CORE THEMES OF ILD

LOCAL LEVEL: Work within the lowest appropriate administrative area, such as parishes, wards or towns.

FACILITATION: An independent third party is an essential ingredient for developing a local management group to act as a collective discussion forum and help coordinate communication with public agencies.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: The farming and local community often have detailed knowledge of the surrounding environment. This should play a central role in identifying environmental concerns and integrating the delivery opportunities.

CONNECT OBJECTIVES: Multiple objectives can often be met through single land use changes. Where possible a wide range of strategic objectives should be delivered within the defined area. This will help make maximum use of public funds and resources.

STAKEHOLDERS: There are often numerous public and private stakeholders with an interest in any given area, such as local businesses, environmental organisations, farmers and councils. They should be identified and bought into the partnership so that their aims and involvement can be coordinated with wider objectives.

LOCAL MANAGEMENT GROUP: Once interested stakeholders and local citizens have been identified, a transparent and inclusive local management group should be created. This should incorporate the parish council or equivalent, to help embed information and ensure continuity.

COMMUNICATION: Lines of communication should be kept open, both between partners and stakeholders who should meet regularly to take action and offer knowledge and resources, and with wider agencies to ensure strategic and legal objectives are being followed.

FUNDING: Open communication and skilled facilitation can help identify multiple funding opportunities from a variety of sectors for the delivery of environmental objectives.

Integrated Local Delivery:
A community led, joined up approach to delivering environmental resilience

INTRODUCTION

Long before localism and conservation entered the language of politics, the landscape was being shaped, protected and committed to memory by the communities that lived within it. In the last 70 years however, the way in which we manage our land has changed dramatically. The demands we place on the land have grown, while initiatives to protect the environment have become increasingly institutionalized in efforts to meet national legislation and international directives and conventions. The result is that communities, landowners and environmental deliverers are faced with ever more complex and disjointed requirements, while environmental targets are consistently missed.

The Integrated Local Delivery Framework was developed in order to unpick this complexity and join up the dots on a local level. With the right support, local people can be put back at the heart of environmental protection and management, inspiring and enabling each community to look after its piece of the global jigsaw puzzle, in a strategic way.

www.fwagsw.org.uk/projects/ild-integrated-local-delivery/

OVERVIEW

We require a lot from our land. Alongside the key outputs of food, housing, energy, infrastructure and water, we rely on nature to clean our air, moderate our climate, store and filter our water and provide abundant space for wildlife.

Tasked with protecting the environment in the face of these pressures, recent decades have seen the development of a complex web of agencies and public bodies, overseen by various government departments and driven by national and international targets and legislation. Working with Non-Governmental Organisations, landowners and businesses, these bodies are responsible for implementing a hugely complicated array of environmental initiatives across the country.

The result of this has been the gradual erosion of the role that local communities play in contributing to the management and protection of their environment, and the neglect of a key source of knowledge, experience and commitment to the protection of such areas. Instead, communities are often faced with multiple bodies issuing confusing and sometimes contradictory signals and instructions relating to the management of their local environment. In many cases this has led to local populations feeling distanced from their own land, as well as countless missed opportunities for using natural processes to join up different goals.

Integrated Local Delivery (ILD) increases the efficiency and coordination of environmental initiatives by building delivery of environmental objectives from the ground up, with communities playing a key role in developing and managing the process. Under the guidance of a specialist facilitator, all stakeholders in the community – from individuals to councils and local businesses - are invited to contribute their knowledge and support towards developing a comprehensive understanding of the local environment.

In this way, environmental management can be delivered on the crucial understanding that each field and each parish is unique, economically, ecologically and culturally, and that each has a vital role to play in an international context.

ILD was developed as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund Caring for the Cotswolds project in 2004, with the support of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, The Countryside and Community Research Institute at the University of Gloucestershire and Natural England. In the years since, it has been so successful in delivering landscape and water protection across different locations that it has been scaled up to deliver water security at a catchment level, and been adopted by the EU funded project Pegasus [1] as the UK case study representing innovative environmental management in Europe.

The complexity of top down environmental delivery

• There are 10,500 parishes and 3060 wards in England alone, which together are home to 53m people, many of whom have essential knowledge, experience and interest in their local environment.

• 214,000 farm holdings across the country, all with a role to play in protecting the environment.

• 7 Government departments have explicit environmental requirements and strategic priorities.

• DEFRA alone works with 33 statutory agencies and public bodies, who in turn work with hundreds of environmental delivery organisations.
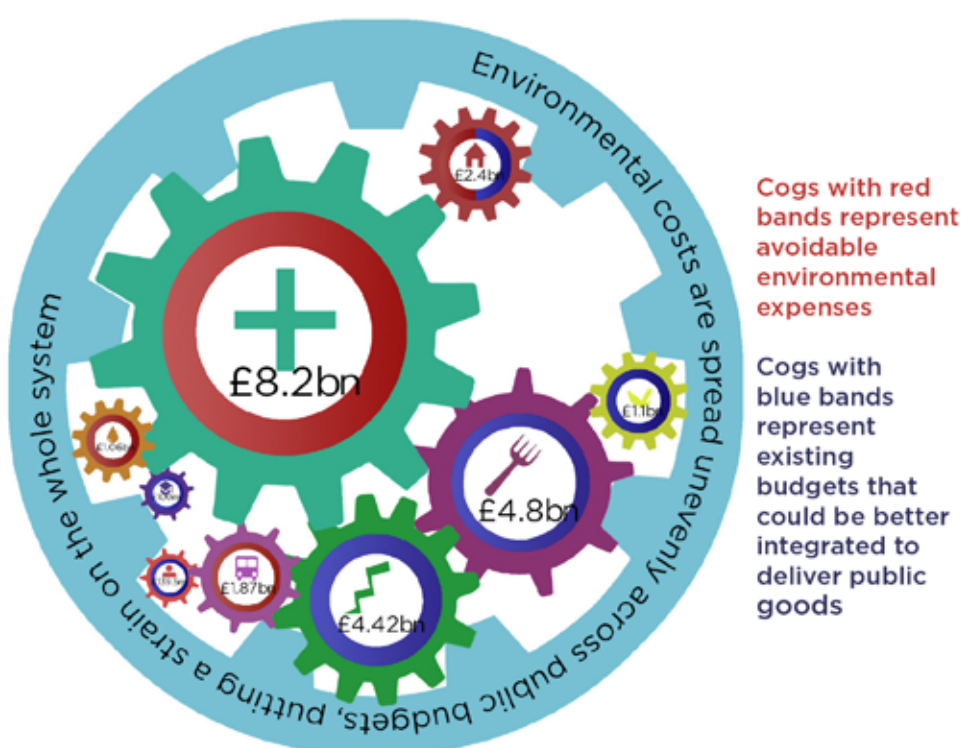
[1] http://pegasus.ieep.eu/about/why-pegasus

Balancing the budget: How a healthy environment can underpin a resilient local economy

As the pressures on our environment grow, so too do costs to the treasury resulting from degraded ecosystems. These expenses are not easy to identify; they appear in budgets across many different government departments, often as retroactive payments for problems already suffered, as with flood repair expenses or health bills for air pollution related diseases. The result is an uneven distribution of costs across government.

A new approach to meeting this challenge is to see ecosystems as a mechanism for providing the public services required to reverse these trends. This approach has been shown to produce multiple benefits to society while making efficient use of public funds and increasing awareness of the environmental challenges.

For example, a larger portion of the hundreds of millions of pounds spent on flood prevention each year could be redirected towards natural flood management, in doing so meeting a variety of objectives, from supporting the farmers paid to introduce the land use changes through to the restoration of ecosystems. If well designed, this in turn can support other aspects of a healthy economy, from tourism through to education and local businesses.

If a joined-up system is to work it needs to be as simple and accessible as possible. For this reason, ILD was designed to join up priorities and budgets at a local level.

Cogs with red bands represent avoidable environmental expenses

Cogs with blue bands represent existing budgets that could be better integrated to deliver public goods

Investment in specialist facilitators is cost beneficial because it enables joined up delivery and inspires the support and involvement of communities

Prices reflect current government spending on services that could be better addressed through an integrated approach.

Health: Obesity and diet related illnesses cost the NHS budget £6.1bn each year. The cost of mental and physical health issues that could be avoided if all people had easy access to nature is estimated at a further £2.1bn a year by researchers at Essex University. Although there is no catch-all solution, there is potential for a greater focus on prevention of these health issues, which could in turn help support a healthy environment in which people had easy access to nature and consumers had a greater cultural connection with their food and wider environment.

Water: Water companies spend £1.06bn a year cleaning water of nutrients and pesticides accumulated from human activity. There is significant opportunity for new revenue streams to reduce pollution and rebuild ecosystems that naturally clean water.

Housing and Infrastructure: Government and insurance companies spend £1.16bn each year on flood prevention and repairs. Meanwhile, a further £1.26bn of public funds is spent on building and maintaining green spaces such as parks, hedgerows, commons and national parks. A joined up approach would see these public spaces being managed explicitly to prevent flooding and deliver wider environmental services.

Food: The last half-century has seen many farms become increasingly specialised, sometimes to the detriment of soil health and habitats. Farmers and landowners receive £2.4bn a year in direct payments, supporting food production but with only minimal environmental requirements. The state spends a further £2.4bn in food procurement for public institutions such as schools and hospitals. There is potential for both procurement and subsidies to be more explicitly targeted to support farmers in providing land management with multiple environmental benefits.

Wildlife: At a total of £1.57bn, the budget for nature protection is lower than the costs associated with ecosystem degradation, such as flooding expenses. If we are to reverse the consistent decline in wildlife in the UK and rebuild healthy ecosystems cost effectively, environmental protection should be acknowledged as a cornerstone of many of the services we rely upon.

Energy: The state currently spends £4.4bn subsidising biomass and natural gas industries each year, often at environmental expense. However, new innovations in energy technology are revealing ways in which anaerobic digestion of herbal leys can work directly to mitigate climate change while increasing soil health and biodiversity. This cannot replace gas powered energy production alone, but should be supported alongside other renewable energy.

Transport: The external costs of transporting food totals £1.87bn a year, including wear and tear on roads and then expense to the NHS of traffic related air pollution. Efforts should be made to reduce transport of food by using local food markets and shorter supply chains, which in turn help supports rural economies and develops a direct relationship between consumers and farmers.

Tourism: Tourism forms a vital part of the rural economy, with over a quarter of tourists in the UK heading to the countryside to enjoy the culture and natural environment. A portion of the £139m Local Authorities spend each year subsidising this industry could be integrated with other environmental payments, supporting the diversity of our landscape and the further development of tourism.

Education: The role of the natural environment within a healthy upbringing and broad education is becoming central to many schools, although accurate costings of state support are not available. Children and adults should be given the opportunity to learn about sustainable food production and be able to volunteer in local environmental networks.

For more information on costings please see www.fwagsw.org.uk