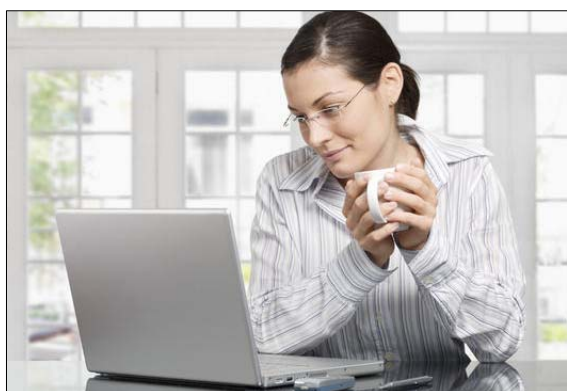


SMEs are the green champions



Calculations by Carbon Trust estimate that businesses waste 26 per cent of all energy they consume. This can be reduced with some small adjustments, but lack of information, time and finances can prevent businesses from undertaking energy efficiency measures.

A unique new initiative, called Low Carbon Champions (LCC), is taking a particularly innovative approach to help SMEs in Suffolk

overcome these problems by creating 'ambassadors' within the businesses to champion carbon reduction programmes.

Delivered by environmental training charity Green Light Trust, LCC has been designed specifically to reduce the need for businesses to rely on external resources so that they can be self-sufficient and take a long-term, sustainable view to carbon reduction.

Will Sambrook, head of business and development at Green Light Trust explained: "LCC is a flexible, time and cost effective way of 'greening' a business, making it more efficient, cost effective and marketable. Individuals from within the business are developed into Champions with up to 30 hours of free tailored advice and access to specialist events and courses.

"Equipped with this knowledge, they conduct a carbon audit of the business to identify ways of reducing the carbon footprint of the SME. They then create a tailored action plan specifically designed for their particular business.

"The great advantage of fostering this knowledge through the Champions is that they are perfectly positioned to spur the business into action by acting as ambassadors for carbon reduction amongst their peers, clients and other business partners."


To help SMEs deliver the recommendations made by the Champions, grants of up to £3,000 are available to fund 50 per cent of any carbon efficiency project within the plan. In the first grant round, seven projects were supported with state funding of £11,000 towards efficiency measures. In addition to this, an online resource centre

and network events give the Champions ongoing support and enable them to share knowledge and showcase examples of good practice amongst individual businesses.

Progress is monitored throughout the implementation of the plan so that the impact on the business can be fully assessed. For those organisations looking to achieve a quality mark for their actions, assistance is given to achieve the Suffolk Carbon Charter Bronze, Silver and Gold level of Carbon Management. So far, seven project organisations achieved the certification and more are considered at the moment.

Suffolk County Council and Green Light Trust are leading the initiative in partnership with Suffolk Chamber of Commerce and Suffolk Climate Change Partnership. Comprehensive project evaluation is being lead by the Essex University. The project is starting to have a significant impact on SMEs within Suffolk and it is planned to be extended across the East of England in the next years.

Made possible with £ 265,224 of funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the initiative is helping 85 small businesses and social enterprises to reduce their carbon emissions by up to 15 per cent over the next three years. So far, the Carbon Audits of first 32 companies identified that 1,630 tonnes of CO2 and £282,343 could be saved per year which is 16.5% of the total carbon footprint.

Priority Axis 2			
Funding:	Total Project Cost: £ 666,292 ERDF: £ 265,224		
Solution for Business Product:	Improving Your Resource Efficiency		
Scope:	East of England	Project Duration:	April 2010 – June 2013
More Information:	Liz Moss, Green Light Trust: liz.moss@greenlighttrust.org or + 44 (0) 1284 830829 www.greenlighttrust.org/low-carbon-champions		
ERDF Details:	<p>The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is a seven-year investment programme part financed by the European Union. Its objective is 'towards low carbon economic growth' in the East of England and €110.9 million has been allocated to our region.</p> <p>The fund aims to help small and medium size enterprises respond to the challenges of climate change and the huge commercial potential behind a low carbon economy.</p> <p>For more information visit w: http://www.communities.gov.uk/regeneration/regenerationfunding/europeanregionaldevelopment/eastengland/ or tel+44 0303 4446400</p> 