action?

Following on from this point, there are initiatives focussing upon urban sustainable energy issues. One of the most recent is the Covenant of Mayors 'Beyond 20-20-20 by 2020' agreement. The Covenant of Mayors is a voluntary commitment by signatory towns and cities to go beyond the objectives of EU energy policy in terms of reduction in CO₂ and publicly report upon progress. None of the 17 UK towns or cities already signed up to the Covenant of Mayors are located in Wales.

A focus area for action should be mechanisms and incentives to promote innovation and good practice which will stimulate engagement with new ways of working and specialist advisory services.

Question 13

Where should we focus action for emission reduction in the waste sector?

Tackling the wider consumption emissions related to waste as well as greater ways to promote reuse and recycling.

Question 14

Where should we focus action for emission reduction in the business sector?

Developing accessible low carbon technologies appropriate for Wales is a key focus area.

EDC would also like to see the 'knowledge' in Wales increasing and propose establishing sector-based sustainability learning hubs to intensify local eco-literacy.

Wales recognises the need to maintain the value that it has invested in people. This now needs to be extended to reflect how people value the products and service systems that they consume. Social and technical solutions need to be found to enable these resources to be maintained, reused, recycled and reformed, for the benefit of Wales: rather than as a hindrance to Wales. Life cycle / cradle to cradle thinking needs to be encouraged in order to close the loop. Greater innovation and R&D around



these areas is critical to develop the necessary technical and social solutions.

Following on from this point, as well as working with the Environment team of FS4B, the Business Innovation Model (BIM) team will also be an important intermediary delivering advice and support.

Question 15

Does our proposed approach to adaptation seem reasonable?

Yes

Question 16

In what specific areas should we focus adaptation action?

Eco-literacy is critical on all levels including policy makers, civil servants, professionals as well as students. All organisations will need to be assisted to ensure that they can confidently meet expectations and reflect the WAG's aspirations. This will include innovative communication, new information and evaluation techniques to inform decision making. It is often the case that an initial project's expectations and intentions reflect a need to tackle more challenging and strategic issues. Because of this there is a need to strike a balance between both individual and organisational learning. The Scheme needs to support this type of organisational understanding. Building capacity and capabilities around resource efficiency leadership, management and the development of innovative new business models will be absolutely crucial.

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