

BRIEFING

SUSTAINABLE
CONSUMPTION
IN THE UK

A SELECTION OF
CASE STUDIES



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents case studies of best practice in achieving sustainable consumption in the UK. It has been prepared as part of the project *Implementing Sustainable Consumption in Civil Society of Urban China*, led by the University of Civil Engineering and Architecture of Beijing.¹

For the purposes of this report we have defined sustainable consumption broadly, covering all aspects of a person's lifestyle in which resources are consumed. The case studies we present exemplify ways in which people can be helped, encouraged or compelled to live more sustainably, either directly or indirectly.

The case studies presented fall into four categories.

The first set of four case studies relate to initiatives led by, or involving, government to restrict or inform consumers' product choice around a particular class of product. They cover:

1. The Zero Carbon Hub – an example of industry and government working together on a long-term trajectory for regulations around product standards
2. Government regulation for efficient central heating boilers – a demonstration of government successfully regulating to directly restrict product choice
3. Energy Saving Trust Recommended scheme – a government-initiated, but now privately funded, labelling and certification scheme promoting higher standards for appliances
4. Television Voluntary Retail Initiative – a scheme by which government worked with retailers to limit the products offered to consumers, in advance of regulations coming into effect.

Taken together, these case studies highlight the role that direct restriction of product choice can play in shifting markets towards more sustainable products. By exploring when and where direct regulation can be effective, they demonstrate how initiatives to inform consumers and mobilise the supply chain can work alongside and reinforce direct government action to restrict product choice.

The second set of case studies focuses on the role of large-scale public campaigns to raise awareness of sustainable livelihood issues. They are:

5. Love Food Hate Waste – a government-funded national campaign raising awareness of a less well-known issue in sustainable consumption
6. Every Action Counts – a programme run by national government to mobilise the community and voluntary sector to promote sustainable lifestyles
7. Manchester is my Planet – a city-wide awareness campaign focused on carbon reduction.

These cases studies highlight first the importance of establishing consumer awareness campaigns with a broad base of support in the public, private and voluntary sectors through partnership building. It is important to ensure real ownership of the campaign by these partners through the creation of appropriate management structures. Second, they show the importance of investing in research, which both creates the underpinning rationale for involvement in the campaign, and provides the collateral for partners to make the campaign a success. Finally, fulfilment mechanisms are essential, empowering

1 For more details see <http://www.ippr.org/research-project/44/9157/sustainable-consumption-in-china>

2 IPPR | Sustainable consumption in the UK: a selection of case studies

consumers to take action on the messages of the campaign. However, the deployment of the required means to deliver a specific sustainable lifestyle change needs to be carefully planned and timed, with an understanding of how and when consumers move from awareness to action.

The third set of case studies relate to capacity-building initiatives:

8. Pro-Environmental Behaviours Framework – an overarching system of analysis created by government to promote sustainable consumption
9. Energy Saving Trust – a large-scale, long-term, government-funded initiative focused on working with demand and supply actors in one area of sustainable consumption
10. Transition Networks – an entirely voluntary-sector scheme coordinating multiple, ‘bottom up’ local campaigns to promote sustainable consumption.

These three programmes – all of which aim to provide structures within which sustainable consumption campaigns can flourish – highlight the importance to sustainable consumption initiatives of setting clear targets and evaluation mechanisms. Not only do such mechanisms allow for an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of different programmes, but they provide feedback to consumers and partners.

All of our first ten case studies are led either by government, government-funded non-profit bodies or the voluntary/NGO sector. Our final case studies show how two different actors are leading sustainable consumption initiatives in the UK:

11. Marks and Spencer Plan A – a retailer taking a leading role in promoting sustainable consumption direct to its customers
12. Hugh’s Fish Fight – a sustainable consumption campaign led by a high-profile individual and utilising new media to full effect.

These case studies are arguably the most important in showing how sustainability campaigns need to evolve given the scale of the challenge we face in changing consumption practice. Governments are unlikely to have the resources to promote sustainability across all lifestyle areas, or to be willing to use regulation to drive very large-scale changes. Meanwhile NGOs are well trusted but usually face capacity and skills barriers. The Marks and Spencer example shows how one large private company has identified and acted on a value proposition based around more sustainable consumption. And the Fish Fight initiative shows how new media can enable a sustainable consumption campaign to reach nearly a million people without a traditional organisational structure behind it.

Across the twelve case studies, there is a complex interaction between campaigning for consumers to *change behaviour* and promoting *policy change* at local, national or European level. In some cases, awareness and behaviour-change programmes are developed to ensure policy can be effectively implemented. In other cases, initiatives fill policy gaps or go beyond regulatory requirements. And some of our case studies seek to change awareness and behaviour as a route to changing policies. Perhaps the clearest conclusion from this mix is that an effective policy environment in tandem with powerful consumer awareness and engagement initiatives is vital if we are to see sustainability come fully to the forefront in citizens’ consumption choices.

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared as part of the three-year project *Implementing Sustainable Consumption in Civil Society of Urban China*, which is being led by the University of Civil Engineering and Architecture of Beijing and in which IPPR is a partner.² This project aims to promote resource-efficiency and environmentally friendly economic development in China, specifically in the urban areas of Beijing and Tianjin, through mainstreaming individual sustainable consumption. In so doing it will improve the quality of living in the target area and reduce energy consumption and emissions, contributing to the mitigation of climate change. The case studies included in this report are intended to inform the design of the project.

Sustainable consumption programmes come in a variety of forms and cover a multitude of lifestyle areas, but ultimately, they are targeted at raising public awareness and changing behaviour in order to reduce our impact on the environment.

The UK Sustainable Consumption Roundtable³ produced a landmark report *I will if you will: Towards sustainable consumption* in 2006. The report has formed the basis for sustainable consumption initiatives since it was published. The aim of the Roundtable was to accelerate the transition to living within ecological limits, from a three-planet economy to one. To do so it defined sustainable consumption broadly, covering all aspects of a person's lifestyle in which resources are consumed.⁴ We have chosen to adopt this definition of sustainable consumption here and the case studies contained within this report exemplify ways in which people can be helped, encouraged or compelled to live more sustainably, either directly or indirectly.

The Roundtable was firmly of the view that government, business and consumers all had a key role to play in achieving sustainable consumption and that they had to work together to implement a range of actions.⁵ We have reflected this approach in the case studies chosen for this report, which have been led or implemented by a cross-section of these groups. The case studies cover a range of initiatives and include awareness-raising, product labelling and improved standards, policy and regulatory framework, governance and organisational set-up, and skills development.

Taking a broad approach to sustainable consumption has allowed us to showcase a diverse range of activities and provide a robust evidence base to inform the design of the Sustainable Consumption in China project. The case studies chosen are not exhaustive – there are many, many initiatives across the UK – but they provide different perspectives on how sustainable consumption may be achieved.

Case studies

The case studies fit within four areas:

1. Initiatives to restrict or inform product choice:
 - Zero Carbon Hub – an example of industry and government working together on a long-term trajectory for higher product standards

2 For more information see <http://alturl.com/5bov3>, and <http://www.ippr.org/research-project/44/9157/sustainable-consumption-in-china>

3 The Sustainable Consumption Roundtable, jointly hosted by the National Consumer Council (NCC) and the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) ran for 18 months from September 2004 to March 2006. Funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Roundtable brought together a small group of leading experts in consumer policy, retailing and sustainability to advise government on how to create consumer choices that stay within environmental limits.

4 Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (2006) *I will if you will: Towards sustainable consumption*, London: 4

5 *ibid*: 6–7

- Government regulation for efficient central heating boilers – a demonstration of government successfully regulating to directly restrict product choice
 - Energy Saving Trust Recommended labelling scheme – a voluntary, privately funded labelling scheme to inform customers of product sustainability
 - Television Voluntary Retail Initiative – an example of retailers and government working together to limit the products offered to consumers
2. Public campaigns to raise awareness of individuals’ environmental impacts:
 - Love Food Hate Waste – a government-funded national campaign raising awareness of a less well-known environmental issue
 - Every Action Counts – a case study of government working to mobilise the community and voluntary sector to promote sustainable lifestyles
 - Manchester is my Planet – a city-wide awareness campaign around carbon reduction
 3. Organisational and capacity building projects to create structures to promote sustainable consumption:
 - Pro-Environmental Behaviours Framework – an overarching system of analysis created by government for considering and promoting sustainable consumption
 - Energy Saving Trust – a large-scale, nationwide, long-term, government-funded initiative focused on working with demand and supply actors in one area of sustainable consumption
 - Transition Network – a model of coordination and leadership for multiple, ‘bottom up’ public movements promoting sustainable consumption
 4. New Leaders for Sustainable Consumption – focusing on different leadership models for sustainable consumption campaigns:
 - Marks and Spencer Plan A – an example of a leading role for retailers in promoting sustainable consumption
 - Hugh’s Fish Fight – an example of a sustainable consumption campaign led by a high-profile individual and utilising new media to full effect.

The case studies give rise to a range of individual lessons and common themes which are relevant to the specific design and implementation of future initiatives to promote sustainable consumption.

The evidence for this paper has been compiled through desk-based research and interviews with key stakeholders. Detailed information on the location and timing of the case studies and the participating organisations is presented in the Appendix.

Below we look at each of the case studies in turn before drawing out cross-cutting lessons.

The selected case studies on UK sustainable consumption are presented below by category in the order: product choice, awareness-raising, organisational and capacity building, and new champions for sustainable consumption.

1. PRODUCT CHOICE

Included in this section are different approaches to achieving the sustainable consumption of products utilising a range of interventions. The first case study examines a government and industry partnership to create a long-term plan for regulation for sustainable new homes; the second case study shows how direct regulation has successfully transformed the market for energy efficient boilers; our third case study highlights the use of labelling to inform consumers; and the final case study in this section shows how voluntary choice editing undertaken by retailers can change consumer purchasing behaviour.

Case study 1: the Zero Carbon Hub

The Zero Carbon Hub was set up by government to improve sustainable consumption by government working with industry to set a long-term trajectory for product policy, ensuring the effective implementation of regulation and improved consumer acceptance of zero carbon new homes.

What was it?

A requirement for zero-carbon new homes from 2016 was announced for England in 2006. The policy is being delivered through the Building Regulations that control the construction of new homes, which are being revised to require higher levels of insulation and the use of microgeneration equipment to achieve a designated 'zero-carbon' standard. Between 2006 and 2016, Building Regulations are being steadily tightened towards the Zero Carbon Homes standard.

The Zero Carbon Homes policy was unique in Europe at the time of its introduction and was seen as a bold move by the government. Homebuilders expressed concern at implications of the policy on their businesses and there were also some wider concerns:

- How would consumers react to zero-carbon homes? Would this radical change in home design be acceptable to consumers or would they avoid buying new homes as a result?
- What would be the best technological solutions to achieving the standard and how scaleable are they? At the time the policy was set, only a tiny number of homes in England had been built to the standard.
- Do housebuilders have the skills to achieve the Zero Carbon Homes standard? Skill levels in housebuilding in the UK are not high, and there has been concern that high-quality completion required to deliver low-carbon homes will be difficult to achieve without massive investment in upskilling the existing workforce.

To address all these issues, in partnership with industry, the government provided 50 per cent funding for a 'Zero Carbon Hub' to operate in the run-up to 2016. The Hub has been established with a small secretariat, and runs a series of research programmes, committees and working groups to discuss and identify solutions to the challenges of the 2016 policy. It is jointly funded by government and the private sector.

In particular, the Hub has established five working groups focused on different aspects of the zero-carbon challenge:

1. buildings – focusing on the technical issues around building highly energy efficient buildings
2. energy – focused on technical issues around low-carbon energy supplies for new homes
3. examples – focused on encouraging the development of case studies of homes built to very low-carbon standards

4. consumer – focused on how new homes can best be marketed and promoted to consumers
5. skills – focused on developing the skills in the supply chain to build low-carbon homes.

Each working group has involved bringing together representatives from the housebuilding industry with other interested parties, including government and environmental organisations. Further, these working groups have coordinated research programmes funded from a variety of sources.

Alongside the working groups, the Hub has convened a series of stakeholder meetings at the request of government to examine specific aspects of the Zero Carbon Homes policy. Recommendations from the Hub working groups have largely been accepted and endorsed by the government minister with responsibility for the policy. However, on the final issue of the definition – the degree to which emissions from a house can be offset by low-carbon development elsewhere, referred to as ‘allowable solutions’ – the Zero Carbon Hub’s recommendations have not been endorsed by government.

What did it achieve?

With the direction set by the Zero Carbon Homes policy, UK government has been able to move housebuilding towards much higher energy standards for new-build homes. The Zero Carbon Hub has been the key mechanism by which government is ensuring acceptance and support from the (politically powerful) housebuilding industry for the policy.

The ambition of zero-carbon homes in 2016 has been maintained across a change of government, although it is, along with building regulations more broadly, now the subject of government consultation.

What can we learn from it?

It has been a challenge to maintain government commitment to the Zero Carbon Homes policy, particularly at the time of a change of government and when there are major pressures on the public finances. Indeed, shortly after the change in government in 2010 public funding for the Zero Carbon Hub initiative was completely cut. A successful resolution was agreed whereby government agreed to continue endorsing the work of the Hub, while industry took over the full funding of the secretariat. Effective lobbying and relationship building with the new government by the stakeholders engaged in the Hub was key to this successful outcome.

Another challenge has been to achieve a good balance of stakeholders. As it stands, the Hub is dominated by housebuilders, and most of its outputs have to be understood in that light. Other interested parties, in particular environmental groups, have not been able to participate fully in the Hub’s activities. This is not because they are not invited, but more because they do not have the staff, resources or expertise to participate in the Hub’s processes. Similarly, consumers and consumer groups, and small building firms, have not been represented in the Hub’s decision-making.

Nevertheless, the Zero Carbon Homes policy demonstrates the value of establishing a long-term trajectory for mandatory improvements to products, and, alongside that, using formally constituted partnership structures to gain industry engagement. Industry has engaged with standard setting within the definition, has funded its own pilot projects of very low carbon homes and is now entirely funding the Zero Carbon Hub as a centre of expertise focused on the policy.

The final success for the policy, however, will depend on successful consumer engagement – will householders want to buy the new types of homes? Little work has yet been undertaken in this area. It will also be vital to ensure that the policy delivers zero carbon homes in reality, which will require new, successful government measures to quality-assure the delivery of new build homes.

Case study 2: Regulation for Efficient Boilers

In the example of energy efficient home central heating boilers, the UK government aimed to improve sustainable consumption by using regulation and improving the skills of the supply chain to drive a step-change in the installation of the product. Space and water heating accounts for about three-quarters of UK homes' carbon emissions so dramatically improving boiler efficiency had the potential to significantly improve sustainable living.

What was it?

The majority of UK homes use a gas central heating boiler to provide heating. Condensing boilers are highly efficient boilers that have much lower fuel and running costs than standard boilers. Despite their benefits, condensing boilers were more expensive than conventional boilers and take-up was slow from their first introduction in the early 1980s. Many installers reported problems installing and using the boilers, which was probably due to a lack of skills in installing them and lack of familiarity with the technology.

By 2006 condensing boilers had never achieved a market penetration of greater than 5 per cent. In that year, the government amended the Building Regulations to require the use of high-efficiency – effectively, condensing – boilers in nearly all new and replacement situations in England and Wales. The Scottish government introduced a similar policy.

Initially boiler installers were sceptical about condensing boilers and this scepticism was seen as posing a significant risk to public acceptance of the new policy. The government therefore funded a training programme in advance of the change to the Building Regulations, with support of industry training bodies and boiler manufacturers. The Certificate in Energy Efficiency for Domestic Heating provided training for installers on the benefits of the new systems as well as explaining the wider rationale for the changes, covering energy use and climate change, and was successful in bringing the installers on board with the new technology.

While the regulations ensured that only high-efficiency boilers were installed at the point when a boiler needed to be replaced it did not tackle those old and inefficient boilers that were still functional. Indeed, some of the UK's oldest boilers were of simple solid construction and were unlikely to break down. In 2009 therefore, the government introduced a voluntary incentive scheme which worked alongside the regulations and encouraged householders with the oldest, least efficient boilers to make a replacement. Under this 'boiler scrappage' programme, householders with old, but still functioning, boilers received a £400 discount against the cost of their new system.

What did it achieve?

Government mandating for the installation of condensing boilers has led to a transformation of the market for boilers in the United Kingdom. In 2009, 42 per cent of homes were fitted with condensing boilers, compared to 38.7 per cent with standard boilers (the remaining homes having either no, or a non-gas boiler, fitted).⁶

In total 118,249 boilers were installed under the Boiler Scrappage programme.

6 BSRIA (Building Services Research and Information Association) 2007

What can we learn from it?

The mandatory roll-out of condensing boilers in the UK is notable for the low level of consumer concern that it stimulated, and lack of long-term negative impacts on demand for boilers. This was despite no significant, dedicated investment in consumer awareness campaigns around the new regulations. This can be compared to the more recent mandating of energy-saving light bulbs in the UK, which has led to extensive negative press coverage.

Boilers are considerably more expensive, and use much more energy, than light bulbs, so why did a mandated technology change cause a much lower level of concern for the more expensive product? Some of the reasons might be:

- Boilers are fitted by professionals, not by householders themselves, and the training programme for boiler repairers had allayed fitters' concerns about the technology.
- Householders are familiar with and accept the role of building regulations in restricting professional work and improvements to their homes.
- The impact of moving to energy efficient light bulbs can have a very noticeable effect for consumers by changing the ambience of lighting in their home. Boilers, on the other hand, operate in a largely invisible way, their performance judged instead through the efficiency with which they heat a home. As a consequence, mandating energy efficient boilers could be seen by consumers as a far less intrusive policy than the policy for energy efficient light bulbs.

The case study of energy efficient boilers suggests that mandating by government can be used to drive higher standards even in situations of significant, abrupt technology change affecting comparatively highly priced products. However, such approaches may be more likely to be successful for professionally installed products, and where professionals have had appropriate training to prepare them for the new technology. Consumers' attitudes must also be taken into consideration.

Case study 3: Energy Saving Trust Recommended scheme

The Energy Saving Trust Recommended certification and labelling scheme provides information for consumers at the point of purchase via labels identifying the most energy-efficient products. The standards on which the label is based are set in partnership with industry and independently checked.

What was it?

Energy Saving Trust Recommended (ESTR) is a product certification and labelling scheme that highlights products that are among the most energy-efficient on the market and thereby will help consumers to save energy in the home. The scheme, formerly known as Energy Saving Recommended, is voluntary and is run by the Energy Saving Trust (EST). ESTR was previously funded by government but has since moved to a self-funding, fee-paying model.

When the labelling scheme started in 1995, there was no EU energy label, only the eco-label (a broadly conceived European sustainable products label that did not provide upfront information on energy performance of the labelled product).⁷ The ESTR label was intended to allow customers to identify quickly and easily those products which were in the top 20 per cent of products in their class in terms of their energy performance.

7 Eoin Lees, founding chief executive of the Energy Saving Trust, personal communication, 21 March 2012

Since the ESTR label was introduced, a specific EU energy label has also been established which has been applied across Europe in a number of product categories (the EU energy label now covers kitchen appliances, televisions and air conditioning systems). However, ESTR still covers a much wider range of products (appliances, lighting, computing equipment, glazing, insulation, heating systems, and home entertainment and electronics).⁸ In addition to this, the two labelling systems take different approaches and arguably serve complementary functions:

- The EU energy label uses an A–G scale, allowing the consumer to see where the product falls against set EU standards which are not updated as the market evolves (though additional A+ and A++ categories have been created at the top of the scale for some products as they have become more efficient)
- The ESTR label does not include a scale and identifies simply those products that are in the top 20 per cent of energy performance for the product class: the standard is regularly checked and updated for each product class as the market evolves.

To set standards for ESTR, the Energy Saving Trust works with industry and partners in a rigorous, peer-reviewed process. The four steps to creating a product standard for ESTR, which aim to ensure it is as sound and credible as possible, are:

1. Together with industry and partner organisations, EST writes a proposal document on the new standard and its requirements – this will seek to set a standard that covers the top 20 per cent of the products on the market in terms of their energy performance.
2. EST then holds a consultative forum where manufacturers, retailers, testing and certification bodies discuss the proposal.
3. The Energy Saving Trust Recommended Endorsement Panel reviews the proposal. This body comprises independent regulatory, certification, enforcement and environment experts.
4. Once it has been reviewed and agreed or changed, the new standard is implemented and communicated to the industry.⁹

This describes the process for including new products in the scheme. For existing product categories, standards are peer-reviewed when there are significant improvements in the energy performance of the product on the market, necessitating an uplift in the standard in order to stay close to the 20 per cent standard.

In order to use the label on its products, a company must provide information about its operations and how it intends to deploy the label. Once an organisation has been approved as a certified company of the ESTR scheme, it can apply for certification of its products. The company must submit a proportion of its products for random testing in an independent testing house.¹⁰

The Energy Saving Trust Recommended scheme was funded by government and made available to retailers as a free service from its establishment until 2010, at which point government funding was removed. The Energy Saving Trust has since successfully moved the scheme to a fee-paying model.

8 <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Consultancy-and-certification/Energy-Saving-Trust-Recommended/Product-certification>

9 *ibid*

10 *ibid*

10 IPPR | Sustainable consumption in the UK: a selection of case studies

What did it achieve?

Over 3,000 products have been certified and labelled. The Energy Saving Trust has not published a review of the label's impact, though research shows that 73 per cent of UK customers that recognise the label understand that it shows them which products will use the least energy.¹¹

The main purpose of ESTR is to drive consumer choice. However, the standards set around the label have also been used within other regulatory and financing initiatives: ESTR has therefore driven the market for products both directly and indirectly. For example, their standards formed the basis for the EU standard on compact fluorescent light bulbs. ESTR standards have also been used within the Energy Efficiency Commitment – the government-controlled, energy supplier-funded subsidy schemes for energy efficient products. ESTR standards also formed the basis of the Television Voluntary Retailer Initiative in 2010/11 (see case study 4 below).

What lessons can be drawn from it?

The scheme highlights the potential for government to establish a scheme, build credibility around it and then withdraw funding, allowing the initiative to be taken forward as a credible initiative in the private sector. The initial period of government 'seed' funding is vital for two key reasons:

- to establish the credibility of the scheme
- to provide financing for the initiative – companies will be less likely to pay to subscribe to a scheme before it has proved its worth.

Key to the success of ESTR has been its robust certification and standard-setting processes. In particular, using an independent testing laboratory ensures integrity and acts as an incentive for manufacturers to ensure their products continue to meet the necessary standards, otherwise they risk losing their certification.

The scheme also shows how a robust certification and labelling process run outside government, can set standards that can then be widely adopted within other sustainable consumption initiatives – whether these are run by government or private sector.

Finally, though ESTR has a robust certification and standard-setting process, it is less administratively complex than the governmental European Energy Label. Accordingly, ESTR has been able to set standards for a wider range of products and to respond more rapidly to developing markets than the EU labelling initiative.

Case study 4: Voluntary Retail Initiative for televisions

The Voluntary Retail Initiative for televisions is closely linked to the Energy Saving Trust Recommended (ESTR) Scheme described in case study 3 above. In this example, the ESTR product certification is used as the basis for a programme of choice editing undertaken by major retailers.

Growing numbers of televisions in UK homes coupled with increasing energy use caused by the popularity of larger models has in recent years seen the energy use and carbon emissions associated with these products increase dramatically. Research showed that consumers were poorly informed about sustainable consumption with regard to televisions: they had no idea how much electricity televisions consumed, assumed that standby mode made the products more energy efficient, and rarely considered running

11 *ibid*

costs when making a purchase.¹² Meanwhile television sales in the UK were dominated by eight large retailers, who controlled over 50 per cent of the market.

Against this background of low consumer awareness and a high degree of centralisation in the market, in 2010 government sought to promote more sustainable purchasing of televisions by working directly with retailers to restrict the choice of televisions available to customers in shops – building on the ESTR scheme. This was in advance of a known plan for direct regulation to come into force at European level in 2012 to restrict the sale of higher energy using televisions.¹³

What was it?

In 2010 the Energy Saving Trust (EST) launched the Energy Saving Trust Recommended Voluntary Retailers Initiative (VRI), partnered by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Under this initiative eight leading retailers, representing over half the UK market in televisions, agreed to remove the worst-performing television models from their ranges by 2011, more than a year before the introduction of mandatory EU minimum efficiency standards.

The VRI on televisions was launched in March 2010 with the eight retailers signing a commitment of intent to:

- increase the range of highly efficient, ESTR-labelled televisions from branded suppliers
- specify own-brand televisions to ESTR standards
- introduce or increase training to raise awareness of the improved models for sales staff and consumers
- signpost consumers to Energy Saving Trust Recommended models
- share sales, model efficiency and evaluation data
- carry out marketing and PR activity that will assist in driving awareness of the programme.

In return for their commitment, retailers received the following support from the Energy Saving Trust:

- marketing support to communicate the message to their customers and key stakeholders:
 - Energy Saving Trust Recommended labels and key sales messages for integration within their point of sale material in-store
 - training aids and materials to raise awareness of sales staff
- support for the companies' PR, corporate social responsibility and carbon reporting activities through:
 - a certificate of achievement for the company, recognising achievement of the minimum energy performance requirement across their product range
 - verification of carbon savings achieved by the company as a result of participation in the initiative.¹⁴

12 <http://www.esd-ca.org/business/Business/Energy-Saving-Trust-Recommended/About-the-scheme/Voluntary-Retailer-Initiative-for-TVs>

13 *ibid*

14 *ibid*

What did it achieve?

Eight major electronics retailers covering more than 50 per cent of the television market in the UK committed to removing the most inefficient models from their shelves by 2011, a year ahead of the mandatory EU timetable.¹⁵

Market research was undertaken by the Energy Saving Trust to assess how consumers felt about the VRI and found that most consumers were supportive of the initiative.

What lessons can we draw from it?

The Voluntary Retail Initiative was effectively a joint commitment between government and retailers, negotiated by the Energy Saving Trust. The existing relationships that EST had with the major television retailers, as a result of Energy Saving Trust Recommended, greatly assisted in getting their buy-in, as did the backing of Defra. The retailers agreed to undertake several activities to promote energy efficient televisions and the EST supported their activities through tools, marketing, and public relations. This cooperative and supportive approach helped to set the tone for the scheme and to ensure it ran smoothly. It also paved the way for initiatives on other products in the future.

For the scheme to be effective it was important to have each of the eight major retailers involved. This was for two reasons: first, their sales accounted for the majority of the television market; and second, as more efficient television models tend to be more expensive than less efficient models, a retailer that acted unilaterally by removing the less efficient models from their product range could be put at a competitive disadvantage. By having all of the retailers act at the same time this in effect maintained a level playing field within the market.

It was in the interests of industry to be involved because of the marketing and PR advantages associated with the scheme. Further, the retailers' actions were taken in advance of regulation which would, anyway, force them to restrict sales of products: they were moving early, rather than striking out in a new direction.

One of the challenges that would make this initiative hard to repeat is the rapidly transforming retail market for consumer electronics, with increasing numbers of online sales driven by new online retailers. The market is becoming less concentrated and any similar initiative today would therefore need to negotiate agreement with a larger number of actors in order to be successful.

Product choice: key lessons

The introduction of regulations around energy efficient boilers (case study 2) highlights when and how regulations can be effectively introduced to directly restrict consumer choice. The key to success was to identify barriers that might prevent the regulations working effectively. In this case, the main barrier identified was installer skills and attitudes and a specific programme was put in place to address these.

The plan to make all homes 'zero-carbon' (case study 1) from 2016 is one of the UK government's most ambitious sustainable consumption policies. There are multiple challenges to be overcome if this policy is to be a success – skills, supply chain preparedness, consumer acceptance. The only way these challenges can be addressed is for government to work collaboratively with the industry around the introduction to the policy and the Zero Carbon Hub is proving an effective formal structure to do that.

15 *ibid*

The Energy Saving Trust Recommended scheme (case study 3) is a robust, independent certification programme for appliance energy standards. It works both directly (as a label to inform consumers) and indirectly, setting standards that are used within other schemes and initiatives. One such initiative is the Voluntary Retailer Initiative for televisions (case study 4), which, based on the ESTR standard, encouraged retailers to remove energy inefficient televisions from their stock in advance of regulations coming into force.

2. AWARENESS-RAISING

In this section we look at the different approaches to achieving sustainable consumption by improving consumers' awareness of the impact of their lifestyles. The first case study highlights a government-funded initiative to raise awareness of the issues around food waste, a little-known sustainability issue in the UK. This example showcases a staged approach of research, awareness-raising and partnership building to increase the profile of the issue with consumers and stakeholders. Our second case study shows how the UK government has sought to mobilise the disparate community and voluntary sectors to spread the word on sustainable lifestyles. The final case study in this section involves a city-wide approach to engage citizens to take action on carbon emissions in their locality.

Case study 5: Love Food Hate Waste

Love Food Hate Waste (LFHW) was a campaign established by the government-funded organisation WRAP (the Waste and Resources Action Programme). Food waste is not a widely understood sustainability issue in the UK and therefore this campaign has focused in its first years of operation on carrying out underpinning research, building new partnerships, making consumers more aware of the issue of food waste and only over time introducing consumers to ways of addressing the issue.¹⁶

WRAP was set up in 2000 to help recycling take off in the UK and to create a market for recycled materials. Similar to the Energy Saving Trust (see case study 9), WRAP is a government-established and funded organisation, formally independent, but in practice working under close direction of governments in England, Wales and Scotland.¹⁷ LFHW was led and managed by WRAP with government support and funding.

What was it?

The LFHW campaign was set up to raise awareness of the need to reduce food waste. The ultimate objective of the campaign was to show that by doing some easy practical everyday things in the home everyone can waste less food, which will ultimately save money and help the environment.

Before launching LFHW, WRAP undertook to develop a robust evidence base to make the case for action on this issue with consumers and partners. This involved both the technical side – the nature of food waste and how much of the waste stream it comprised – as well as research into consumer behaviour and the motivations for householders taking action to reduce food waste.

The first public phase of Love Food Hate Waste focused on awareness-raising – making the public and other stakeholders more aware of the issue of food waste and the importance of reducing it. It was not until further into the campaign that the messages moved onto more practical actions which consumers could take.

Love Food Hate Waste works with retailers and brands, local authorities, businesses, community groups and campaigners to help promote the LFHW message by providing resources such as well-researched tips, recipes, messages, publicity materials and consumer insights.

Throughout the campaign, WRAP has tracked the attitudes and behaviour of consumers so that they could target solutions at the right time.

¹⁶ Emma Marsh, WRAP, personal communication, 20 March 2012

¹⁷ http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/static/about_food_waste

Changes in government policy have presented some challenges. In 2010, with a change of government and a focus on cutting state expenditure, a central ban was put in place of state-funded advertising and public relations activity. Much of the awareness campaign relied on government funding, particularly the website. WRAP is now exploring how to make the website self-funding through sponsorship and advertising.

What did it achieve?

Since its launch, WRAP reports that ‘millions of people have responded [to the LFHW campaign], saving around £1.5 billion and 1.1 million tonnes worth of food’.¹⁸

WRAP has successfully aligned the campaign with initiatives already being run by major supermarkets, for example Sainsbury’s ‘Love Your Leftovers’ and Morrison’s ‘Great Taste Less Waste’ campaigns. These initiatives involved raising awareness and changes to packaging – the introduction of improved labelling (removing ‘display until’ dates from their products), and adapting pack sizes so that they were better suited for modern, smaller UK households. The retailer involvement was also in part encouraged by a voluntary commitment of retailers (brokered by government) to reduce waste.¹⁹

What lessons can be drawn from it?

Understanding what people do, and more importantly, why they do it has provided an important basis for the campaign. In particular the LFHW campaign found that appealing to people’s better nature does not work.²⁰

Partnership building has proved resource intensive, but ensuring partners are fully committed at the beginning and maintaining good communications with them has been vital to the successful outcomes achieved through this route. Levering private sector funding and support has also helped mitigate against the effects of cutbacks in state expenditure on awareness-raising.²¹

Moving to the next stage of the campaign – stimulating action – is still proving problematic, and the example of WRAP highlights the critical role of business partnerships in this area of sustainable consumption. After four years of the campaign, WRAP reports that ‘the campaign is still not getting through to some people and successfully changing their behaviour. The intention is to continue to reinforce behaviour change through partners who may have a greater level of influence with them.’²²

Finally, WRAP reports that methods used to measure success – targets and continuous evaluation – have proved useful in providing feedback for all involved in the campaign and have helped to indicate what is and is not working.²³

Case study 6: Every Action Counts

This government-led campaign aimed to improve sustainable consumption by using trusted non-environmental voluntary organisations to raise awareness among their members, as well as embedding sustainability in their own operations. The success of this

18 WRAP, *Love Food Hate Waste: An Introduction*: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Love%20Food%20Hate%20Waste%20Retailer%20Introduction.pdf>

19 Emma Marsh, WRAP, personal communication, 20 March 2012

20 *ibid*

21 *ibid*

22 *ibid*

23 *ibid*

project was largely down to sound preplanning and the involvement of a range of partners from the outset.

What was it?

Every Action Counts (EAC) was a government-funded community-based programme to improve sustainability. The project was managed and implemented by a consortium of voluntary organisations and targeted at a range of smaller groups across the country. Its aims were to raise awareness of sustainability, embed sustainability into their operations, and reach out to their members to further raise awareness and influence their environmental behaviours.²⁴

EAC emerged in part from the government's 2005 Sustainable Development Strategy and also from Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) research which suggested that voluntary groups were interested in sustainability but needed support to properly engage with it.²⁵

As a result, Defra then consulted with the voluntary sector and conducted roadshows around the country to assist in designing the programme. Defra then developed the early messages, materials and website for the project, as well as the targets and measurement process. Defra then let the contract for the programme.²⁶

EAC's stated aim was to address sustainability under five easily understood headings: 'save energy; travel wisely; shop ethically; save our resources; and care for your area'.²⁷

The programme provided training for community champions and community development workers; information, good practice guidance and case studies; assistance in the development of action plans; and resources and tools to evaluate performance.²⁸

Funding was provided to groups, with the amount of funding linked to targets which were largely based on outputs related to the above key areas.²⁹

What did it achieve?

EAC trained approximately 800 to 1,000 community champions. EAC also developed a range of resources for voluntary groups which continue to be used widely. Further, it had a lasting impact upon the groups involved: it helped to embed good practice in sustainability for their own work in areas such as events, finance, governance and human resources. It also helped to stimulate debate and thinking about sustainable consumption among the voluntary sector groups.³⁰

What lessons can be drawn from it?

The collaborative and consultative nature of this project was a major reason for its success. It was developed through consultation with voluntary organisations and was run by a consortium of voluntary organisations.

24 Mark Walton, then Head of EAC, 'Helping community groups lead the way to a better future', a presentation to the Charity Commission: <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Library/enviroeac.pdf>

25 Mark Walton, former Head of EAC, personal communication, 13 March 2012

26 *ibid*

27 See note 24

28 *ibid*

29 See note 25

30 *ibid*

Defra reported that much of the programme was targeted at behavioural and cultural change within organisations and communities – something which requires a longer timeframe than EAC had, in order to build momentum. However, the resources developed as part of EAC have continued to be used well beyond the life of the programme.

Some of the governance elements of the programme proved challenging. While the consortium managing the programme brought many benefits and exchange of ideas, it was at times rather unwieldy. Clearer roles for members of the consortium would have improved this situation.

Government funding of the programme also required accountability and the meeting of easily measurable targets, which did not necessarily always align with the objectives of the programme. They often drove EAC activity rather than measuring its success. In addition, as the targets were spread equally across the three years of the programme, they did not allow for adequate planning and programme design in the first year or for momentum to be built over time.³¹

Case study 7: Manchester is my Planet

Manchester is my Planet (MIMP) is an initiative from a number of Manchester organisations and ran a paper and online pledge campaign resulting in over 20,000 people committing to take action to cut their CO₂ emissions. Building from this successful campaign, MIMP has gone on to become an established semi-independent organisation in its own right, successfully delivering a range of programmes in the city focused on climate change.

What is it?

MIMP grew out of Manchester Green Energy Revolution, an initiative set up by a number of organisations collaborating to assess the potential for large-scale action on carbon emissions in the city. With funding from government and other sources, a campaign was established in 2005 with an initial target of 10,000 citizens signing a pledge to take action on climate change. A celebration event was staged when this target was reached in 2006.³²

At this point MIMP was formalised as a programme in its own right, based within the organisation Manchester Knowledge Capital. With much lower levels of funding, the pledge campaign has continued since 2006 and has now reached over 20,000 people.

MIMP's aims are:

- To change the thinking and actions of politicians, local authorities and private sector partners as well as the citizens of Greater Manchester.
- To deliver and facilitate the delivery of projects and processes that can move Manchester along the path to a low-carbon future, and help the UK to meet the government target of reducing CO₂ emissions by around 30 per cent before 2020, and 60 per cent before 2050.
- To do this in a way that improves life quality, contributes to the social and economic prosperity of the city-region, and enhances Manchester's image as a shining light of sustainable living and working. The key strands of activity underpin the city-region's actions towards a sustainable and low-carbon future.

31 *ibid*

32 <http://www.energychange.info/casestudies/181-case-study-12-manchester-is-my-planet-programme>

Since 2008, MIMP has focused on the delivery of two EU-funded programmes, one on sustainable energy action planning³³ (looking at carbon reduction commitments to 2020) and one on changing behaviour.³⁴

What did it achieve?

The initial MIMP campaign reached beyond Greater Manchester, with the prime minister at the time signing up to the pledge. Television personalities and sporting celebrities also lent their names to the campaign. Media coverage included three local television slots, eight radio features and 32 print media articles, helping it reach an estimated audience of 4.7 million people.

An estimate of energy savings – based on the assumption of the 20,000+ pledges meeting their commitment – suggests that around 44,600 tonnes of CO₂ can be saved annually.³⁵

MIMP has acted as a showcase and a stimulus for similar initiatives. Several organisations have used MIMP as a case study for local-level action. Further, in neighbouring cities such as Oldham, companion campaigns – ‘Oldham is my Planet’ – were set up.

At the same time, Manchester is my Planet has established itself as an independent organisation facilitating and stimulating action on carbon reduction in the Manchester area, creating a trusted brand and profile for work on carbon reduction in the city.³⁶ The programme has helped to cement Manchester as a centre for low-carbon activity and has contributed to city-wide green growth and low-carbon ambitions and planning.

The MIMP team has had to compete for funding to keep the initiative running. In spite of this, the core of the activity has remained intact and the MIMP branding and profile remains across Manchester.

What lessons can be drawn from it?

The pledge campaign was high-profile and had wide reach, but there have been concerns expressed about the long-term impact of such actions in delivering ongoing carbon savings. Other linked campaigns introduced an element of local competitiveness, which helped to drive local people to pledge support to their own area. This approach has been adopted by other subsequent environmental initiatives.

The bulk of the pledges that were made were in response to a major publicity campaign funded out of national government funds. Not all local campaigns will have access to these resources. However, MIMP has also begun using more online campaigning methods; once established it has also shown itself able to bring in other funding in order to continue the campaign.

Awareness-raising: key lessons

These case studies highlight the importance of establishing consumer awareness campaigns with a broad base of support in the public, private and voluntary sectors through partnership building. It is important to ensure real ownership of the campaign by these partners through the creation of appropriate management structures. Partnership building takes time, and the Every Action Counts (case study 6) example in particular

33 <http://manchesterismyplanet.com/sustainable-energy-action-planning>

34 <http://manchesterismyplanet.com/behavioural-change/the-changing-behaviour-project>

35 <http://www.energychange.info/casestudies/179-case-study-22-manchester-is-my-planet-pledge-campaign>

36 <http://www.energychange.info/casestudies/181-case-study-12-manchester-is-my-planet-programme>

shows that programmes that are built around multiple partnerships need to allow time for the partnership to develop. Targets and ambitions need to reflect this (by anticipating lower levels of outcomes in the first year).

The importance of investing in research is also highlighted (particularly through the Love Food Hate Waste case study, which showcased a programme built around a less well-understood issue in sustainable consumption). Research creates the underpinning rationale for involvement in the campaign, and provides the collateral for partners to make the campaign a success. The Love Food Hate Waste case study also highlights that development of fulfilment mechanisms are essential, empowering consumers to take action on the messages of the campaign. However, the deployment of the required means to deliver a specific sustainable lifestyle change needs to be carefully planned and timed, with an understanding of how and when consumers move from awareness to action.

It is important that fulfilment mechanisms drive real action. The key mechanism used in Manchester is my Planet (case study 7) – a personal pledge to reduce carbon emissions – was not evaluated as to its effectiveness in driving real action in homes. However, the campaign was certainly effective in raising awareness and providing a large-scale, city-wide focus for future action on carbon in the city.

3. ORGANISATIONAL AND CAPACITY BUILDING

In this section we look at the organisations and structures aimed at developing industry, community and consumer capacity to live sustainably. The first case study highlights how research and engagement were utilised to develop a framework for coordinating action on sustainable living. The second showcases a long-term, large-scale capacity-building and awareness-raising initiative around household energy consumption. The final example in this section looks at a structure put in place to support local communities to develop and implement local initiatives to encourage sustainable consumption.

Case study 8: Pro-Environmental Behaviours Framework

The government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) aimed to promote sustainable consumption by developing a common framework for analysing and promoting sustainable behaviour change, based on rigorous research, engagement and collaboration. The plan was to coordinate government and external organisations' activities to promote sustainable consumption in order to reduce duplication and increase effectiveness.

What was it?

In establishing the Pro-Environmental Behaviours Framework (the Framework), Defra aimed to bring together evidence on public understanding, attitudes and behaviours around sustainability; identify behaviour change goals; and draw conclusions on the potential for change across different sectors of the population.

The Framework was designed to support policy development and implementation in Defra. Outside the department, the Framework was also aimed at policymakers and marketing advisers in other parts of government and the public sector, and at stakeholders in the private and voluntary sectors who were interested in supporting greener lifestyles.

Specifically, the Framework covered:

- a set of core **principles and approaches** for encouraging more environmentally friendly behaviour
- a set of 12 headline **behaviour goals**, which covered the main areas of consumption: food and drink, personal travel, homes and household products, and travel tourism
- **consumer insight and evidence base** which included an assessment of what kinds of actions people were already taking and their relative ability and willingness to do more
- an **environmental segmentation model** that divided the public into seven clusters, each sharing a distinct set of attitudes and beliefs towards the environment
- an assessment of the implications of this evidence and understanding for policy development and implementation, including the design of communications and marketing tools.³⁷

To produce the Framework, Defra-commissioned research included a large-scale survey of public attitudes and behaviour and a series of pieces of qualitative research on public understanding.³⁸

Defra also convened several stakeholder workshops to develop the Framework. Stakeholders included other government departments, government delivery agencies,

37 <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/evidence/social/behaviour/>.

38 *ibid*

non-government organisations and voluntary groups, and research institutions. These groups worked through a series of challenges from identifying the headline behaviour goals to mapping the behaviour change delivery landscape.

Following these smaller workshops, Defra convened a much larger group to consult on the draft Framework and move towards broader consensus.

What did it achieve?

Seeking to change environmental behaviours was, in many ways, a relatively new area of government influence. Government understanding of behaviour change was much more developed in the area of public health than in climate change, carbon reduction and the environment. In attempting to bring a greater level of coordination and cooperation to the activities of government and across a wide range of organisations, it was an ambitious undertaking.

The segmentation model advanced Defra's understanding of how environmental attitudes, values, current behaviours and motivations and barriers were packaged together for defined segments of the population.

It also successfully prioritised individual behaviours on the basis of the potential for carbon reduction and the likelihood/ease with which the public could undertake them through a consultative basis.

In bringing together a wide range of stakeholders and groups, a common understanding of the range of environmental behaviour change activities was achieved. In addition, the collaborative approach to developing the framework generally achieved consensus and theoretical support for the coordinated approach.

Defra have not published quantified outcomes from the initiative.

What lessons can be drawn from it?

The evidence base developed in preparing the Framework was integral to not only developing the Framework but also achieving consensus. It ensured that the Framework was grounded in a stronger understanding of behaviour change and public motivations rather than assumptions. The evidence base has also been used more widely by other organisations to inform their activities.

Within government, having one department try to influence others, including HM Treasury, will always prove challenging. A broader, cross-government consensus and buy-in would have made a significant difference.

While there was considerable support among the organisations involved for a more coordinated approach to delivering environmental behaviour change programmes, there was concern that this could become an attempt by government to exert greater influence and control over their approach.

Case study 9: the Energy Saving Trust

This is an example of a major institution with long-term funding from government, focused on influencing demand and supply actors around one area of sustainable consumption: home energy use. In particular the establishment of the Energy Saving Trust in 1992 institutionalised a partnership between government and energy suppliers to reduce domestic energy consumption. The organisation has used a range of techniques to

promote sustainable consumption, principally by raising awareness with consumers, but also by building the capacity of other private, public and voluntary sector actors.

What is it?

The Energy Saving Trust (EST) was formed as a partnership between government and energy suppliers to bring about a step change in the energy efficiency of households and communities. It was established as a private, not-for-profit company with a board comprising energy suppliers, government representatives and independent members to ensure its impartiality.³⁹

The Energy Saving Trust was originally established with the intention that it would invest money from private energy supply companies in home energy efficiency measures. However, just as the organisation was being established, the government rejected this model. Instead, EST ran programmes to *promote* action on home energy efficiency. The energy suppliers, meanwhile, were obliged to make investments in actually installing energy saving measures (principally insulation) in homes. The EST thus represented a form of institutionalised partnership between government and the energy suppliers: EST (with government support) aimed to build the market for installed energy efficiency measures, while the energy companies supplied the market with subsidised or free energy efficiency measures.

Over time EST came to deliver a wide range of government initiatives and with an annual budget of around £25 million it provided comprehensive services around household energy efficiency, and subsequently home microgeneration and the sustainable use of personal transport.⁴⁰

EST worked through a variety of techniques and a range of delivery channels, including:

- direct advice and support to individuals, primarily through a UK-wide network of 52 local energy efficiency advice centres (later streamlined to become 21 sustainable energy advice centres incorporating energy efficiency, renewable energy and transport)
- a state-of-the-art consumer segmentation model, which allowed targeting of citizens with the highest potential for carbon reduction, as well as use of the most appropriate channels and messages to engage with them
- the UK's most extensive database on energy saving activity and house by house installations – the Home Energy Efficiency Database
- partnerships with major private sector retailers and product manufacturers, such as B&Q and Proctor & Gamble, who wished to promote carbon emissions reduction, as well as specific low-carbon products using the well-established 'Energy Saving Trust Recommended' brand (see case study 3)
- internet and other new media increasing reach and citizen access to energy saving advice and information
- engagement with local authorities, using a unique network of contacts in every local authority to provide support, in-depth consultancy and motivation for action
- partnerships with the voluntary sector at national and local levels to embed energy-saving behaviour among members as well as supporting bespoke projects

39 Eoin Lees, founding chief executive of the Energy Saving Trust, personal communication, 21 March 2012

40 *ibid*

- technical advice and support to the housebuilding industry and social housing providers
- independent field trials of new and emerging technologies to verify claimed carbon savings and provide accurate advice on installation to industry and consumers
- piloting new ways of delivering on behalf of government, such as green household finance models.

While EST was formally independent of government in functional terms, over 90 per cent of its funding came from government, which was also represented on the organisation's board, so it tended to operate closely under the government's direction.

In 2010, with the election of a new government, EST funding was substantially cut and many of the functions which the organisation had previously delivered were either stopped or taken under direct government control. Government has instead sought to empower the private sector (not just energy supply companies) to market and sell energy efficiency measures, in particular through the creation of a new financing mechanism for energy efficiency: the Green Deal. Against this background EST has been able to transition many of its activities (such as EST Recommended) to private sector funding. However, its core activity of providing impartial expert advice to customers and the supply chain has been severely restricted.

What did it achieve?

The Energy Saving Trust delivered sustainable energy and transport initiatives for the UK government and has achieved:

- £1.5 billion savings on people's fuel bills since 1994
- 20 million tonnes cut from the UK's carbon footprint in 2008/09
- 3.5 million consumers given advice in 2009/10
- 395,000 lofts and cavity walls insulated in 2009/10
- 142 local authorities benefiting from in-depth consultancy
- 4,500 community groups supported.⁴¹

The figures for achieved savings need to be understood as delivered in partnership with energy suppliers, as has been explained above.

What lessons can be drawn from it?

The Energy Saving Trust shows the value of a long-term investment in an area of sustainable consumption. The organisation has built up data, insight and expertise that underpins most of the activity taking place today in the UK to promote energy efficiency and microgeneration to householders. Nonetheless, the organisation has faced challenges in its mode of operation.

Most critical has been the dependency on government funding and thereby political support. Changes in political direction have posed challenges for the organisation in investing in long-term capacity building.

The organisation has struggled to always align marketing and awareness-raising with energy suppliers' activity to promote energy saving measures. Energy suppliers in the UK are incentivised to compete in the delivery of energy savings and therefore do not

41 Energy Saving Trust [EST] (2010) *Helping people save energy*, London: 2

collaborate easily with a public sector body seeking to work impartially and openly with all parties.

Finally, changing consumer behaviour around home energy use has proved very difficult; even the high levels of investment given to EST (and required from the energy suppliers) have not been sufficient to see the required step change in the way UK householders use energy. Action by EST has tended to be most effective where it has supported regulatory change (for example the transition to condensing boilers), but governments have been reluctant to use regulation in this area except in very limited circumstances.

Case study 10: Transition Network

The Transition Network is a UK-based international voluntary sector initiative. It aims to improve sustainable consumption by acting as an umbrella for community-based programmes and providing a framework and tools to support the development and implementation of community plans for sustainable living.

The Transition Network is funded through voluntary sources in the UK and has a secretariat of three paid staff.

What was it?

The Transition Towns movement was started in Kinsale in County Cork, Ireland, by a group of academics, but has grown rapidly to become a large international network of local communities working to overcome the twin problems of peak oil and climate change through a focus on local resources and resilience.

Transition Towns are encouraged to develop Energy Descent Action Plans (or EDAPs) to move towards more sustainable consumption of energy. The first of these was produced in Kinsale. This plan then resulted in a 12-step programme that subsequent Transition communities have followed:

1. set up a steering group
2. awareness-raising – build networks and prepare the community in general for the launch of a local Transition initiative
3. create networks with existing groups and activists
4. organise a launch event (described as a ‘Great Unleashing’) – this stage creates a memorable milestone to mark the project’s ‘coming of age’
5. form subgroups – with each subgroup working towards the Energy Descent Action Plan by focusing on practical measures to increase community resilience and reduce the carbon footprint
6. use open spaces to run meetings and raise awareness
7. develop visible practical manifestations of the project – this stage is designed to demonstrate that the initiative is not just a talking shop
8. empower and train people to work on projects (described as ‘the Great Reskilling’) – the aim is to ‘give people a powerful realisation of their own ability to solve problems, to achieve practical results and to work cooperatively alongside other people’
9. build a bridge to local government – to help facilitate the Energy Descent Action Plan
10. work with and use the skills of elderly people, who are identified as valuable because they ‘directly remember the transition to the age of cheap oil’
11. allow the project to grow organically (‘let it go where it wants to go’)

12. create the Energy Descent Action Plan – the plans begin with an understanding of local resources and seek to provide a vision of the community 15–20 years into the future. This is then brought back to the steps needing to be taken today to begin on the journey and this is then populated with stories, pictures and other media to highlight key stages along the journey to plan delivery.⁴²

What did it achieve?

While not all Transition Town initiatives have been successful, some have accomplished a great deal and are continuing to run and grow. Some have resulted in the introduction of local currencies supported by local businesses – promoting the sale and use of sustainable, local produce. Others have campaigned for the banning of plastic bags, and have worked alongside local energy services companies to promote local sources of renewable energy. Food growing has often been an important part of Transition activity, and there has been a focus on the production and supply of locally sourced produce including support for community gardens and gardening and cooking lessons. Transition Town groups have also worked on car-share schemes and have organised events to swap or repair clothing.

While the Transition Network and individual Transition Town initiatives continue to grow, the Transition Town movement in general has also had an influence on government policy. Government is now considering measures to support bottom-up community models as part of initiatives on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

What lessons can be drawn from it?

There are those who consider that the approaches suggested by the Transition movement are not radical enough and that more fundamental shifts away from more sustainable consumption to consuming less are needed.⁴³ Some feel that the centralised resources and processes are too restrictive whereas others find their consistency effective in moving towards local action and have contributed towards the rapid growth of the network.

Bergman et al have studied models of local social change.⁴⁴ In their review they note that some socially led organisations struggle to compete against more highly funded R&D programmes in delivering genuine change. They also report that some community-led initiatives can get stuck with being ‘locked in’ to dominant top-down technological models.

Given the nature of Transition Towns, the experiences of the communities and individuals involved vary greatly. What works in some communities does not work in others. It is largely dependent upon those involved, which is fundamentally part of the challenge. However, several towns have successfully engaged their local communities and small businesses in action, proving that bottom-up, self-organising, locally driven initiatives can work.

Organisational and capacity-building initiatives: key lessons

The Defra Pro-Environmental Behaviours Framework (case study 8) takes a very different approach to the other case studies featured in this report: it is focused entirely on building the framework to make other campaigns a success. It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that there is a lack of quantitative evaluation of the impact of the initiative. Nonetheless, this Framework does show the value of multiple stakeholders working together to consider sustainable consumption across a broad area – what are the most important consumption behaviours to change, who is it best to target, how can this best be achieved? To ensure

42 <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/support/12-ingredients>

43 <http://www.feasta.org/2011/04/06/the-transition-towns-movement-its-huge-significance-and-a-friendly-criticism/>

44 <http://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/research/energy/downloads/Bergman%20et%20al%20Social%20Innovation%20WP.pdf>

ownership and use of this Framework inside and outside government the case study suggests that leadership is critical – perhaps such a programme should ideally be led from the very heart of government.

The Energy Saving Trust (case study 9), similarly shows government at its most ambitious, committing ongoing, large-scale funding over nearly 20 years to create a centre of expertise on home energy saving. EST has achieved significant, large-scale reductions in carbon emissions to match its funding. However, EST's dependence on government has been both a strength and a weakness – programmes have tended to change with governments and now the organisation faces a more uncertain future with the withdrawal of most of its government support. It is arguable that the overall EST initiative would have been more stable for the really long term with a basis in true partnership funding from private and government stakeholders.

Finally, the Transition Network (case study 10) shows the impressive power of citizen action, mobilised entirely without the resources of the state. With thousands involved in transition towns, the Network provides a systematic structure for their activities and engagement. However, research into such local community action suggests that its ability to drive real action may be limited by a lack of technical capability to address complex sustainable consumption challenges.

4. NEW LEADERS OF SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

In this section we look at new approaches to leading and communicating sustainable consumption. Our earlier examples have been of initiatives that have been led by the state or non-profit organisations – albeit often with substantial private sector involvement. This section gives first an example of a transformational sustainable consumption initiative led from *within* a major retailer. Our final case study in this paper provides an example of a campaign led by a high-profile individual, utilising the full power of celebrity culture and new media to get the message across.

Case study 11: Marks & Spencer Plan A

This example involves one of the UK's major retailers, Marks and Spencer (M&S), which set out to improve sustainable consumption by working across the company to raise awareness, improve practices and influence the sustainability of the product stocks. It did this by making it a corporate priority from the very top of the organisation, having a clear plan in place, measuring it regularly, and engaging all stakeholders, including the supply chain.

What was it?

In 2006, M&S launched a campaign 'Look Behind the Label' to increase customer awareness of M&S values and the sourcing of their products. As a result, brand trust noticeably improved. Building on this success, Plan A was conceived as a cross-organisational programme to transform the way M&S conducts its business.⁴⁵

Plan A was launched in January 2007 with a list of 100 commitments, which was subsequently extended in 2010 and now pledges 180 commitments to be achieved by the year 2015: its goal being to make Marks and Spencer the world's most sustainable major retailer. The Plan A commitments are grouped under five headings: climate change, waste, sustainable raw materials, health and 'being a fair partner'.⁴⁶ The commitments are grouped by theme and then organised in seven pillars (see below for a list of the seven pillars).

All M&S stores have to report against a range of targets as part of their standard management reporting. Senior executives' bonuses are linked to the achievement of Plan A commitments.⁴⁷

What did it achieve?

Of the 180 commitments, 95 have been achieved, 77 are on target, one is on hold and seven are currently behind schedule. M&S has identified it as their most successful transformation project. The seven pillars of the scheme are:

1. involve customers in Plan A – customers have been helped to identify and choose more sustainable products (no available quantification)
2. make Plan A how M&S does business – which includes engaging employees (4,000 employees had their homes insulated for free in 2010/11) and business partners
3. climate change – annual carbon dioxide emissions have been reduced by over 90,000 tonnes of CO₂ since 2006/07 (an improvement of 25 per cent per square foot of sales floor)
4. waste – M&S stores, offices and warehouses recycled 94 per cent of their waste in 2010/11
5. natural resources – 90 per cent of fish sold in M&S stores came from sustainable sources in 2010/11, as did 76 per cent of timber

45 Adam Elam, Marks and Spencer, personal communication, 22 March 2012

46 <http://plana.marksandspencer.com/we-are-doing>

47 Adam Elam, Marks and Spencer, personal communication, 22 March 2012

6. fair partner – over 37,000 employees were trained about their employment rights and health and safety
7. health and wellbeing – M&S is the retailer of the top two UK diet brands and has launched a dedicated health and nutrition website.⁴⁸

What lessons can be drawn from it?

Plan A has been very high-profile with significant marketing and communications of the initiative. With it, M&S have identified a range of challenges and lessons including:

- the commitments were bold and new and initially they did not know how to go about achieving them
- some commitments have been outside the control of the organisation (such as achieving targets for organic food sales where the UK market is currently declining)
- the scale of the ambition across the organisation and the supply chain has proved challenging
- partnerships, particularly with environment groups, charities and other industry groups have proved crucial
- changes to supply chain have been particularly challenging – a collaborative approach has been employed to create change, using forums, conferences, information exchange and demonstration projects to support the transformation (such as co-funded eco-factories, which are used to practically demonstrate best practice to other suppliers)
- a very clear plan has been important, along with clear governance, roles, measurement, transparency and the buy-in of the board and senior executives
- it is vital to have robust data to track progress and to have this both internally and externally audited to ensure credibility and transparency
- as a customer-led business, M&S can be one step ahead but not too far ahead. They need to lead their customers on a journey, helping them to make changes and keeping them engaged. Their customers will not pay more for sustainability.⁴⁹

Case study 12: Hugh's Fish Fight

Hugh's Fish Fight aimed to improve sustainable consumption by campaigning to change fisheries policy, influence supply chain practices and increase consumer awareness of sustainable fish consumption. It achieved this through utilising the power of social media. The campaign has been led and developed by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, a television chef and champion of sustainable food.

What was it?

Hugh's Fish Fight is a public campaign to influence European and UK fisheries policy in order to introduce a discard ban on fishing (fishermen in Europe currently throw away large numbers of edible fish because of European quotas limiting how many they can land and because consumers reject many edible fish). Fearnley-Whittingstall also sought to influence consumer choices, although it is important to note with this initiative that policy change has been the main objective: changing citizens' consumption habits is a secondary objective.

In 2010, Fearnley-Whittingstall went on a tour to better understand the issues of sustainable fishing. He visited the North Sea, where he learnt that half the fish caught are

48 http://plana.marksandspencer.com/media/pdf/how_we_do_business_report_2011.pdf

49 Adam Elam, Marks and Spencer, personal communication, 22 March 2012

being thrown back dead because of EU regulation. He documented his journey in a three-part television documentary series which aired in January 2011. Fearnley-Whittingstall then launched a campaign 'Hugh's Fish Fight' to try to change European regulation.⁵⁰

A key part of the campaign was a very clear statement of the policy change needed and the use of electronic media to raise awareness of the issues. The website is the campaign hub where people sign up to support the campaign. It also acts as a fulfilment mechanism, providing practical steps members of the public can take to ensure their fish consumption is more sustainable, including recipes for the less popular fish species.⁵¹

The campaign has relied heavily on social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, as well as smartphone apps (including one with fish recipes).

What did it achieve?

The campaign is reporting that nearly 850,000 people have signed up to support the campaign and that consumers are buying a wider variety of fish (no further quantification).

Hugh's Fish Fight has used its significant popular support to successfully exert influence on retailers and the supply chain to sell different varieties of fish and those which are sourced more sustainably.⁵²

The campaign has enjoyed a relatively high profile and has received the support of the UK government which is now funding research to better quantify the scale of the problem and potential solutions. Finally, and most importantly in terms of the campaign objective, a discard ban has been included in new draft EU Common Fisheries Policy.

What lessons can be drawn from it?

Hugh's Fish Fight has had a relatively high profile compared with others addressing sustainable consumption. Part of this is due to a celebrity leading the campaign, but in this case, a celebrity who has credibility in the area as a result of his profession as a chef with a connection to the issue. Charting his journey through a television documentary series also significantly helped bring large numbers of consumers on board.

The campaign definitely benefited from having a very clear and simple policy ask (focused solely on the 'throw-back' issue). It was easy for the public to understand and support in a way that is not usually seen in environmental campaigns.

The successful use of a wide range of digital media has undoubtedly contributed to the very high level of public support for the campaign.

New leaders: key lessons

These case studies are arguably the most important in showing how sustainability campaigns need to evolve given the scale of the challenge we face in changing consumption practice. Governments are unlikely to have the resources to promote sustainability across all lifestyle areas, or (in the UK) to be willing to use regulation to drive very large-scale changes. Meanwhile NGOs are well trusted but usually face capacity and skills barriers.

The Marks and Spencer example (case study 11) shows how one large private company has identified and acted on a value proposition based around more sustainable

50 <http://www.fishfight.net/the-campaign/>

51 <http://www.fishfight.net/what-else/>

52 <http://www.fishfight.net/our-impact/>

consumption, being able to deploy significant resources to deliver changes and – to some extent – bring its customers and suppliers with it. The question is, though, how can this private sector model be adopted more widely. M&S is a retailer that promotes itself principally on quality rather than price: it is unclear that a retailer with a lower-cost model could readily adapt the Plan A approach ahead of other market players.

Hugh's Fish Fight (case study 12) shows how new media can enable a sustainable consumption campaign to reach nearly a million people without a traditional organisational structure behind it. The model is impressive, but is based principally on a short-term, high-impact, policy-led campaign, and the approach may be more successful for being built around such a simple policy ask. It remains to be seen whether the initiative can be successful in delivering real long-term complex behaviour change.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

There are many different ways of encouraging sustainable consumption. In this report we have looked at a range of examples involving: restricting or guiding product choice; raising awareness of sustainable living; the creation of new institutions and structures; action led from within major companies; and using the full power of celebrity and new media. Here we draw out lessons that can usefully inform the development and implementation of other sustainable consumption initiatives in the future.

1. **Research, facts and data** – ensure that any initiative is evidence-based and can be supported with facts. This helps gain support for initiatives and gives credibility for action. However, the pursuit of perfect information can also be the enemy of action. A balance is needed and research can be undertaken throughout programmes.
2. **Engagement** – all key parties/organisations need to be engaged as early as possible in the initiative (even in the design and scoping phases) and need to buy-in. Even in the case of regulation, stakeholder support is crucial for effective implementation, especially if technical and skills improvements are needed, as in the case of Zero Carbon Homes.
3. **Partnerships** – usually successful initiatives have involved partnerships between organisations from different sectors (central and local government, private sector and NGOs). This can help ensure a better, more informed and targeted programme, it can extend the reach and it can result in more cost-effective delivery.
4. **Planning** – having a clear plan which has the support of other organisations and partners often helps to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes. It helps to achieve buy-in and ensures everyone is working towards the same outcomes.
5. **Awareness-raising** – while important, there need to be tools to support and encourage people to take action and change their behaviour. The timing of the tools and practical actions will depend on the initiative. In the case of Love Food Hate Waste, there was very little awareness of the issue so tools could come a little later, whereas with Hugh's Fish Fight awareness-raising and practical actions were needed almost simultaneously. At the very least, some form of fulfilment mechanism – to enable citizens to take action as soon as they feel motivated to do so – is necessary.
6. **Consumers and the supply chain** – in order to change consumer behaviour more sustainable products need to be made readily available and people need to be made aware of their existence at the right time through, for example, clear product labelling. In some cases they change in tandem (such as Hugh's Fish Fight).
7. **The increasing influence of social and digital media** – it is a quick and cost-effective means of raising awareness, distributing information and tools/resources, and communication. And good campaigns can go viral.
8. **Targets, measurement, evaluation and feedback** – the right targets need to be set in order to measure progress, and if it becomes clear that they are not the right ones then change them. Feedback is important, not only for those running programmes to ensure they are achieving objectives, but also to the wider public as part of reinforcing their behaviour change.
9. **The role of policy** – there is no consistent role for policy in these case studies. In some cases, programmes are developed to implement policy. In other cases, initiatives fill policy gaps or go beyond regulatory requirements. And some seek to change policies that are a barrier to sustainable consumption. However, sustainable consumption will always be made easier by a supportive policy and regulatory system which encourages better environmental performance.

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF CASE STUDIES

1. Product choice

A. Zero Carbon Hub

Where	England
When	2006–2016
Organisations	Home builders (a small number of large companies build the majority of UK homes) National Home Building Council – a national body set up by the housebuilding industry which issues guarantees for house purchases Government – national (in setting England-wide standards for new homes) Government – local (in monitoring and enforcing national building standards)
Website	www.zerocarbonhub.org

B. Energy Efficient Boilers

Where	UK-wide
When	2006–
Organisations	Suppliers and installers of home central heating boilers. The market for installers of central heating systems in the UK is dominated by micro-SMEs Homeowners (70 per cent of whom are individual/family owner-occupiers) Government – national (in setting UK-wide standards for heating systems as part of the Building Regulations) Government – local (in monitoring and enforcing national building standards)

C. Energy Saving Recommended

Where	UK-wide
When	1995–
Organisations	The scheme was developed and is managed by the Energy Saving Trust, an independent not-for-profit organisation. The scheme was funded by government until 2010, but is now funded by membership and administration fees paid by product manufacturers to have their goods independently tested and verified.
Website	www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Consultancy-and-certification/Energy-Saving-Trust-Recommended/

D. Voluntary Retail Initiative

Where	England
When	2010–2011 Another Voluntary Retail Initiative for home IT equipment was launched in 2011 and initiatives for other products will be undertaken as the opportunity arises.

Organisations The project was a joint initiative by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (which funded the project) and the Energy Saving Trust. Eight major retailers were signed up to participate.

2. Awareness-raising

A. Love Food Hate Waste

Where UK-wide

When 2007–

Organisations The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) is funded by the government and works to encourage and enable businesses and consumers to be more efficient in their use of materials and recycle more things more often. This helps to minimise landfill, reduce carbon emissions and improve our environment (http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/static/about_food_waste).

Website www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

B. Every Action Counts

Where England

When 2006–2009
Every Action Counts finished at the end of March 2009. The Third Sector Declaration on Climate Change which was developed in 2007 with support from EAC has been reviewed and continued by a consortium of third sector organisations under the banner of ‘Just Act’.

Organisations Every Action Counts was funded by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and run by a consortium of 30 voluntary sector organisations led by the Community Development Foundation, a leading national organisation in community development and engagement.

Website www.justact.org.uk

C. Manchester is my Planet

Where Greater Manchester – across 10 local authorities covering an area of 2.6 million people

When 2005–

Organisations Over 100 organisations were involved in co-creating the three-year pilot programme. The programme is co-ordinated by Manchester: Knowledge Capital on behalf of the 10 local authorities in the Manchester city region.

Website <http://manchesterismyplanet.com>

3. Organisational and capacity building

A. Pro-Environmental Behaviours

Where	Great Britain
When	The process commenced in late 2006 and the framework was published in January 2008. Additional supporting research was subsequently undertaken but a departmental restructure (creation of a separate Department of Energy and Climate Change) resulted in a significant reduction in resources and influence.
Organisations	The process was initiated and led by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. A range of government, private sector and non-government organisations were involved in the development of the Framework and subsequent practical testing. The Centre of Expertise on Influencing Behaviours has since been created within Defra, which seeks to influence behaviour by contributing to the development of more effective interventions and it has published the Framework for Sustainable Lifestyles which is, in effect, a synthesis of this case study, as well as additional consumer and practical research.
Website	www.defra.gov.uk

B. Energy Saving Trust

Where	Initially Great Britain but later extended to Northern Ireland
When	1992–
Organisations	EST was a partnership between the government and energy supply companies and was largely government-funded until 2012. The Energy Saving Trust had a significant reduction in its core grant funding from government in 2011, and no core grant funding in 2012. It is now running programmes under contract for the UK government, collaborative European projects and commercial contracts.
Website	www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

C. Transition Towns

Where	The first Transition Town was formed in Kinsale, County Cork, Ireland. The network now consists of over 950 Transition Towns across the UK and increasingly internationally. The most developed are Totnes, Brixton, Bristol and Lewes.
When	The first Energy Descent Action Plan was developed in 1995.
Organisations	Transition Towns is led by the community, with grassroots at its core. The Transition Network provides centralised support and materials/resources to Transition Towns.
Website	www.transitionnetwork.org

4. Cross-cutting initiatives

A. M&S Plan A

Where	Across M&S stores in the UK and abroad, M&S operations and global supply chain.
When	Launched in 2007 with current commitments to be achieved by 2015.
Organisations	Around 21 million people visit Marks and Spencer stores in the UK and 42 overseas territories each week. In 2010/11 sales were £9.7 billion and pre-tax profit was £714.3 million. Marks and Spencer is the UK's largest clothing retailer with a market share of 12.3 per cent by volume and 3.9 per cent of the UK food market.
Website	http://plana.marksandspencer.com

B. Hugh's Fish Fight

Where	The initial focus of the campaign was gathering support in the United Kingdom to help influence European fisheries policy. The campaign has expanded now to a range of other EU member states and is now translated into 11 languages.
When	January 2011–
Organisations	Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, a celebrity chef, has spearheaded the campaign with support from environment groups, businesses and the UK government.
Website	www.fishfight.net