



TOYOTA



Schools for Sustainable Development Community Action Programme

13 Steps to Planning and Delivering a Project

Education for Sustainable Development can make an excellent focus for community projects. Many young people and communities are unhappy about the state of their surroundings and community projects can be a valuable way to involve young people and improve their environments.

During the lifetime of a project there will be a number of issues and responsibilities that will need to be addressed. These issues fall into two main categories. The first of these is management of the project process - ensuring things happen at the right time and that all parts of the regeneration approach are considered before final decisions are made.

The other element is the participation of people involved in the project, from contractors to local people and other project partners - this is covered in the second part of this document.

• Step 1: First things first...

All projects need to be planned to some extent. Careful thinking through at the 'preparation' stages and a step-by-step approach through the 'doing' stages are the main ingredients for success. But before you start it is worth thinking about the following:

- Why is the project needed?
- What do we hope to achieve?
- How are we going to achieve it?

- **Step 2: Getting ideas together...**

Before you can start planning your project you will need to think about why the project is needed and what you hope to achieve - in project management terms these will become your aims and objectives.

Things to think about may include:

- How does my site fit into what is happening or what is needed in the rest of my neighbourhood, town, village - **how does it fit into the bigger picture?**
- **What potential does the site have?** - what benefits could the site bring for people and for nature?
- **Who am I going to work with?** - nearly all successful projects are achieved by people working together.
- **What is the future for the site?** - even at this stage you need to start thinking about the long term; who will look after the site over the next 5, 10, 50 years? And **how long are you yourself going to be able to be involved?**

- **Step 3: What does the site suggest/lend itself to...**

All sites are different and these differences will suggest ways you can work **with** the site and with **nature** to achieve your aims and objectives. Detailed survey work and design work will come later but for now think about the main characteristics of your site..

- Physical characteristics
 - What physical features are already there?
 - What plants and animals are on the site?
- Site location
 - How is it currently being used?
- Cultural significance
 - What's the history of the site and the surrounding area?
 - Is there anything left of significance e.g. old buildings or artefacts?

- **Step 4: Who am I going to work with?...**

Some initial thoughts about the people who should be involved with the project will be useful. Some questions to ask might include:

- Who is the Site owner? - They will need to be involved in your project even if it is only to give approval for your proposals!
- Are you working with friends and neighbours? Have you thought about forming yourself into a more formal group?
- What other partners do you need to plan and organise the project? You may be able to do all the work within your own group, or you may need the help of outside groups, experts and funding bodies. What is available locally to help?
- Are there existing groups in your area who might be able to help, or who could tell you about their own project?
- What about local residents - do you know what people living near the site think?
 - Local residents may want to get involved with the project.
 - Public events will give people an opportunity to find out about your project and become more involved.
 - Are there any special interest groups who may have an interest and so be able to contribute to different aspects of your project?
 - Mother and Toddler groups may be interested if you are providing a young children's play area.
 - Local wildlife groups could help if you are interested in enhancing or maintaining the ecological value of your site.
- Are there planning restrictions on what you can do on the site? Has the site already been included in any plans made by the local authority?
 - Can the local authority help you with your project?
- Do you need professional help?
 - Does the project need help from outside professionals or organisations?
- Have you considered where the money's coming from?

- It may be worth talking to potential funding bodies at the early stages of developing the project to include them as part of your partnership. This will help planning time-scales and they may provide grant funding to help develop your initial ideas.

- **Step 5: What is the future for the site?...**

Even at this initial stage it is worthwhile thinking about the future of the site. If you consider some of the long-term challenges at the outset your plans for the site are more likely to be sustainable.

Be realistic about how much time you and the other members of the How will the future care of the site be provided?

- Determine if your group could help look after the site, or if maintenance work will be undertaken by others such as the site owner, the local authority or a third party.
- Who will be legally responsible for the site when the project is completed?

The key to success is ensuring that your plans are "socially, economically and environmentally sustainable"

- **Step 6: Linking it all together...**



If you have carefully thought through all of these questions you should be much clearer about you aims and objectives.

- **Step 7: Legal Issues - planning**

There are four main legal issues relating to land regeneration that you will need to consider at this planning stage:

A Land rights and consents These include:

- Getting the site owner's consent
- Getting planning approval
- Obtaining other statutory consents relating to public rights of way, nature conservation.

B Site liability and regulation

By carrying out work on a site or taking over the ownership of a piece of land you may become subject to different types of liability

C Health and Safety

Health and safety needs to be considered at all stages of project development, from making initial visits to the site through construction to ongoing use and maintenance.

D Contracts

Contracts define the supply of a service or good in exchange for a consideration (i.e. money). Contracts can range from very simple to the very formal, depending on the complexity and value of the service or good required.

- **Step 8: Financial planning - how to pay for the project**

A major barrier to many community-based projects is often seen as money, or lack of it.. This process starts right at the beginning of every project - however big or small - and the issue continues after the main project work has been completed.

Financial planning: costing - An idea of the cost of a project is needed before funds can be obtained.

Fundraising: Once the costs of a project have been assessed then funds have to be raised. This includes identifying possible donors, dealing with the requirements of any application process and issues such as match funding
Financial management: In order to keep track of expenditure and ensure that this remains within budget, suitable financial management regimes must be put in place

Insurance: The holding of insurance can protect the project and those involved in it from financial problems should something go wrong. This can be from over-runs on contracts, accidents on site during and after the

project and environmental liabilities resulting from the possibility of contamination existing on the site

Costing

Costing is a fundamental part of project planning, yet is essentially a common sense procedure with which we are all familiar in our day-to-day lives. It involves identifying all the different project items, estimating (or finding out) how much they will cost and adding them up! Costing becomes complicated when the activities being costed are complicated - or unfamiliar or uncertain. Some costs can be more readily anticipated and calculated than others. For example, estimating the purchase costs of an item with a stable price history is relatively straightforward and accurate, whereas estimating the cost of staff time is likely to be more difficult.

Costings are important in deciding whether a project or project component is worthwhile or feasible. While in community projects there will be many other considerations to take into account in determining whether and how to proceed, it would be unthinkable to proceed without considering costs.

Like other planning techniques, costing can be done with different degrees of care and detail. Initially a quick and outline estimating exercise may be sufficient to determine whether to move ahead. Later on, fuller and more reliable figures can be substituted prior to making firm decisions to proceed.

Costing helps in designing project activities and deciding how best to do them. From a costing exercise it also becomes clear which particular project items need to be especially focused on. These are likely to be the items where relatively small differences in unit costs could have a large impact on the overall project costs and/or those items where there is a high degree of uncertainty with a risk that, unless carefully managed, costs could 'run away'.

Of course costs represent only one part of the financial considerations of a project and, over time, they need to be at least balanced by project income. This raises the question of what should be the starting point in drawing up a project budget, the income or the costs? Although it will inevitably be an iterative process, the starting point should really be project costs. This is because costs relate directly to what a project aspires to do or achieve. There are risks in starting with the income; it can restrict thinking, overlook some income options and, worst of all,

generate projects driven by the logic of spending available money within a set timeframe rather than delivering something that people actually want.

Making sure you have enough money to cover the cost of your project is, of course, crucial. Financial planning comes in two equally important parts: making sure you know in detail how much your project will cost and then raising the money to do it.

A How much will the project cost?

- Your cost estimate will get more accurate as the details of the project are developed. At the initial stages you may only have an outline estimate, but as the project plans become more detailed, so will the estimates.
- The design and the financial planning processes are inter-linked: there is no point coming up with an elaborate project design, if there is no means of raising the money to pay for it!
- It's always worth including a sum for contingencies, that is for meeting unexpected additional costs which are likely to arise in almost any project.

B Fundraising:

- There are many places you can go to find funding for a regeneration project. These include grants from the public, private and voluntary sector as well as sponsorship, donations and group fundraising efforts.

• Step 9: Project Management

- As well as planning what you want to do you also need to plan how you are going to do it. This involves project management. By planning in advance how your project will be managed, you will help ensure that the right things happen at the right time and that the project is successful in achieving its aims and objectives.

The main management tasks to be decided at this stage are:

A Define roles and responsibilities

Make sure that every one knows what they are doing and why. The roles needed will vary from project to project but will include:

- Project manager
- Landowner
- Community representatives
- Client (individual or body employing contractor)

- Contractor
- Contract manager (e.g. architect or landscape architect, engineer who administers construction contract)
- Funding organisations

B Ensuring everybody stays involved

The project design and planning process can be managed to ensure that the wider community is involved in all stages of decision making as the project progresses. Although this may add to the time scale for the project development, it will reap benefits in the long term and is a key element of project sustainability.

C Bringing in outside help

- Working with other organisations and professionals can bring added value and skills to your project that may not exist within your group.

- **Step 10: Site work, tasks and work programmes**

There are several different ways of carrying out work on your site - using contractors, volunteers or other local groups. There are important things to remember with each.

Table 1: Project implementation methods

Method	Notes
Working with contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful for work that is too dangerous, technical or large scale for volunteers to undertake e.g. large scale landscape and earthmoving, tree surgery, larger construction projects. • Select your contractors on the basis of recommendation, from an approved list held by your local authority and/or through a formal tendering procedure. • Draw up a contract that will cover issues such as defects liability, procedure for valuation, approval of works and payment terms, project programme, liability/ insurance etc.
Working with volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good way of keeping the wider community involved in the project. Has added benefits in helping people develop their own confidence and skills and making them more likely to help look after the site in the long term. • Working with volunteers requires the careful planning of tasks, materials, tools, training, and health and safety. Although you are not paying for labour, the project may take longer to plan and to carry out on site. • Some type of work may be unsuitable for volunteers. See above.
Working with children/young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See working with volunteers. Involving young people can give projects a valuable educational benefit and be a useful way of spreading the word among parents and other family members. • There are important additional liabilities to consider including child protection legislation. • Tasks need to be planned to be fun and achievable.
Working with agencies/training groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may involve mixing elements of volunteer work with more formal contractor working and so needs a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. • Time scales and quality of work may be different to

Method	Notes
	<p>working with a professional contractor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By working with locally based training or employment organisations, your project may be directly contributing to your local economy and providing a number of other wider benefits.

Step 11: Insurance

Undertaking a restoration project on land that may be contaminated or may hold potential liabilities can entail some risk. Insurance is a good way of managing that risk to ensure that if something does happen then provision is in place to cover the outcomes financially.

Types of risk

Third party risks	If activities on the site result in damage to other people or other people's property then those responsible for those activities may be liable for the damage. Similarly if the condition of the site is such that pollution spreads to off-site locations again those responsible for the site may be liable.
Risk associated with contamination or other remediation issues (if relevant)	The existence of contamination can provide a number of risks in addition to those described above. Clean up costs can be unpredictable, as can investigative work and legal costs associated with any regulatory requirements.
Site work risks	Having either contractors or volunteers on a site undertaking work causes risks to exist. The work could also worsen existing problems or create new ones.
Risk involved in volunteers and community involvement	Involving community groups and volunteers in a project entails risk as undertaking site work can result in accidents and damage to people and property.
General risks	As with any piece of property there is a risk from flooding, vandalism and theft.

The main legal issues you need to consider during the implementation phase of the project are:

A Liabilities during construction.

These include:

- Employers liability: This includes employees (and volunteers) who may be harmed as a result of working on the project.
- Public liability: This includes harm to members of the public who use the site (includes use after work has been completed).
- Third party liability: Damage to third parties or their property e.g. neighbouring boundaries.
- Damage to works and plant: Damage to construction plant or to works during and after implementation.

B Health and safety

Health and Safety is often seen as a matter more related to power tools or to too many hours spent in front of a computer than community work. But it is also an issue for community workers - this section shows why and describes actions to take to ensure community work is safe for everyone concerned. Every organisation should have a clear health and safety policy, which should cover the types of work that may be done by community and outreach staff.

Risk Assessments

The basis for all safety work should be assessing the likely risks. Community projects can take place in hazardous areas. A risk assessment should be completed for all new projects, and should include the following:

- * All practical conservation tasks
- * All tasks involving the community
- * All public events

This especially important if:

- * Health and safety considerations suggests there may be the chance of an accident

- * The nature of the issue to be discussed at an event is contentious
- * Known individuals are expected to attend and are likely to cause difficulties

Once this routine is established it should not be time-consuming. The key is to assess the overall level of risk as High, Medium or Low risk. If a project is High risk, you should immediately consider whether to proceed. For any High or Medium risk task the next step should be to consider which specific activities result in this classification, and what can be done to reduce the risk before starting. This may involve altering the planned work.

Health and safety problems can occur in any area of work, whether it is working on site with power tools, working in an office or at a public meeting. Within a project team there should be someone responsible for health and safety and all team members should know who that person is. This person should have appropriate training. There should also be someone in the team who has had first aid training, particularly for on-site work.

There should be a clear health and safety policy, and that policy should cover the types of work that may be done by a project team, the community and outreach staff. It is important to ensure that everyone involved in the project work has received adequate training, information, instruction and supervision to ensure that work is conducted safely.

General health and safety issues;

- Ensure that all employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors are aware of safety procedures (including fire procedures).
- Ensure that any equipment purchased, borrowed or hired for use in the project is inherently safe and is properly installed and that staff have proper training in its use.
- Ensure that there is first aid cover available for project activities.
- All accidents and 'near misses' should be properly recorded and reported and an investigation should be carried out to determine causal factors.
- Ensure all insurances required are in place

- Ensure that no subcontractors are engaged until their health and safety policy has been read and understood. The contents of the policy should be pertinent to the proposed work to be carried out.
- The following is a list of general hazards that might apply to any area of project work, whether on site, community work or public events, and should be assessed for risk:
 - age of volunteers working on project
 - any special needs of people working on project
 - supervision of volunteers: competency, numbers
 - working with schoolchildren: inside/outside/around school
 - working with schoolchildren: inside/outside businesses
 - working with schoolchildren: handling materials and equipment
 - supervision: adult/child ratio
 - transporting schoolchildren
 - disposal of waste materials
- Health and safety should be a major consideration in the implementation phase of any project.
- By now you should have planned your project work carefully, undertaken risk assessment of all the site operations and taken action to minimise risk during the implementation stage. You now need to make sure that everyone who has access to your site understands and follows the health and safety procedures in place.

C Contracts

- You may be using different forms of contract, for example buy to materials, to employ contractors, to employ artists or architects. These are all legal agreements and you need to be fully aware of their implications for you and your group.

- **Step 12: Project management - implementation**

Making sure the work is done properly and efficiently is quite a task, especially if you are using a lot of outside groups or contractors. Professional assistance may well be needed especially if the project is large or complex. Learning the basics of good project management will stand you in good stead.

Whichever of the many project management systems you choose to adopt, make sure you are able to co-ordinate:

A Project programming

- The planning of the many different tasks that need to be performed by members of the project team. You will need to consider deadlines and priorities, which tasks rely on others, lead-in time, and seasonal influences on when work can take place.

B Budget control

- Project management is closely linked to financial management; each will influence the other. Good project management will help you achieve your project both effectively and economically.

C Community participation

- The implementation stage is the most visible part of the whole project, so is an ideal time to involve local people. Site activities can be fun, and high profile events such as tree planting days or participatory arts projects can involve hundreds of volunteers!
- Remember celebration is an important part of participation!

D Working with funders and working with other agencies/ professionals

- You should have developed a clear understanding of the requirements of funding bodies, right from the planning stage. It is important to set up a system to ensure that you record and are able to demonstrate to funders that you have achieved everything you said you would when you applied for the grant. This will save you time at the end of the works when you will need to submit claims and reports and will help ensure that there is no risk of having to return grants.

- **Step 13: Long-term use and management**

The final stage of the project is to ensure that all your hard work does not go to waste.

You should be aiming to deliver a project that is sustainable - that endures and evolves for many years into the future.

It is important to remember that your project is more likely to last if you consider issues of long-term management at the **very beginning** of the planning process.

Once you have completed the work on site it is important to review your progress to see if you have met your original aims and objectives. You now need to plan in detail for future management and maintenance. It may be that your project was just a first phase of many future phases of work on the same site.

And now you have...

A SUCCESSFUL WELL-PLANNED AND DELIVERED PROJECT!

Schools for Sustainable Development Community Action Programme

Guide on Participation

Community Participation

Giving young people a say in matters that affect them and the places where they live and work is simple common sense. It makes sense for environmental projects and local councils to consult with communities— local people know the real issues and problems in an area and may well have ideas on how to deal with them. It also makes sense for local people to know why participation is happening, and to understand what may be expected of them.

Definitions

Engaging the Community, community participation occurs when people are invited to be involved in planning and developing a project and can help shape it from the start. They may also be involved in delivering and managing the project. This is different to community consultation, which is when local people are asked for their views about a proposal or a project that someone else has developed, or about a service they are using.

The importance of effective participation is widely recognised. Government and European funding programmes expect that communities will be active participants in both designing and implementing projects for which they give money. Effective participation is more than just good sense. It can have very specific benefits for local councils and private developers as well as for communities. It may take time and money, but it can also:

- Add value for society, through less dissatisfaction, vandalism etc.
- Stimulate interest and involvement of local people in making sure projects are successful
- Produce better quality results more in tune with local needs and character
- Build the capacity of community groups and individuals to take an active part in improving their local environment

Making participation work – Steps to a successful process

- Good participation takes time and money. Plan well in advance: work out what resources are needed (staff time, printed materials, room hire, expenses etc.) and produce a clear budget. If you can't get the budget you want, review your plans and scale them down – don't start something you can't finish.
- Work out what techniques may be most appropriate
- If you need to, do an initial stakeholder analysis to work out which key groups should be involved. Work with a key group or network to do a fuller analysis, and make sure that all the identified stakeholders are invited.
- Identify groups with special needs in the area (e.g, young people who may use a proposed community centre, or minority ethnic communities who have little history of involvement in the issues you are working on), and plan ways to encourage them to take part.
- Send out the information/invitations well in advance, and include enough relevant information so that people can see why what you're planning is important. Remember that many groups only meet once a month. Circulate publicity material widely (libraries, college, churches etc.) especially where you think stakeholders will see it.
- Invite interested groups and individuals to help form an advisory group or steering committee for the process if appropriate.
- Be open and frank at all times. If there are problems explain them as fully as possible. People are far more likely to help solve problems if they think people are being honest.
- Make sure that all events are well publicised, that good clear minutes are taken and circulated to everyone involved (not just those who attended that meeting).
- Be clear about what happens after the end of the public participation phase, and make it clear when it does end. Use the last meeting to review the process and agree the key issues that have arisen.

Planning For Participation

Timing

It is crucial to recognise that if such projects are being done with the community then they need to work within the community's own time-scales where these exist. If, for example, you are seeking the support of a local group or committee, you need to be aware of their meeting schedules, and when your project ideas will be discussed.

Small community groups will often let professionals set time-scales for projects, even if they have reservations or doubts about the work. Make sure that there is genuine support for a proposal, and people are not keeping quiet even though they feel your plans are unrealistic. The keys to this are to ensure that concerns are not ignored, and to develop good listening skills: it is also important to hear what is NOT being said, as well as what is being discussed.

Getting Started

- **Getting to know the place and the people**
- Take some time to get a large-scale map and walk around the area. Be aware of personal safety issues and take someone with you if you feel there are any safety concerns.
- It is helpful to use census data to get a profile of the area: if, for example, you are working in an area of very high unemployment you need to know that right from the start. If it is an area with different ethnic minority populations you need to make sure you are talking to all the cultures in the area.
- You need to find people who know the area as leads to finding community groups. Sources include existing community workers; local councillors; the police (particularly for youth projects); and your partner organisations.
- Talk to local schools – they may well have ideas on how they would like to work with you. Working with children is also a good way to reach their parents. Parent–teacher associations are another good source of local contacts.
- It may be a good idea to carry out a 'stakeholder analysis'. Stakeholders are people or organisations with an interest (stake) in the action or decision being taken. Some of these may have an interest in delivering the programme, some in the results of the programme or decision.

Stakeholder analysis

Finding your stakeholders

The following relatively simple exercise, called 'traffic lights', can be carried out, preferably in a group but not necessarily:

1. List all the people, groups of people, organisations and agencies who have a stake in the action, decision or programme under consideration. Try to avoid saying 'everybody'.
2. Try to be specific about what their stake is: are they a service deliverer, a funder, a resident, etc.?
3. On the list: Identify those who always get involved. Mark them with a green spot. Identify those who are likely to get involved if the conditions are right, e.g. they are informed, meetings are in the right venues and at the right times, etc. Mark these with an orange (amber) spot. Those that are left should be the ones that are most difficult to engage with. Mark these with a red spot.
4. Now spend time considering the orange and red spots. What conditions need to be fulfilled to encourage the 'amber lights' to get involved? What strategies do you need to adopt to engage the 'red lights'? An understanding of the stake they hold might be the key to engagement.

However, 'having an interest' is not the same as 'showing an interest'! Some stakeholders come to the table easily, some do not. In order to be as inclusive as possible, any involvement strategy needs to identify the stakeholders as the first step.

• Letting people know

A proactive approach is needed to ensure that projects are accessible to all groups and individuals within the community. Ways of communicating to a community that a project is happening include:

- putting local people in touch with each other (use community workers, shopkeepers, church leaders, teachers, local authority officers, etc.);
- posters, leaflets and newsletters;
- features in the local press/radio;
- word on the street: door-knocking, spoken invitations, using the local grapevine.

Send out the information/invitations well in advance, and include enough relevant information that people can see why what you're planning is important. Remember that many groups only meet once a month. Circulate

publicity material widely (libraries, colleges, churches, etc.), especially where you think stakeholders will see it.

Meet with community leaders in advance of the first public meeting or event. Take notice of their concerns and involve them in planning the event.

If this is a major project make sure that the key people involved come to the first public event (planners, heads of regeneration agencies, senior councillors, etc.). Make sure that all relevant documentation is available.

- **Getting people involved**

A range of special techniques have been developed to work with community groups/stakeholders. These are all designed to make the process more effective by encouraging people to say what they really want and think.

Some techniques have names that describe them: “Planning for Real”[®], parish mapping, round tables, focus groups, Citizens Juries, Participatory Appraisal, Consensus Building, and so on. In other cases the process may just involve a series of meetings over a few months, perhaps supported by newsletters, surveys and leaflets. It is always important that the right tool is used for each situation, and that the person running it knows how to use the tool properly.

In addition to special events and launches, other types of activities can be a good way to get a project going or explore the range of choices available, especially when working with children. Ideas include:

- making models and maps;
- structured walks and visits: visits to other projects can enable skills building and information exchange;
- slide shows and speakers;
- video and photography projects.

- **Involving young people**

Regeneration projects provide a valuable resource for young people to discover more about their local and global environment. It is important to ensure that children and young people are involved in the participatory process. They often interact with their local environment in different ways to adults. The land uses and facilities that involve children and young people are frequently different from those of adults, and even when shared, are largely used for different purposes. Young people and adults are therefore likely to differ in how they see, feel about and react to a landscape. Involving young people in a project will also encourage a sense of ownership and confidence that is likely to endure beyond the scope of the project.

This may involve working through established youth groups, alongside youth and community workers and youth leaders. Work with trained youth workers can help to ensure that young people get the most out of being involved in projects. Youth workers can be brought into a project as contractors, in which case it is important to reach a clear agreement about who will do what, when it will be done and how much it will cost.

Youth forums can be useful mechanisms to ensure that young people have an ongoing input into the planning, design and management of a project. Groups such as this, however, may suffer by appearing tokenistic or attracting only the more active members of the community. In addition, many youth schemes flounder because young people are forced into 'adult' decision-making systems. It is important to realise that the language and structures used to reach decisions must be adapted and accommodated to include young people.

Investigating the views of young people through traditional survey techniques is often difficult. Informal techniques such as simply talking to young people where they congregate, such as clubs or youth centres, will often yield valuable information on what they really think. Involving young people themselves in undertaking research has often proved an effective way of seeking out views, while building the confidence of those involved.

- **Educational opportunities**

By working with local teachers, a regeneration project can offer opportunities to integrate project activities into their coursework and curriculum. A project site can be a teaching resource for practically every aspect of the curriculum and for all age groups. In addition to learning about the local natural environment, it can provide a focus for learning about the geography and history of an area. Numeracy skills such as measuring and calculating can be developed, and writing about how the project is progressing can enliven literacy learning.

Schoolchildren can sometimes be one of the driving forces in transforming somewhere. Getting schoolchildren involved brings with it huge benefits, because their enthusiasm spreads throughout the community – to parents, friends, teachers and neighbours.

- **Group activities**

There are many different ways to involve young people. Environmental play-schemes can be a popular option. Training can be provided in aspects of ecology and activities developed that would encourage habitat restoration, for example bird watching, mini beast hunts, pond dipping, bird and bat box building, etc., as well as environmentally themed games.

Older children may be able to get more involved in environmental improvement works on site. Young people are more likely to be interested in projects that offer immediacy of action and a practical outcome. Young people need to be engaged quickly in a project with rapid and tangible results to prevent them losing interest, and to demonstrate that their ideas are being actively taken on board. A visible and valuable short-term activity, which is guaranteed success, can also be used as a mechanism to build confidence and team-working.

Arts projects

The arts are an excellent way to involve people in a project and provide an opportunity for people to reflect on and express their feelings about their local environment. Arts projects can be visual (e.g. sculpture, painting and mosaic), performance-based (drama and music), literary (e.g. poetry and story telling),

multimedia (e.g. video and interactive CD) or even combined – where several art forms interact in one event or space.

- **Maintaining involvement.**

Once a project plan and design have been agreed, tenders can be prepared and a contractor selected to do work on the ground. However, this can break the momentum of any community involvement in the project. To prevent this:

- It is important to get people involved in hands-on activities where possible, e.g. planting days, line marking, collecting litter, clearing and laying paths, or nature conservation activities. It may also be possible to carry out wildlife surveys.
- Involve the contractors as early as possible in the project, depending on the form of tender procedure.
- Involve project representatives at all stages of managing the contract for work on site, receiving copies of correspondence, attending pre-contract meetings and site meetings.
- Use new and existing channels of communication to keep people informed about the progress of the project.
- Celebrate milestones and capital phase completion with community events.

Working in partnership?

Working in partnership is nowadays so often regarded as ‘best practice’ that it is worth reviewing why this is and considering the potential benefits. These benefits include:

- **Inclusivity**

A desired outcome of many regeneration projects is that there should be improvements in social cohesion or social capital. Inclusivity means engaging with a broad range of stakeholders and this is precisely what extensive partnership working achieves.

- **Broad community support**

Apart from generating projects that have broad utility, a successful partnership approach will also produce projects that have broad support. This in turn will enhance the chances of a project’s long-term success, as many organisations will have a stake in its ongoing success.

- **Broad potential resource base**

If a project is delivered by a single organisation, pursuing a narrow agenda, the resource options, particularly financial resources, will be relatively narrow. By engaging with a number of organisations, and touching a number of different agendas, the options for attracting resources to the project will be much greater.

- **Added value**

Partnership is not only a useful means to the end of generating successful projects – it is also, if successful, a valuable end in itself. Partnerships bring

organisations together and help to build mutual understanding and respect. Organisations, and individuals within the organisations, can grow from the experiences of an effective partnership and go on to tackle other challenges with new knowledge and understanding.

Partnership Success Factors

While there is no single formula that can guarantee a successful process or successful outcome, the following factors are generally considered to be important, if not critical:

- **Added value:** Partnership working must be capable of, and believed to be capable of, achieving worthwhile things that would otherwise not happen.
- **Leadership:** Leadership can take many forms but needs to exist in some form, at individual or group level, to take a partnership forward.
- **Equality:** All those participating in a partnership must feel and be treated as equals.
- **Focus on practical realities and issues:** A partnership must have clear and practical objectives and not become bogged down in philosophical or procedural matters.
- **Trust/mutual respect:** In a successful partnership, trust and mutual respect will grow but for a partnership to even get started, a certain baseline level must already exist.
- **Consensus building:** A visioning process of some sort to help develop some common views of desirable outcomes.

Fundraising

The culture of fundraising and 'charitable' giving varies greatly across the European Union. For example in some countries there is a strong culture of corporate giving, whereas in others this is much less common or is focused very specifically on particular types of projects. Also, whereas in some countries there is a very strong non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector, many of which have grant-awarding capacity, this is by no means universal and many projects will therefore be relatively restricted in their options for fundraising.

Types of funding organisation

Broadly speaking, funding bodies can be split into four categories, as shown in this table.

1	Public sector	Including local authorities, regional and national governments, governmental bodies, European Union
2	Private sector	Large and small companies
3	NGOs and charitable trusts	Ranging from international charities, charitable foundations through to very localised NGOs
4	Individuals or groups of individuals	Fundraising activity involving a number of individuals making (usually modest) contributions

Public sector

This is usually the first and most obvious target for financial support, particularly where a project will provide tangible benefits to local communities. Indeed it is likely that the public sector, in the shape of a local authority, will have some involvement or stake in the regeneration project, and may even be the landowner. For this reason, it would in most cases be wrong to think of the local authority merely as a source of project funding – given their wider social and political role, project success is more likely to be dependent upon the local authority being engaged and supportive of the project than on their direct financial contribution.

This is particularly the case when seeking funding from other public sector sources. In most instances, these other sources will, as a minimum, require evidence that the proposal has local authority support and more likely will need to see that the project proposal clearly fits within the local authority's wider strategies. The role of the local authority is also likely to be important in the context of long-term project management and funding – all the more reason for seeking to engage their support at the outset.

The public sector's 'motivation' for supporting a project might be because the support is part of its statutory duties (as defined by regional, national or European law) and/or because support would help to fulfil its agreed policy and/or because it would be politically attractive. As with all fundraising, in arguing the case for financial support from the public sector, it is important to understand the 'benefits' your project will provide to the funder in terms of addressing their statutory/policy/political needs.

One potential source of funding, which is difficult to classify clearly as public or private, is via nationally run lotteries (they are often publicly supported and administered, but their funding is via private, individual punters who may be tempted to participate partly because they know some of the proceeds are destined for 'good causes'). The nature and operation of national lotteries

varies enormously across the European Union, but may well be an option worth exploring.

Private sector

In broad terms, there are three reasons why a private sector company may become involved in an ecological regeneration project:

1. Because they have a direct interest in the area of land concerned, perhaps as landowner (or former landowner) or as neighbour.
2. Because they see involvement as furthering their corporate aims. For example, having a high-profile involvement in a regeneration project may be an important part of a company's marketing strategy, or helping to regenerate sites to a high standard may be important in helping the company argue the case for further planning consents.
3. Being socially responsible may be an important part of the company's core values.

It is important to understand the motivation of any business that is being approached for support. If approaching local businesses it is likely that an understanding of what is most likely to secure their engagement will probably come from local knowledge or contacts. For larger corporations, some research will be necessary, via directories of corporate giving, annual reports or websites. Any sizeable business will be regularly approached for donations or sponsorship and will usually have developed a strategy to handle this in a manageable way. Sometimes these strategies are published, but even if this is not the case, research will reveal a company's historical approach to giving and hence a good indication of whether a particular project proposal is even likely to be considered.

There is an important distinction to be made between donations and sponsorship. A donation is essentially a gift, albeit with conditions attached. The relationship between the parties is that of donor and recipient. Sponsorship is a business transaction. In return for the sponsorship payment, the name of the sponsor and the fact that they have entered into a sponsorship arrangement is promoted for the specific marketing benefit of the business. The relationship between the parties is that of client and service provider. Not only is this distinction important in understanding the motivation of the business, it is also likely to have implications for the way in which the transaction is dealt with in regard to taxation. In practice the distinction between the two is often not clear-cut, but it is a point worth discussing with a potential corporate funder to try and achieve some common understanding at the outset.

NGOs and charitable trusts

There are many thousands of NGOs and charitable trusts, some established by wealthy individuals or businesses, some very old (perhaps distributing the income generated from an endowment made centuries ago), some very specific and conservative in what they support, others much broader in their aims. An important prelude to making any approach is therefore to narrow

down the field and identify those bodies that may have an interest in your project, or a part of it.

Search criteria need to include the geographical area that the funding body will consider (sometimes this is based on country or region, sometimes on types of area, e.g. former coalfields), the types of activity or project that will be supported, the levels of funding and the time-scale for making an application.

A search for organisations that fund 'community-led regeneration of derelict land' or 'ecological regeneration' is unlikely to yield helpful results. It will probably be more productive to consider more specific project outputs such as 'youth education', 'wildlife conservation', 'community development', 'community art' or 'local heritage conservation'. These are more often the types of things such bodies support, so it may be necessary to tailor an application to some fairly specific components of your project, or represent a particular project perspective, in order to meet the funding criteria.

One approach to seeking project support from large NGOs is not to ask for money at all, but to explore with the NGO whether and on what terms it might adopt the project. This option is clearly contingent upon the NGO having values that accord with local wishes but if a suitable agreement can be struck, it could be beneficial to all parties. Through acquiring a stake in the project, this option might be attractive to the NGO while the local project stakeholders could have the benefit of long-term support from a known and respected body.

Individuals or groups of individuals

This category of fundraising covers a wide range of activities, usually participatory, and usually having a high local profile. It could include street collections, sponsored events, bring-and-buy sales, small lotteries, etc. In regard to ecological regeneration projects, this approach can be very challenging because fundraising is likely to sit alongside fundraising activity for many other local initiatives, e.g. the local school, sports club, church, hospice or animal sanctuary. For it to succeed it must therefore be for a project that genuinely enjoys broad support.

The funds generated by such events may be important but are usually relatively modest. If it is a main source of funding, there therefore needs to be a clearly definable project 'vision' that is capable of retaining broad local support, perhaps for years, as funding gradually accumulates. More realistically, these sources of funding will need to be complemented by other sources. Arguably the true achievement of a major local fundraising initiative is not the money raised but the fact that a large number of people will need to have been actively engaged, one of the key success factors of a sustainable regeneration project.

Sustainability

All the elements of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) are equally important to the long-term success of a project, but social sustainability is perhaps the hardest to generate. This includes:

- **Group involvement:** An important part of community development is to help community groups and individuals involved with the project develop skills so they benefit from involvement in the project and possibly help look after the project in the long term
- **Maintaining the project profile:** One way of maintaining the community engagement with a site is to set up groups within the local community for those that wish to look after and use the site in the future. This means the creation and support of such groups
- **Maintaining involvement:** Often community involvement in a site can tail off after the initial project phase. To ensure the longevity and success of the project, involvement needs to be maintained by keeping friends and user groups going and involved in the management of the site
- **Safeguarding the site:** In order for the benefits of a site dedicated to the local community to be maintained, the site needs to be protected either by ownership by the local community or by putting a deed of dedication or long-term leasehold in place.
- **Monitoring and indicators:** To assess the progress of the project and the impact of it after the initial development process is completed a level of monitoring needs to be put in place. One way of doing this is to establish indicators that can be tracked to observe changes in the local community over time in terms of skills and quality of life.

Group involvement

There are several ways in which local people can be involved in the management and maintenance of a site, ranging from the informal contribution of volunteers and site users through to formally constituted groups that are directly responsible for the stewardship of a site.

- **User groups:** Groups may have previously used a site in its derelict or abandoned state on an informal basis, for example anglers, birdwatchers or horse riders. It is often in the interest of these groups to become involved in the site management to ensure the provision of their facilities.
- **Friends Groups:** These are formally (and informally?) constituted groups made up of local stakeholders, including community groups, which have responsibility for the day-to-day management of regenerated sites and their future development. The legal status of a Friends Group may enable it to hold the lease for a site (or even take on ownership), control budgets and apply for future funding.

What kind of events?

Community events are a good way of communicating that the new resource created by the project is something for the whole community to enjoy. They can also be used to maintain interest in future years, if funds can be found to hold some form of regular annual event.

Make sure that all the participants (past and present) know what is happening. While it's good to have a party, think about how this can be used to reach a wider audience, perhaps by the kind of music, entertainment or activities held.

Include a short semi-formal session at the start to which the press, councillors, the mayor, etc. can be invited, along with all the participants and the local community. One or two (very) short speeches can explain why the project came about and what it has achieved. It also good to have some form of display that shows what the changes are and how they happened.

How you market or celebrate your success depends entirely on what kind of work you've been doing. Completion of a survey and the release of its findings may make good news, but is probably more the time for some form of public meeting (to which the media might be invited) than for something celebratory. Whatever you plan, discuss it with the local community and make sure they want to be involved and get their ideas for the sort of event they'd like.

Schools for Sustainable Development Community Action Programme

Environmental Sustainability

Among the main benefits of an ecologically informed approach are improvements to the environment, landscape, biodiversity and habitat provision. For a project to be successful these improvements need to be sustainable. This section discusses the following subjects that are pertinent to achieving environmental sustainability:

- **Management plans:** In order to maximise ongoing environmental benefits, some form of continued intervention on the site will almost certainly be required. This intervention can be targeted by producing and implementation of a management plan
- **Sustainable materials:** Many projects will involve some construction, for example paths, fences, community buildings and car parks. The construction materials used and ongoing operation of new facilities can affect the environmental performance of the site as a whole. Using environmentally sound technologies and materials can enhance the site's contribution to environmental sustainability. It was recognised at the Kyoto Earth Summit that the Earth's global problems can be solved locally and the phrase "think globally act locally" was coined. In ecological regeneration projects there is the opportunity to make some difference by careful selection of the materials used.

The purchase of sustainable materials, both organic and inorganic, is complex and can initially sound daunting. This section will take you through the main issues and direct you to further information if required.

The most sustainable site

The best way to look at a site is as a functioning system. The most unsustainable systems require a high level of input, minimise recycling and release a substantial amount of energy. Conversely, a sustainable system reduces inputs and maximises internal recycling of materials and resources.

Clearly the resourcing of materials from within a site is limited and there are very few that can resource all construction materials internally. Perhaps one of the most important considerations in developing a sustainable approach is to minimise as far as possible the amount of new materials required.

Design

In addition to utility, aesthetic and safety considerations, design ought to extend to reuse and efficiency.

Reuse of materials is now being considered in a wide range of products, from cars to buildings. The designer needs to consider facilitating the possible future reuse of materials to extend the product's lifespan.

Make sure that you have not over-designed, i.e. ensure the most efficient use of materials. For example, the design of a surface to take heavy vehicles may be unnecessary if only light vehicles can gain access, resulting in superfluous materials being imported onto the site.

Construction materials

The following are the most common types of construction materials likely to be used in a community regeneration project.

- **Footpath construction**

With the amount of reclaimed materials now available, there is now no excuse in most areas for constructing footpaths in an environmentally unsustainable way. The building industry, for example, produces an estimated 70 million tonnes of concrete and brick rubble waste each year.

Crushed concrete and brick rubble can make an ideal sub-base material, with reclaimed road planings used as a surface. If required, path edgings can be constructed in reclaimed plastic as an alternative to timber.

- **Steps**

Railway sleepers are generally a very durable reclaimed material that have been used for many years. It is however worth checking the source before purchasing, as they can be imported from as far afield as Canada, which would make the material's energy consumption level unacceptable. In some locations reclaimed stone or concrete kerbs may be more appropriate, as would locally grown timber. Green Oak and larch are both very durable.

- **Walling**

As with aggregate, there are large quantities of suitable reclaimed materials available, both stone and brick. Perhaps the most important consideration is the geographical source of the material. If material is being transported a long way then it may be more energy efficient to buy new locally.

General construction

This includes fencing, boardwalks, bollards, etc. As discussed earlier, minimising the materials required and sourcing materials locally is the most sustainable approach. The energy requirement of locally produced softwood is minimal compared to timber transported over long distances. Design consideration needs to be given to the situation and intended lifespan. For example green oak, larch and ash are the most suitable for situations where timber will be used in the ground, i.e. gateposts.

Recycled plastic designed for use as artificial timber is now available. As well as being extremely durable, it can be used for a wide range of uses.

- **Concrete**

The use of new concrete should be kept to a minimum. Apart from exposed structural situations, in many other instances it is possible to use reclaimed aggregate rather than concrete based on newly quarried aggregate.

- **Tarmac**

Tarmac perhaps is the least preferred surfacing material from a sustainability perspective. Far better alternatives are permeable crushed stone or reclaimed block paved surfaces.

Soft materials

As mentioned earlier, the most sustainable solution is where use is made of material on the site. Where soft landscape material is concerned then retention of existing vegetation should be considered, with new planting confined to suitable stock (see below). In addition to importing plant stock, the taking of cuttings or use of locally collected seed should be considered.

Generally, the rules are to minimise material imports onto a site, to use recycled materials and to use locally produced materials.