



SE² Project Profile: Carbon Reduction Strategy for the English Schools Estate

Background

SE² was commissioned by the **Sustainable Development Commission (SDC)** to project manage the development of a carbon reduction strategy for the English schools estate for the **Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF)**. The project followed a previous carbon footprinting exercise which established the carbon impact of schools' use of energy, travel and transport, waste and recycling and procurement activities.

The project was carried out between July 2007 and March 2008.

Project Objectives

The project aimed to:

- Identify the carbon emissions associated with schools and explore the scope for carbon reductions
- Suggest the types of targets that could be established for the sector and develop scenarios for achieving those targets
- Recommend actions and policy interventions which the DCSF can carry out or influence

Methodology/Activities

1. Project planning

A full project plan and schedule was developed on commencement of the project.

2. Review of evidence base

A comprehensive review of existing literature and research was conducted. This incorporated over 120 source documents, covering education policy, school buildings, travel, procurement, waste and broader sustainability issues.

3. Stakeholder engagement

To ensure that the report embraced the widest possible range of views, extensive stakeholder consultation was undertaken. A stakeholder mapping exercise identified those stakeholders whose participation was core to the development of the report, and those whose views were valuable in a wider context.

Stakeholder engagement activities are summarised below:

Project Advisory Group

A Project Advisory Group was established for the lifetime of the project, with the aim of providing a strategic steer and critical insights during the strategy development process. The Group met four times during the project. Members of the Group included:

- DCSF (incorporating schools capital, travel, procurement and food specialists)
- Defra
- Becta
- Government Office for London
- Government Office for the South East

Stakeholder questionnaire and interviews

Face to face meetings and telephone interviews were conducted with 25 key stakeholders. In addition, a questionnaire was sent to a further 90 stakeholders, with 21 responses received. The interviews and questionnaire explored:

- Stakeholder views on targets for schools carbon reduction



- Current activity under way to reduce schools carbon emissions, and the likely impact (positive or negative) of future policies
- Trends affecting the schools sector
- Planned activity to address carbon emissions from the schools estate
- Roles and responsibilities

An abridged questionnaire was also sent to members of the SDC Panel, with 70 responses received.

Stakeholder event

A large-scale stakeholder event was held on 19 November 2007, with 60 delegates in attendance. This event gathered stakeholder views on:

- A vision for schools in the future
- How that vision might be fulfilled in a low carbon way
- Measurements and milestones in achieving carbon reductions
- Early actions and quick wins towards carbon reductions

A shorter version of this event was run for members of the SDC secretariat.

3. Mapping report and headline report

Having reviewed the evidence base and interviewed/met a variety of stakeholders, a report was produced mapping carbon dioxide emissions in the schools estate. This was provided to DCSF and the Project Advisory Group in November 2007 and sought to map sources of emissions from schools and identify opportunities for emissions reductions.

This report was supplemented by a headline report, produced in December 2007, which brought in additional findings from the stakeholder event and early thoughts on the recommendations which populate the main final report.

4. Modelling and scenarios

The Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) at the University of York was contracted to produce a Schools Carbon Reduction Tool which the project team could use to develop scenarios for carbon reduction to 2050.

A series of scenarios was developed as agreed with the Project Advisory Group. The three scenarios produced are:

- Scenario 1: Business As Usual
- Scenario 2: A 30% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2020, leading to a 60% reduction by 2050
- Scenario 3: A 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2020, leading to an 80-90% reduction by 2050

5. Final report

The final report and recommendations for the project were produced in March 2008.

Project Team/Partners

The overall project manager was Liz Warren. Support for stakeholder event design and facilitation was provided by Rachael Mills and Emily Browne. Technical research capability was provided by Wendy Shaw.

Achievements and Successes

We were delighted to submit a comprehensive and well-received final strategy to the SDC and DCSF in March 2008. To our knowledge, it is the first carbon reduction strategy produced for a Government department that addresses carbon impacts from energy, transport, procurement and waste in one holistic view.



The level of stakeholder engagement in the development of the strategy was high, with the Steering Group providing valuable feedback throughout and individual stakeholders contributing significant amounts of time, information and ideas.

The carbon scenario tool developed by SEI as part of the project is being further trialled by the Government Office for London.

Momentum was established across a wide range of teams within DCSF with carbon reduction coming into the mainstream. We hope that this momentum will continue.

Liz Warren, Project Manager at SE², commented:

“This was one of the most challenging assignments we have ever faced. Bringing together data, research, stakeholders, ideas and recommendations across the widest aspects of a carbon footprint presented a great many challenges and unlocked some real opportunities for progress. The level of stakeholder dialogue was extremely sophisticated and there is real enthusiasm across the sector for a commitment to significant carbon reduction.”

Further Information

For more information on SE²'s involvement with the development of a carbon reduction strategy for the English schools estate, please contact:

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