



Business Resource Efficiency advice and the role of Business Link

Findings of the 2007/8 Business Resource Efficiency Pilot Conclusions and recommendations for the future

A report by the Regional Development Agencies

October 2008

England's **nine** Regional Development Agencies are:

Advantage West Midlands East of England Development Agency East Midlands Development Agency	London Development Agency Northwest Regional Development Agency ONE NorthEast	South East England Development Agency South West of England Regional Development Agency Yorkshire Forward
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Executive Summary

Introduction

The report, *Business Resource Efficiency Pilot*, sets out the activities and findings of a pilot programme run by the nine English Regional Development Agencies, in partnership with Business Link, from April 2007 to March 2008. The programme (referred to in this report as the BRE Pilot) aimed to provide advice and onsite audits on resource efficiency for 10,000 businesses, across all regions.

This report also sets out conclusions and makes recommendations that RDAs and Government should consider for the future, taking into consideration the rapidly-changing public sector landscape (e.g. the current Delivery Landscape Review by Defra) and the likely impact on support for and advice about resource efficiency for businesses.

What is business resource efficiency?

Business resource efficiency is about how organisations can effectively manage their use of resources such as raw materials, energy, water, transport or even the workforce, in order to minimise waste and the amount of material used. Business resource efficiency can help reduce costs and ensure they comply with environmental legislation requirements. With growing supply chain and consumer pressure to reduce environmental impact, it is a key commercial consideration. Businesses that are resource efficient save money, increase their competitiveness, and reduce their impact on the environment.

Background

How it started

The BRE Pilot programme was developed following an announcement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 2006 Budget. He committed the RDAs to running a pilot programme in conjunction with Business Links, in order to help streamline advice for businesses on resource efficiency. This approach would be consistent with the Government's proposed Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP), now underway. The task offered a significant opportunity both for Business Link to demonstrate its growing role as the primary gateway for business support, and for the RDAs to call upon their regional expertise to swiftly roll out an effective programme, calling upon existing single pot and BREW funding, i.e. at no extra cost.

Business Link and the RDAs

The nine Regional Development Agencies are responsible for managing Business Link a national service that offers impartial and authoritative information and brokerage to businesses. The RDAs, who are playing a leading role in the organisation, design and delivery of the Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP) are responsible for the provision of business support at a regional level, working tendering for and managing services such as Business Link to ensure that publicly-funded support for business is simple to understand, easy to access and fit for purpose.

How Business Link works

The fundamental principle of the Business Link model is that it does not offer direct advice to businesses. Instead, via a process known as information, diagnostics and brokerage (IDB) it analyses a business's individual requirements and introduces the business to a range of organisations and information that can then help them to find solutions to their specific needs.

Business Link and business resource efficiency

Business Link Advisers are, and are meant to be, generalists. They do not therefore usually have specialist knowledge of resource efficiency. Regional Business Link providers hold a wide-ranging knowledge bank of the public and private sector support and resources available on a range of business issues. Although this may include resource efficiency, Business Link Advisers have not traditionally had a major role in this area nor had they, up to now, created strong links with the

national support providers such as WRAP and Envirowise. Resource efficiency was, in most cases, not seen as a mainstream part of the IDB process – but this varied from region to region, as was highlighted by the BRE Pilot.

The approach

Regional variations in the approach to BRE, with some Business Link providers having already made BRE more a part of the mainstream IDB process than others, meant that there was no common starting point for the BRE Pilot programme. Commonality came in the form of the OPE (One Planet Economy) Group. This cross-RDA group created the framework for the BRE Pilot programme, including setting timescales and targets for delivery and evaluation.

A baseline for the level of discussions between a Business Link Adviser and a business was drawn up by the OPE Group in the form of outline questions. Although these were adapted and amended by some RDAs, the questions covered key areas such as energy expenditure, and whether businesses had monitored energy consumption, explored renewable energy options, minimised transport use, and could identify waste and recycling streams. It also asked about environmental compliance, policies and COSHH and risk assessments. It closed by ensuring that priorities for action were identified, and proposed solutions and actions were also laid out.

A target of engaging with 10,000 businesses on BRE over a 12-month period (April 2007-March 2008) was set. This broke down to 1,000 per region except in the South East, which was given a target of 2,000 businesses. Engagement, or ‘an assist’ was defined as providing a BRE advice service, that, as a minimum, would consist of a diagnosis of a business’s needs and aspirations, carried out by a Business Link Adviser. This would usually take place on site and may, if applicable, result in referral to one or a number of providers of specialist support on resource efficiency. Variations in ‘assists’ to SMEs resulted from the fact that, due to differences in the allocation of funding, varying levels of 1:1 RE support were available in each of the regions. This resulted in e.g. some SMEs receiving an in- dept RE audit ‘assist’, while others received a light touch (advice only) ‘assist’.

Mainstreaming BRE

The regional variations in the service offered by Business Link on BRE offered the programme an excellent opportunity to examine the various methods for offering BRE advice to businesses. All regions now aim to make BRE part of their mainstream Business Link offering. The approach to this has varied. Some regions have called upon specialist resource or consultants. These have been employed in a range of ways, either in providing specialist coaching for Business Link Advisers, (South West Regional Development Agency [SWRDA], East Midlands Development Agency [*emda*], Yorkshire Forward and ONE North East) or by being placed as specialists within Business Link teams – as was the case with the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)’s new Sustainable Business Advisers, or in the North West, where its Environment Connect specialist service was embedded into the Business Link as a result of the BRE Pilot.

Other regions adopted tools that were incorporated within the IDB model, with the East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) adopting a resource efficiency diagnostic tool which provided an in- dept assessment of a company’s resource use, highlighted areas for improvement and encouraged businesses to apply for grants for resource efficiency improvements. The East of England Development Agency (EEDA) adopted a lighter touch approach to their green business review and similarly, Advantage West Midlands (AWM) focused on using events while London focused on thoroughly embedding resource efficiency within its Business Link’s initial diagnostic, as well as its onsite questionnaire.

During the period of the BRE Pilot, all regions also ran some form of specialist events and workshops on the subject of business resource efficiency. Yorkshire Forward, for example, held workshops for smaller companies, as did SEEDA and *emda*. For some regions, these events comprised their entire marketing activity. Others such as SWRDA additionally raised awareness about business resource efficiency issues through an effective email campaign, or, like the London Development Agency (LDA), encouraged participation through its website. *emda* ran a resource efficiency communications campaign using novel images. There were also examples of targeting key sectors (food, drink and

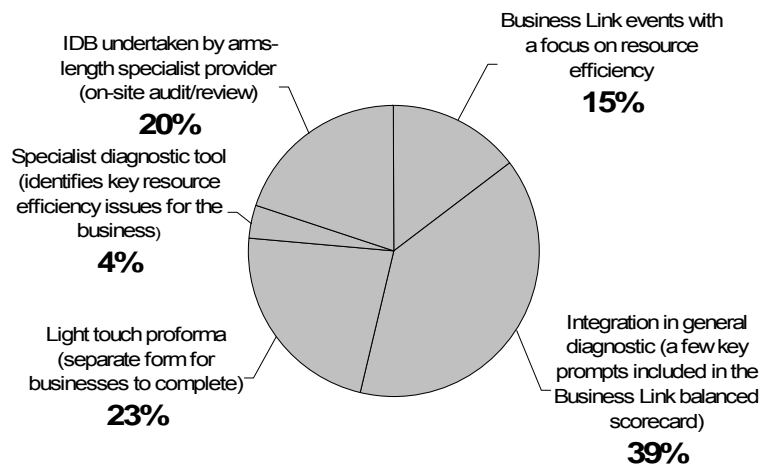
land-based industries for SWRDA) and sharing effective collateral (*Quick wins* guides, developed originally by SEEDA but adapted by SWRDA).

Outcome and benefits

Targets

The BRE Pilot met and indeed exceeded its target of engaging 10,000 businesses by over 25%. In all, 13,128 businesses across all the regions were given BRE support, with all but three RDAs beating their individual regional targets. This was despite only five RDAs operating their pilot programmes for the full 12 months. (The work of developing the definition of the service and creating training materials and discussions on how the pilot should be undertaken, meant in some cases that the pilot work did not begin in earnest until November 07.)

The chart below highlights the breakdown of BRE ‘assists’ delivered. Where RDAs had already invested in 1:1 BRE support to complement national delivery bodies, this resulted in a fifth of businesses supported receiving an on-site audit and the follow up support to help implementation.



Knowledge

The BRE Pilot programme has prompted an overall increase in the level of understanding of resource efficiency principles and available support, both among Business Link Advisers and among businesses.

Most regions undertook some form of training for Business Link Advisers, either on an informal basis by in-house or contractor specialists, or by embedding specialist mentors within the teams (full time in the South East and South West, and as shadow advisers in Yorkshire and Humber and the East Midlands.) In the East Midlands, a full Small Firms Enterprise Initiative (SFEDI)-compatible competency model was developed that enabled the design and implementation of formal training (accredited by a professional body – IEMA) for Business Link Advisers. This approach is also now being adopted by Yorkshire Forward and considered by Advantage West Midlands. All regions emphasised that the aim of training was to build confidence and competence, not turn their generalist Business Link Advisers into specialists. Knowledge about resource efficiency is just one area in a vast array of information that Business Advisers are required to handle. Knowing how to identify,

prioritise and refer key environmental issues is important and these skills once learnt need to be maintained and updated.

Learning points

The BRE Pilot threw up many useful learning points for Business Links and RDAs and has helped inform the recommendations for the future (see below). One size, for example, does not fit all. Small and medium-sized enterprises have different needs to micro businesses, and for the latter the investment of time to complete the diagnostic process may not equate to financial payback. The benefits of resource efficiency need to be clearly set out in easily-comprehensible terms relating to risks, financial and competitive advantages they can bring. The issue is still not widely understood nor, as yet, driven by necessity. However, the feedback from the Business Link Advisers indicates that awareness of business resource efficiency and its benefits is now considerably higher as a result of the activities of the BRE Pilot, both among Business Advisers who feel better informed, and among businesses e.g. 62% of SMEs involved in the South West BRE Pilot, said they would make improvements to operations in next 12 months, as a result of the Business Link's intervention.

During the short timescale of the BRE Pilot, useful links, partnerships and information-sharing have been created and there is seen to be much greater potential for improved co-ordination. Helpful relationships have been created between Business Link and national BREW partners such as Envirowise. Yet this Pilot has also shown that the 'plethora of overlapping national and regional support programmes' (Ellis/Healy report 2006) can cause confusion. This will be addressed by the effective implementation of the BSSP, including the adoption of the resource efficiency product descriptor. Given the way that the landscape has changed even during the course of this pilot, with the withdrawal of 1:1 support for smaller businesses by the national support providers, some of the lessons learned about improved communication between Business Link and national delivery bodies, ensuring a smoother, more even and more accurate flow of referrals to those national providers, are no longer current – but may yet be relevant going forward. The BRE Pilot indicates that regional flexibility, and localised follow up support, plays a critical role in enabling SMEs to continue to take action following interaction with national programmes such as Envirowise.

Evaluation procedure

RDAs and Business Link completed an evaluation proforma asking for feedback on the good and not so good points of the IDB in relation to the BRE Pilot.

Although Business Link carried out customer satisfaction surveys in some regions, due to time constraints, a collective evaluation of these alongside follow up from audits was not undertaken.

Conclusions drawn from the BRE Pilot

The BRE Pilot has been an excellent catalyst to bring resource efficiency support closer to the mainstream. Through RDA-directed integration with the Business Link service, resource efficiency messages have reached a wider business audience. Business Link Advisers have greater understanding of the issues, and some tools and mechanisms are now in place to continue to ensure their work will continue to encompass the resource efficiency theme. Some quick wins have been achieved in the course of the project, but there are plenty of longer term opportunities for development, especially as all regions have committed to develop the process further. This will require architecture and funding to develop key systems and support. And as Business Link cannot go further than their IDB model, there is a need to define further roles and responsibilities in delivering solutions to businesses, particularly in terms of regionally specific follow-up solutions (in accordance with BSSP requirements). RDAs have the mechanisms in place to aid this process, which should be determined through the ongoing discussions on BSSP and the Resource Efficiency Product. The BRE Pilot has shown there is an opportunity, and a willingness, to create a consistent level of support to help businesses in the English regions to become more resource-efficient, creating savings, aiding competitiveness, alongside protecting the environment.

Case study



Duvet manufacturer helped to tackle rising energy costs

Snug Ltd is one of the UK's leading manufacturers of duvet and bedding. The company's success hinges on its continued investment in research, technology and manufacturing to create innovative, high quality products at value for money prices. Having invested in automated production facilities, the next step for the company was to tackle its rising energy costs, which topped £120,000 in 2006-07, and reduce its carbon footprint. Snug Ltd was signposted by Business Link in the North East to the Midas project.

Operating to the Business Link IDB model, Midas uses the regional service provider register to broker in technical consultancy. Snug received a free evaluation of its energy, waste and water usage to identify where efficiencies could be made. Potential energy savings of ~£28,000 were identified. Since then, Snug Ltd has begun the process of upgrading its lighting and has compiled an energy action plan to implement the other recommendations made in the Midas report. The next stage of the plan will be to conduct staff training to raise awareness and deliver further efficiency savings.

The Midas project has diagnosed over 920 companies and assisted over 300 to undertake further activity via the support of a service provider. It is estimated to have saved regional businesses £10m gross (2006 to date). The project ended in September 2008 but, in line with BSSP, it is intended to migrate this activity to Business Link North East.

Next steps

Post BRE Pilot and removal of RDA-BREW funding, each RDA is continuing to mainstream resource efficiency activities and the majority (6) has retained the annual target of engaging with 1,000 businesses. However, levels of funding, and prioritisation of the business resource efficiency agenda, vary from region to region.

This report makes recommendations on the future role of Business Link in business resource efficiency. The BRE Pilot took place during a time of major change and review of policy and funding for business support, and this change continues. For example, BREW funding programme ceased in April 2008 with knock-on effects for delivery bodies. When Defra-funded delivery bodies were also no longer able to offer 1:1 support (with some exceptions), this has left a gap in 1:1 business resource efficiency support for smaller businesses in some regions. It has reduced some of the ability for Business Link to broker support for businesses from delivery bodies such as Envirowise. However, with Business Link likely to be the main business support channel under the BSSP, there should be greater impetus for it to embed BRE within the centre of its core IDB service. The recommendations for the migration of BRE IDB to Business Link, naturally, cross over with the wider BSSP agenda. As such, they are part of a range of issues that Defra and the RDA's should work together to address.

Operational level recommendations:

- agreement is needed on the diagnostic elements of BRE required during the IDB process

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and Role of Business Link

- differences in interpretation between diagnosis and delivery need to be settled
- BRE marketing and communications materials are pooled as a shared national resource, able to be adapted to regional needs
- Diagnostic tool kits are also pooled to develop standards and share best practice.
- An agreed level of competency for Business Link Advisers is established (such as that developed by *emda*), and all gateway staff are trained to be able to handle BRE enquiries
- BRE support brokered by the Business Link IDB process is initiated at regional level

Policy-level recommendations

- the ‘Improving your Resource Efficiency’ product offer under the BSSP, needs to ensure that business resource efficiency support, both regionally and nationally, is cohesive and above all delivers against business need
- that the Defra Delivery Landscape Review and implementation should result in a simplified national agency approach. The BRE Pilot highlighted confusion amongst stakeholders and Business Link as to the relative role of each of the various national delivery partners. The RDAs should, through continued close working with Defra, be able to clearly define a national and regional delivery programme
- That the draft action plan contained in this report is delivered by a task and finish group of RDAs, Defra, DECC ,Business Link and relevant delivery bodies
- That a standardised approach to measuring outputs and impacts is adopted by both regional and national programmes – so that the impacts of publically funded BRE support can be both monitored and reported to Defra/DECC consistently.

Draft action plan

This report presents a draft action plan to help national and regional partners work more closely together during the development and deployment of business resource efficiency support via the Business Link IDB approach. Subject to agreement by all parties, and the securing of resources for co-ordination and delivery, the action plan would build on the good practices and learning points highlighted by the BRE Pilot. Its main elements address the recommendations above and include:

- Effective and co-ordinated provision of marketing and information materials
- Training to help frontline support staff, regionally and nationally;
- Tighter, clearer definitions of the levels of diagnostics, with a sharing of best practice on diagnostic toolkits;
- Work with Defra to develop clarification and standardisation of national indicators to measure the economic and environmental outcomes that have been achieved as a result of BRE support;
- Competency frameworks for Business Link staff, following agreement on resource efficiency competency levels. This would cover consideration of accreditation and pooling of current best practice resources;
- Future solution provision in the context of the Defra Delivery Landscape Review – aiming at reducing complexity, developing further the Resource Efficiency Product, and clearly defining roles;
- Creating standardised brokerage and referral systems between Business Link and the national and regional support providers;

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and Role of Business Link

- RDAs, working with Defra, to establish a minimum level and standard of support for businesses in relation to both IDB and delivery, identifying any additional funding and resources and agreeing on the delivery.

ENDS

1. INTRODUCTION

Business resource efficiency is now a mainstream business issue. Businesses across the country need to understand how they can benefit, financially and commercially, from the adoption of good practice in managing raw materials, energy and water in order to minimise waste and reduce cost. In the 2006 Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made the following announcement:

"To support small and medium-sized businesses on energy efficiency, each of the nine English RDAs will pilot in 2007-08 a streamlined business resource efficiency advice service, through Business Links. This will include on-site audits of resource efficiency, delivered consistent with, and coordinated through, the Business Support Simplification Programme" (Budget Report 2007)

Part 1 of this report by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) provides an overview of the resulting Business Resource Efficiency (BRE) Pilot programme¹. It highlights the successes and learning points from this initial phase and the progress that has been made in recent months.

The pilot programme was very timely, as a number of Government policy initiatives² mean that, as the primary gateway for business support, Business Link will become an increasingly important partner in the efforts to engage businesses in resource efficiency.

Part 2 of this report therefore, looks at the anticipated role for Business Link in the future and, learning from the initial pilot, recommends how the transition can be made in the most efficient and effective manner.

PART 1: THE BUSINESS RESOURCE EFFICIENCY PILOT

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This section of the report provides an overview of the context for the BRE Pilot.

2.1 Healey-Ellis Task Force

Advice for SMEs on resource efficiency has historically been available through a number of national, regional and local initiatives. These include:

- Defra funded programmes (eg The Carbon Trust, Envirowise, WRAP, NISP etc);
- RDA funded activities
- Other regionally funded programmes from sources such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- Local projects funded through trusts and Local Authorities, and
- Private sector initiatives.

The Healey-Ellis Task Force on Energy Efficiency Advice for Business reported in December 2006³. The report found that there were too many publicly funded initiatives (70 significant national and 96 main regional and sub-regional advice services operating in this domain), a number of them overlapped and in many cases business support programmes were **funding led rather than needs led**, creating confusion for businesses and poor value for money from a public investment point of view.

¹ This has also been referred to as the Pathfinder programme. In this report it is referred to as the BRE Pilot.

² The main national policy initiatives which impact here are the Business Support Simplification Programme and the reduction of Business Resource Efficiency funding and reduced emphasis on 1:1 business support by Defra. The Defra Delivery Landscape review will also have implications.

³

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/taxation_work_and_welfare/tax_and_the_environment/tax_ environ_energyefficiency.cfm

The Healey-Ellis report recommended that the Government should streamline the initiatives and that the RDAs should deliver this rationalised approach through Business Link. The Business Representative Organisations undertook to signpost their members to this new service.

These recommendations were consistent with the emerging Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP).

2.2 The BRE Pilot

It was agreed that the RDAs, in partnership with Business Link, would run a BRE Pilot programme during the financial year 2007-08:

To run pathfinders/pilots in all regions providing onsite 'audits' and advice for a minimum of 1,000 businesses in each region that do not have environmental management systems in place.

The overall target was to engage with 10,000 businesses – 1,000 per region, with the exception of the South East that had a higher target of 2,000.

The BRE Pilot intended to make generic advice available – including, for instance, lighting, heating/cooling, micro-renewables, water, waste, material reuse/recycling, raw material specification, advice on regulation and fleet management.

In line with the Business Link model, the intention was to provide **information** to businesses, to **diagnose** business needs and to **broker** appropriate (public or private sector) support. This is known as Information, Diagnostic & Brokerage (IDB). Where appropriate, Business Link would refer to national service providers funded directly by Defra including the (then) Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW)⁴ partners.

2.3 Cross-RDA agreements and preparations prior to trial delivery

In order to ensure that the BRE Pilot was delivered, the RDAs established a One Planet Economy (OPE) Group to oversee the programme. Appendix 1 to this report sets out the framework that was developed for the OPE Group's work programme.

The key tasks for the OPE Group were:

- To establish the BRE Pilot
- To oversee and ensure the BRE Pilot's delivery
- To develop a common definition for targets
- To monitor and to collate data as the BRE Pilot progressed, including the provision of an interim report to the OPE Group, and
- To co-ordinate a final report including evaluation of the internal mechanisms of the BRE Pilot programme.

The formation of the OPE has helped build a strong network, assisting in the sharing of good practice and common objectives, in addition creating a joined-up approach consistent with the BSSP principles.

⁴ At the time of the BRE pilot, the BREW programme was in operation. This was landfill tax funding channelled to a range of national delivery partners including (but not exclusively) Envirowise, The Carbon Trust, the National Industrial Symbiosis Programme, WRAP and The Environment Agency. RDAs were also provided with funding for co-ordination and regional programmes to complement the work of the national partners.

2.4 Definition of targets for the purposes of the BRE Pilot

Full definitions are provided in Appendices 1 and 3 to this report. The definition of the service, (also known as a 'business assist, 'assist' or diagnostic process) for the purposes of the BRE Pilot was agreed as follows:

Target definition for the Business Resource and Efficiency advice service, including 'on-site' audits

The service delivered to a business will, as a minimum, consist of a diagnosis of its needs and aspirations, carried out by a Business Link Adviser. Alongside general business enquiries, the Business Link Adviser will ask questions that raise awareness of environmental issues and carry out an assessment of their potential to benefit from more specialist support on resource efficiency. The service will usually be carried out on site and may result, where applicable, in a referral to one of a number of providers including BREW delivery partners.

The outline of questions (BRE toolkit) asked by the adviser (adapted or expanded to reflect local services and priorities) can be found in Appendix 2.

Two things should be noted:

1. This definition allowed workshops to count towards the target delivery.
2. The development of the definition, monitoring sheets and training materials, together with the discussions between the RDAs and their respective Business Link Providers as to how they should undertake the pilot, meant that the BRE Pilot did not start in earnest until after 1 April 2007. In some cases, the outputs only started to be recorded in Quarter 3 of 2007-8. It is important to note, therefore, that the BRE Pilot did not run over a whole financial year. Table 3.1 under the Results section below shows the periods in which regions were collecting data.

2.5 About Business Link

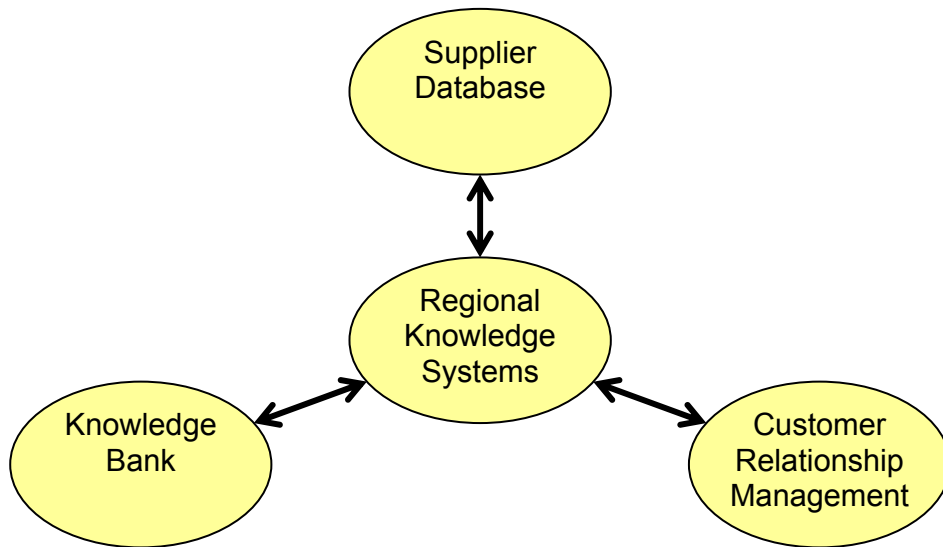
Business Link is a national service, managed by the RDAs and delivered regionally through a network of Business Link providers. The Business Link service is delivered within the context of a national framework and 'core offer'. The structures operating in each region vary but the fundamental service remains consistent across the country.

Key to this is that Business Link operates according to a model of Information, Diagnostics and Brokerage (IDB). This is a fundamental principle of the Business Link model and is vital to the understanding of the BRE Pilot.

Business Link does not provide direct advice. There is a clear and intended delineation between IDB and the provision of a solution. The solution can come from either a publicly funded programme, or increasingly from the private or voluntary sectors. To help the IDB process, each region also operates a regional knowledge system.

Although known by different names in different regions, they all comprise the following interconnected components: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems; knowledge banks of appropriate public support; and databases/brokerage platforms of private sector suppliers that have registered and are available to provide support to businesses in the region (as highlighted in Diagram 2.1 below).

Diagram 2.1: Key Components of Regional Knowledge Systems



The following factors affected the design and implementation of the BRE Pilot in each region:

- Business Link is **IDB** only
- Business Link is **demand led** and does not push specific products or services.
- Predominance of **generalist** rather than specialist advisers
- **Target audience** for Business Link tends to be smaller businesses
- Traditionally Business Link has not had a **strong role in business resource efficiency or good links** with the specialist national support providers
- **Confusion** for advisers of where to go to broker solution provision

Each of these factors is described in more detail in Table A.4.1 (Appendix 4) together with the implications and the response by each region. Most of these issues continue to be relevant and need to be taken into consideration by Defra, BERR and the RDAs when developing the more systematic transition of IDB from Defra's national delivery bodies into Business Link.

3. PILOT PERIOD

The target of 10,000 assists was exceeded. A total of 13,128 assists were achieved across all regions. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the assists achieved by region.

Table 3.1 Results of the BRE pilot – all regions.

RDA	Start Date (Period of Collection)	RDA Actual for 07/08
East of England	November 2007 (5 months)	1,327
South East	April 2007 (12 months)	2,331
South West	April 2007 (12 months)	1,081
East Midlands	November 2007 (5 months)	722
Advantage West Midlands	September 2007 (6 months)	841
Yorkshire Forward	September 2007 (6 months)	710
ONE North East	April 2007 (12 months)	1,424
North West	April 2007 (12 months)	1,881
London	April 2007 (12 months)	2,511
TOTAL		13,128

4. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN APPROACH

At the start of the BRE Pilot, the regions could be categorised into three main groups:

- **Regions with existing Business Link BRE capacity:** Some RDAs had already started to engage with Business Link on BRE. For these regions it was relatively easy to adapt this existing activity to ensure that the BRE Pilot definitions and outputs could be monitored, although there were still some challenges faced in doing this.
- **Regions without existing Business Link BRE capacity:** For other regions, the BRE pilot was an opportunity to marry together Business Link with existing environmental business support services.
- **Regions that needed to start active engagement with the Business Link on BRE:** The final cohort of regions was not in as advantageous a starting position. For these regions, this was the first time that Business Link had been as actively engaged in the BRE agenda. For these RDAs there was a greater need for initial planning and for training the Business Link Advisers prior to any action.

This section covers the main approaches that were adopted as well as the good practice and learning points for future activities.

Table 4.1: Summary of service provided by each region

RDA	SERVICE PROVIDED
<p>East of England</p>	<p>For companies without any existing environmental management systems, a paper based 'green business review' was undertaken as part of a general Business Link diagnostic (Appendix 2). The green business review consisted of questions themed on resource efficient practices, ie, have you explored opportunities for renewable energy use? do you segregate waste and recycle? etc.</p> <p>Business Link monitored the diagnostic results and evaluated the effectiveness of this initiative by interviewing businesses who took part in the initiative.</p> <p>The Business Link role was to provide information, undertake a diagnostic to identify relevance/opportunity, and then broker support providers if a potential opportunity for the business was identified. This light touch, awareness-raising approach to resource efficiency was relatively straightforward to add into the IDB model. Neither the BRE Pilot nor the Business Link were delivering in depth business resource efficiency advice. They were raising awareness, advising on the opportunities and then providing a signposting/referrals process to support. Improvements on this have been identified in the evaluation process and they include (but are not exclusively); continued development of the Business Link Advisers' knowledge and understanding of BRE through appropriate training packages, requirement for consistent appropriate information collateral and, most critically and clearly, BRE support service offering that can be brokered following IDB. It is hoped developments under BSSP and Promoting Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Waste Management (PRESWM) will make this offering clear.</p>
<p>South East England</p>	<p>During 2007-08 SEEDA placed a new team of Sustainable Business Advisers (SBA) within the Business Links to make sustainability more mainstream within the Business Link offering. This model has been highly effective. The team has delivered 2,345 Business Supports on Resource Efficiency and 1,833 Business Supports on corporate social responsibility – altogether 10% above its original target. The SBA role was piloted in Kent in 2006-07 with co-funding from BREW. Primarily charged with training the General Business Advisers and marketing sustainability, the SBAs have been crucial in raising the profile of sustainability within the Business Links and ensuring it is considered a key offering in the IDB process.</p> <p>Marketing and Web content: Complementary to the SBA team, the 'It Pays to Know' marketing programme was developed to deliver a single consistent message to business on sustainability and is now being used across the region. SEEDA successfully negotiated the adoption of the content developed for a regional website on sustainable business being incorporated into the national Business Link regional and national websites. This information is now live on the website, including a tool to help businesses assess how sustainable they are.</p>
<p>South West</p>	<p>The South West approach to the BRE Pilot included three projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WREAS (Waste and Resource Efficiency Advisory Service), which employed coaches within the Business Link providers in the region to i) establish systems for integrating BRE into the core IDB service, and ii) to train all Business Link advisers and gateway staff to be able to include BRE as part of the core IDB service. • Subbiz: A specific project run by Business Link to engage with the food, drink and land-based industry sector, with the aim of improving BRE intervention with this key sector. • A web, marketing and events package to ensure market penetration of the BRE services via the Business Link gateway. <p>A consultant was also employed by the RDA to provide technical support to the Business Link operators during the development and delivery of the pilot programme. It should be noted that the BRE Pilot was developed and delivered from mid-late 2007 onwards, at a time when the Business Link service in the region was in a period of restructuring and</p>

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	transition to new Business Link service providers.
East Midlands	<p>The service is based around a series of tools, developed through specialist contractors and combining BREW and <i>emda</i> single programme funds. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing campaign • Resource efficiency diagnostic tool • CRM system • Business Advisor Competency Framework (SFEDI compatible) • Learner Management System and training programme (competency building for all 70 advisers) • Building capacity and awareness with solution providers • Implementation grant funding <p>The marketing campaign was used to stimulate clients to contact Business Link, and this was then followed up with the resource efficiency diagnostic tool. The tool principally involves Business Link Advisers undertaking a diagnostic process in a one-to-one meeting which examines the amount and expenditure on energy, water, waste management, transport, packaging and other materials. The data collected is then used to generate a report using a traffic light system (red, amber, green) to highlight areas of concern. This is based on thresholds developed through comparison with data on other companies from a similar sector and of a similar size. To help stimulate the use of the RE diagnostic it was mandatory for all applicants for a Business Transformation grant from Business Link to complete the diagnostic. Once the report is complete, services are brokered to the client through the CRM system to the most appropriate solution providers (as determined through a competency and QA).</p> <p>Capacity building for advisers has been undertaken through direct training and a learner management system, which has provided a general overview session for the advisers and online tools for them. Resource efficiency champions from each area team in the region also received more in-depth training.</p> <p>An online version of the RE diagnostic tool has also been released which clients can use to self-assess their business. Other business intermediaries including local authorities have received training. Copies of these reports are automatically forwarded to advisers so that they can be followed up. This provides a systematic method of identifying resource efficiency issues within companies.</p>
Advantage West Midlands	<p>The Business Link WM approach to Business Resource Efficiency/Environmental support has been to make the activity part of the Generalist Business Review, working with existing BRE Business Support Organisations and other solutions providers to help businesses to make financial savings and improve their overall environmental performance.</p> <p>In 2007-08 Business Link WM worked closely with, and developed, joint working relationships with a number of existing national and regional BRE Business Support Organisations including Groundwork, Envirowise, NISP, WRAP, Carbon Trust, Marches Energy Agency.</p>
Yorkshire Forward	<p>In Yorkshire and Humber at the time of the BRE Pilot, there were 4 sub-regional Business Links in operation. Each was provided with a pro forma to support the Business Link advisers to undertake the diagnostic with customers. Additional training and mentoring support was provided by a specialist environmental consultant who undertook training with Business Link advisers and provided a detailed reference document to help the Business Link advisers with more specialist queries. The consultant was also available for telephone support and undertook a series of 'on site' shadowing visits with advisers to help to put the principles learnt into practice. Some BRE workshops were also developed to access smaller companies.</p>
North East	<p>Business Link North East (BL NE) has incorporated the BRE into their main diagnostic process within the Operations section. Having received training, 147 Business Link Account managers are now able to provide a brief overview of BRE issues and to then signpost onto other services such as Envirowise, Carbon Trust, WRAP, NISP and Midas</p>

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	<p>as is appropriate. The Midas project (which operates to the Business Link IDB model providing ~ 4 hrs technical diagnostic and uses the Business Link regional service provider register to broker in technical consultancy) was used to support this pilot however this programme will finish in September due to the lack of BREW funding</p>
North West	<p>The IDB service was provided initially by Environment Connect (EC), a specialist environmental IDB service created under BREW. As part of the Pilot and transition to Business Support Simplification, Environment Connect was then embedded within the Business Link Northwest universal service.</p> <p>The business support services that Environment Connect brokered to were provided by a full range of national and regional resource efficiency providers. However, the majority of businesses assisted by the Pilot, ie 1,814 of the 1,881, received two-hour assists focused solely on resource efficiency, provided by the existing regional Enworks Resource Efficiency Programme, funded by NWDA.</p> <p>EC engaged with SMEs through a range of communication tools and adopted Business Link's phone number and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system in December 2007. Given that the Pilot finished in March 2008, the revised IDB system was operational for only four months of the Pilot period.</p>
London	<p>The LDA had been previously working with its regional Business Link to embed resource efficiency into its IDB service, in conjunction with a third party procured to support both referrals and signposting to specialist providers, as well as raising awareness of environmental issues with businesses. However, following an evaluation of the third party, it was concluded that the service was best located within Business Link in London, so the work conducted on the BRE Pilot both supported and developed this recommendation.</p> <p>Consequently, the Pilot built on the changes Business Link in London had already made to its IDB service, giving it further definition so that it had two levels of resource efficiency diagnostic. At the pre-qualification stage, an enquiring businesses was asked three provisional resource efficiency questions, relating to energy consumption, overall resource efficiency (RE) and waste. These questions identified the need to signpost enquiring business to further resource efficiency information or, if appropriate, they may have been identified as candidates for an onsite visit, where a more detailed RE question was asked – embedded as a part of the wider, more general diagnostic – and from which specific needs could be identified. This would then have determined whether the business was signposted to further information or brokered to an appropriate third party.</p>

Source: RDA evaluation proforma returns.

Table 4.2 Summary of approach by each region

	Overall approach			Diagnostics activity					Training activity		
	Overall aim to mainstream and integrate with other Business Link operations	Included specialist events and workshops co-branded with Business Link	Existing in-house specialists in post at start of the pilot	As part of the general BA diagnostic (extra questions)	As a separate crib sheet to be completed by the general BA	Specialist diagnostic tool completed by BA	Specialist diagnostic completed by 3 rd party	Online diagnostic completed by the client	Informal training (Including BREW support)	Specialist mentor embedded into Business Link teams	Formal training programme including Learning Management System
East of England	√	√	√	√					√		
South East England	√	√	√			√			√	√	
South West	√	√		√					√	√	
East Midlands	√	√				√		√			√
Advantage West Midlands	√	√		√					√		√
Yorkshire Forward	√	√			√				√	√	
North East	√	√		√	√				√		
North West	√	√		√			√		√		
London	√	√		√					√		

Key: BA = Business Adviser

4.1 Marketing

Approaches to marketing activity varied according to the stage of learning reached by each Business Link. It would have been counter-productive to launch a big marketing campaign directing businesses to Business Link before it was able to deal with enquiries.

Many regions approached marketing through events or direct interaction between Business Link Advisers and their customers.

Some regions did undertake more proactive resource efficiency marketing activity. Copies of the South East campaign can be found at <http://www.itpaysto.co.uk/> and <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?type=ONEOFFPAGE&site=210&itemId=5001037968&r.s=sl> and samples of the **East Midlands** campaign can be found in Appendix 5. The **South West** delivered a campaign of resource efficiency specific events, web information and marketing activities including securing BRE speakers at partner events that were already taking place, printing *Quick Wins* guides, and developing four BRE video case studies (accessible via the regional Business Link website pages – (<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.l1=5000451510&topicId=5001038525&site=106&r.s=tl>)) and a quarterly topical email shot to all businesses registered on the Business Link system. The e-shot alone resulted in over 10,000 businesses downloading BRE-specific fact sheets.

Business Link in London (BLIL) thought that there were many web-related interventions, although this is something that it has found challenging to track in terms of direct effectiveness. Statistics for the 12 month pilot period indicate that there were 11,221 visits to this theme on the website. In addition, statistics for the period April 2008 to mid July 2008 indicate that there have been over 4,126 visits to the environmental section of the website from the London pages, demonstrating an increased interest in environmental issues during Q1 2008-09, which is likely to relate to the continued inclusion of RE issues within the two diagnostics.

4.2 Diagnostics

There were the following four main approaches to the diagnostic process across the nine regions:

1. Integration of RE questions into the general diagnostic
2. Separate pro forma completed by Business Link advisers with Businesses which acted as a prompt
3. Specialist diagnostic tool (including online capability)
4. Referral by Business Link advisers to a specialist (in-house or arm's length) organisation to undertake the diagnostic activity.

Each region adopted one or a combination of these approaches. Each region was looking to undertake these key elements

- To embed the RE elements into the mainstream activities (rather than environment to be seen as an 'add on')
- To ensure that it was user friendly for the Business Link Advisers and businesses
- That it allowed for further action, brokerage and follow-up.

Each of the four main approaches is discussed below in turn.

a) Integration of RE questions into the general diagnostic.

In this approach, key questions were included into the general diagnostic undertaken by Business Link.

In **London** a pre-qualification stage was introduced. This took place when a business made an initial enquiry to Business Link. At this stage, three provisional questions relating to energy consumption, overall resource efficiency and waste were included. When

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appropriate, they received an onsite visit, where more in-depth diagnostic – which included an embedded resource efficiency element – was conducted.

In the **West Midlands** several BRE/environmental prompts were included within the Generalist Business Review. These were across the diagnostic process, ie, not just as a separate environment area. This is a useful approach as it shows how RE cuts across the range of business issues. The prompts were as follows:

- Financial – power, fuel, waste and water costs rising?
- Operational – struggling with waste, energy, water overheads?
- Risk – worried about compliance with new legislation and regulations?
- Marketing – environmental business opportunities?

In the **North West**, a number of environmental questions, primarily focused on the costs of resource use and disposal, were integrated into the Business Link sector brokers' range of diagnostics. Experience now suggests that SMEs are very often 'data poor' on key resource efficiency metrics e.g. utility/ waste/material spend. Without key 'basic' data it is difficult for effective brokerage to anything other than awareness raising materials.

In the **South West**, the Business Link operators appointed Business Link-embedded coaches to train and mentor all the Business Link Advisers. The coaches also worked with and supported the telephone gateway staff. This enabled all customer-facing Business Link staff to understand how to identify basic opportunities for resource efficiency improvements and broker on as appropriate.

b) Separate pro forma completed by Business Link Advisers with businesses which acted as a prompt

In the **South East**, a sustainability diagnostic (including both resource efficiency and corporate social responsibility) was developed for use both by Business Advisers and customer service teams. The diagnostic is structured around the key headings of the BAP (Business Action Plan) in the most relevant area of the business review, not as an 'add on'.

In the **East and Yorkshire and Humber**, a separate pro forma was provided to Business Link Advisers which covered a range of questions, See Yorkshire and Humber's at http://www.yorkshire-forward.com/asset_store/document/brewleaflet_145851.pdf.

Despite this approach being relatively 'light touch' (information and awareness raising through the inclusion of BRE in the IDB process), research in the East of England gives positive results⁵. - Business Link East surveyed a sample of 251 companies who had undertaken the diagnostic.

c) Specialist (on-line) diagnostic tool (including online capability)

In the **East Midlands**, a Resource Efficiency Diagnostic Tool was developed for use by the Advisers. The requirement to complete the diagnostic if a business wanted a grant has also provided an added incentive and the tool is seen as fairly simple to use by the Business Link Advisers.

The diagnostic collects useful, basic information (on material and resource use) which can provide an excellent indication of areas where a company needs further support. Even a lack of data can be useful, indicating that the company needs further support on understanding how to measure their resource use so that they can manage it. Data is then used to

⁵ Report available on request.

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generate a report using a traffic light system (red, amber, green) to highlight areas of concern. This is based on thresholds developed through comparison with data on other companies from a similar sector and of a similar size.

An online version of the RE Diagnostic Tool has also been released which clients can use to self assess their business

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1077717513>. Copies of these reports are automatically forwarded to advisers so that they can be followed up. This provides a systematic method of identifying resource efficiency issues within companies.

A number of regions are looking into this more systematic approach and it is recommended that the RDAs and Business Links commit to work together to ensure that effort is not duplicated in this area.

d) Referral by Business Link Advisers to a specialist (in-house or arm's length) organisation to undertake the diagnostic activity.

In the **North West** there is a specialist helpline service called Environment Connect (EC). EC employs specialist environment staff, currently located separately from Business Link, with remote access to the Business Link CRM. EC staff discuss with the caller their business needs and signpost them to the most appropriate provider. All necessary data capture is contained on Business Link's CRM. From the customer's view, this is a seamless service. Feedback from the companies that have received support through EC has been positive. They have been pleased with the level of support from partners, and also the additional signposting to services available after the initial enquiry has been satisfied.

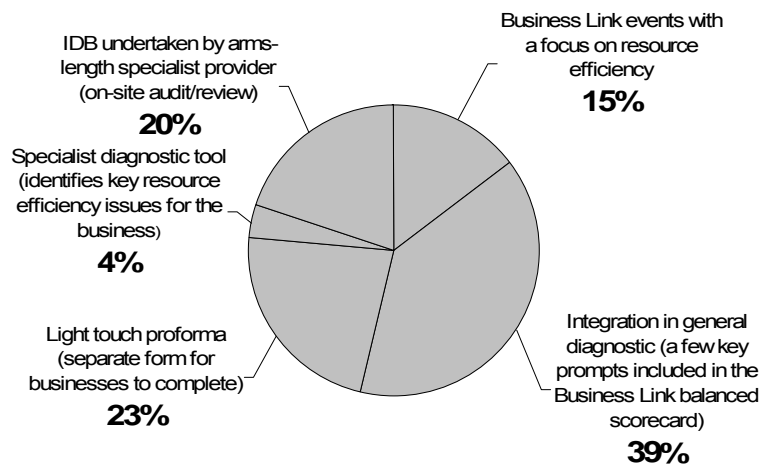
The evaluation has shown that both the small number of staff employed by Environment Connect, and its geographic remoteness from the Business Link universal service initially affected the speed of response and the number of referrals from Business Link brokers. This improved over the BRE Pilot period. Environment Connect staff will shortly relocate into the same building as Business Link.

In the **North West** and the **North East** the BRE Pilot was also linked into existing more specialist support and provision (Enworks and MIDAS). Advisers, as part of these programmes, also provided more specialist IDB and solution support to businesses.

The main approaches to IDB are provided above. In practice, most Business Links adopted more than one of these approaches. The target is, therefore, made up of a range of activities. Table 4.3 provides an estimated split between these different approaches across the total outputs recorded.

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Pie chart 4.3: Breakdown of the BRE results by type of approach



The pie chart above provides further detail on the level of diagnostics undertaken by each region. The variations on type of diagnostic reflect the different approaches and the landscape of environmental business support in each region. Some regions already had highly developed support structures (e.g. Enworks in the North West), and used these existing structures to deliver in-depth specialist support to businesses. Other regions (e.g. East of England, London) chose to develop a light touch diagnostic or simple proforma which fitted within the existing business support structure. This approach could lead to further support (in the case of 6% of 'light touch' assists) if required. Finally some regions (e.g. the East Midlands) developed longer term structures to embed resource efficiency into Business Link and specialist diagnostic tools. No one approach is singled out as performing better, and indeed a successful approach for the future might be to provide a combination of all three approaches, through light touch diagnostics for smaller companies, in-depth diagnostics where appropriate, and referrals to specialist support providers.

4.3 Summary of learning points from information and diagnostics activity

Table 4.4 highlights the key strengths and learning points that were identified by the regions in respect of the information and diagnostic activities

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Table 4.4: Strengths and learning points of information and diagnostic activities.

Strengths	Learning points
<p><i>Business Link Advisers</i></p> <p>Positive response (in the main) from the general business advisers. Keen to embrace the agenda. Could see the overall business benefits. Another 'string to the bow' for advising their customers</p> <p>Gained knowledge and awareness of Resource Efficiency and feel a lot more comfortable and confident in raising these issues with their clients (still work to do – see training below).</p> <p>Integration of Resource Efficiency into the mainstream diagnostic process, rather than just see it as an add-on.</p>	<p><i>Target customer base for Business Links</i></p> <p>Sometimes difficult for the Adviser to highlight the real business benefits of action, particularly when the customer is a micro SME. Time taken to complete detailed diagnostics may be prohibitive for very small companies; financial benefits can be minimal, further support can be unavailable (see below for further discussion of solution provision). The diagnostic was therefore not always relevant. A differing approach for micro businesses and medium/large businesses may be useful in the future. Business Link target customers are now widening so this will be less of a problem</p>
<p><i>Business feedback</i></p> <p>Improved overall awareness-raising of Resource Efficiency amongst businesses</p> <p>Stimulated a lot more interest than Business Link has been able to do in the past on BRE and built up a better knowledge of specialist programmes and service providers in this field, including getting suppliers to register on our service provider database.</p>	<p><i>Terminology used</i></p> <p>Concept and language of 'resource efficiency' is still not well understood in the wider business community and there are few critical 'pinch points' which create an immediate need to act. This lack of an immediate business-critical drive to action, low general awareness of the subject and economic market failure results in a low level of 'demand' (as opposed to need). This was counteracted in all regions by framing the questions in terms of risks, finance, marketing, process improvements etc The key is to tap into 'latent' demand, ie, a business does not know that they have an issue but a more detailed investigation of risks, finances, etc. can identify resource efficiency as an issue.</p>
<p><i>Partnership development</i></p> <p>The BRE Pilots developed partnerships with other organisations and complemented their events</p> <p>Acted as an incentive to bring Business Link into the BRE partnerships in each region</p> <p>Sharing collateral and ideas with other areas (for example SE and SW had an excellent relationship with Business Links in the South East Region). The adaptation of a <i>40 Quick Wins</i> guide was a good example.</p>	<p><i>Operational issues of gearing up for the Pilot</i></p> <p>The Business Link operating model tends to be very lean and is not always sufficiently agile to respond to projects with tight deadlines and relatively short timelines.</p> <p>This was heightened in some regions that were transitioning to a new BL contractor (with associated staff redundancies and organisational change taking place).</p> <p>Managing data recording and reporting across a range of CRM systems</p> <p>Potential for improved co-ordination of the 'bigger picture' of BRE events and marketing across all players – however, given the short timelines and (often national) campaigns already in place, this potential was perhaps limited for this time period.</p>

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4.4 Training and development activity

It was evident in all regions that in order for the pilot to work effectively, the Business Link Advisers would need training and development.

Training varied across the regions (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2 above). There were, however, three main approaches:

a) Informal training

Most regions undertook an informal training programme. This was delivered by in-house specialists (eg South East and South West); in partnership with the regional BREW Co-ordinator and Envirowise Regional Manager (eg West Midlands and London); or contracted to an external consultant to deliver on behalf of the RDA/Business Link, including using the Envirowise panel of consultants. Variations on these themes were used by Yorkshire Forward, EEDA and SWRDA.

b) Specialist mentor embedded into Business Link teams

Three regions had mentors as part of the team: **South East** and **South West** have sustainability experts embedded on a full time basis and **Yorkshire and Humber** used the training consultants to shadow Business Link Advisers on visits and to answer any questions that they may have. What is vital, however, is that a mentor is there for support but does not take the responsibility away from the Business Link Adviser to learn about resource efficiency.

c) Formal training programme

The BRE Pilot in the East Midlands was linked into a wider (pre-existing) programme of work with the Business Link to improve their RE capacity and skills. The two aspects of that programme of relevance here are the development of a SFEDI-compatible Competency Framework standard for Business Link Advisors and a Learner Management System (to measure and monitor capacity building). The capacity building package has been recently accredited by a professional body (IEMA) to ensure robustness and provide genuine professional development for the Advisors.

The Competency Framework was created with a view to offering it up as a national template to be integrated into the SFEDI competency management system used across all Business Links.

This approach is also now being adopted by other regions. For example, as part of the new Resource Efficiency Yorkshire (REY) programme in Yorkshire and Humber; a significant Business Link capacity-building programme is in development for the next three years. It has taken best practice from the other regions and Yorkshire Forward (YF) is working with IEMA and SFEDI to develop a competency standard for Business Link Advisors.

Further details of both are available.

d) Overview of training activities

It should be made clear that the purpose of the training was not to turn Business Link Advisers into experts in resource efficiency. They will always remain generalists as that is the Business Link model of delivery. It is important, however, that Business Link Advisers understand the principles of resource efficiency and the range of support available so that they can broker competently.

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A difficulty with the training has been to ensure that it is at the correct level of detail. The question asked by Adviser Managers in Yorkshire and Humber was ‘*How deep do you want us to go – ankle, knee or waist deep?*’

As emda has highlighted:

A balance has needed to be struck with capacity building for advisers because they are not specialists, with just a few advisers nominated as resource efficiency champions. This has meant that the training has had to be carefully balanced and designed with specific competencies in mind. The general feedback has been that the training has given them a good grounding in resource efficiency, but there is still a need for some ongoing capacity building to increase their confidence in talking to clients.

Another key issue for the RDAs and Business Link was how to ensure that the advisers were adequately aware of the BREW partners and regional/local initiatives. In some regions there had already been a regular round of presentations/updates by BREW partners on their programmes. However this takes time for both the Business Link advisers and BREW partners and can lead to a multitude of information packs and leaflets.

Envirowise were the most proactive of the BREW partners and the Yorkshire and Humber regional manager led the development of Business Link focused training and information packs which were delivered in five of the nine regions. The training was of a high standard and was widely welcomed as part of the BRE Pilot – the majority of feedback from Business Link and RDAs was positive.

However, for some advisers it was too detailed. It also naturally focused upon the support services that Envirowise can offer. This served to further complicate, rather than clarify the range of specialist support available, for both businesses and Business Link Advisers.

As EEDA explains:

Training the advisers in the business resource efficiency support programmes available to refer to was particularly complicated. Advisers found understanding this difficult because of the plethora of national and regional support programmes available with overlapping remits and differing eligibility criteria. The clear message from Business Link Advisers was that this was too complex a field to understand, for both the advisers and businesses. That businesses would want their resource efficiency support from a single place. We expect that effective implementation of BSSP will address this issue.

In the South West this was partly addressed by the development of an information pack for Business Link staff which set out succinctly what the key ‘offer’ was from each of the National and Regional BREW delivery bodies. This has since been further augmented with the development of Memoranda of Understanding between Business Link and delivery bodies in that region (some other regions also have similar things in place, eg West Midlands).

e) The need for continuous training and marketing activity

All regions highlighted the fact that capacity building cannot be a one-off hit. Business Link Advisers, by their very nature, are required to know about a vast range of issues and products. There is a need to find an appropriate way of up-skilling advisers in the area of identifying, prioritising and referring environmental issues.

There will inevitably be a challenge to maintain the profile of BRE on the agenda of Business Links at a time when relationships with Business Link are key to many of the new themes/products under BSSP.

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Competence and confidence are the key areas that advisers need support in. The depth required will very much depend on the model of each region. The training needs to fit with the Business Link Advisers wider development activities and has to be agreed through the RDAs as contract holders in a way that accommodates regional flexibility in delivery.

4.5 Brokerage to solution providers

It will never be appropriate for specialist support to be brokered to all businesses. More detailed support is entirely dependent upon three key factors:

1. Size of the company (and the associated size of its resource issues)
2. Sector in which the company is operating
3. Geographical location

Factors 1 and 2 will influence whether a company is eligible for national support provision. These factors will also determine the types of regional support that may be available. Regional Development Agencies have developed regional support programmes to add on to the national support provision. This has led to regional variations in the types of support available. This may be because of regional sectoral priorities (as identified through the Regional Economic Strategies). However, inevitably it may also be related to funding constraints in some regions and the priority given to RE within the region's economy.

During the BRE Pilot, a range of national support was available to businesses including Envirowise Fast Track and Carbon Trust Energy Audits; and WRAP SME Recycling support etc.

With BREW funding, each region also had additional support available to businesses at the time of the Pilot.

Please see Appendix 7, Table A7.1 for the current provision of more specialist support in the English regions and a discussion of the current situation, which, with the reduction of 1:1 support by Defra, has made a significant difference in the regions.

The brokerage element of the BRE Pilot has had mixed results. It should be noted that many of these comments are now very much historic with the reduction of national 1:1 support. Nevertheless, for completeness they are included in this report – see Table 4.5.

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Table 4.5: Summary of strengths and weaknesses of brokerage activities.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Increased demand from businesses which may not necessarily have been targeted in the past.	<p>Need for improved communications between the Business Link and the support provider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system works best when there is a named contact within Business Link and within the delivery partner - this was not always the case. • In some cases there was a need for Business Link to better understand what a business should expect in terms of timeframes and types of additional support that another delivery partner can provide . <p>No national approach was established to count a referral or brokerage from Business Link to the national delivery partners. In some regions this led to differences in how numbers were recorded.</p> <p>Although processes with delivery partners are now being put in place in some regions, there is no formal feedback on interventions (ie, for the Business Link advisers to see the results of the brokerage).</p> <p>The communication throughout the referral process has been challenging and confusing at times and with more time to develop and agree processes this could have been more successful.</p>
Increased volume of referrals across the regions to service providers via brokerage, including commercial providers	
In some regions it was noted that for the vast majority of customers, Business Advisers were able to raise the issue with them and provide a route to action.	
In some cases, there was positive feedback from support providers and they welcomed the additional referrals to their organisation.	
In some cases improved relationships between Business Link and national and regional delivery partners.	
The BRE Pilot built on a history of signposting to specific programmes for detailed diagnostics within IDB, leading to a well defined customer journey. In Yorkshire and Humber this included MAS; Design works; BEF (funded through ERDF) environmental audits and BREW funded regional activities.	
NW Environment Connect Service) The benefit of Business Link brokers using the Environment Connect specialist IDB ensures both the accuracy of referrals and that customer expectation is not unduly raised. Cyclic dialogue with business support organisations reinforced the accuracy of the referral system.	<p>Events provided a significant number of leads towards the end of the project which resulted in some regions in service providers becoming swamped – therefore, if possible, a more even flow is desirable.</p>
Following the training sessions there was a marked improvement in the number of BRE and environmental queries that have come through Generalist Business Reviews. Advisers have started to consider these issues more carefully and to make linkages between overall business performance and improved environmental performance.	
	<p>When a company was referred to a BREW organisation, there was often additional paper work and administration before a visit could be secured. Improved/joint 'front end' questions would reduce the need for this.</p>

Source: RDA pro forma returns (Appendix 6)

Whilst national support providers can no longer provide 1:1 support, there is still a need to improve on the brokerage element of this project. This should now be easier with rationalised regional programmes.

5 CONCLUSIONS

During the BRE Pilot that operated in 2007-08, over 13,000 businesses were successfully engaged. The Pilot has been an excellent catalyst to bring Business Link, mainstream business support and specialist resource efficiency support closer together.

The strengths of running the Pilot through the Business Link model are:

- The ability to touch a much wider business audience with the resource efficiency message. The reach of Business Link is far broader than any other business support model.
- The opportunity to mainstream resource efficiency as a business issue and to provide top tips and advice to businesses.

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

- The ability for Business Link advisers to channel businesses to the correct support area for more detailed support.

The weaknesses for some regions were:

- The short term nature of the programme, leading to the need to develop diagnostic tools, brokerage arrangements quickly and to the up-skilling of Business Link Advisers in an unplanned and ad hoc manner. The general feedback from advisers has, however, been positive about the RE as a subject area. All regions have committed to further develop this process and some have already embedded the architecture for resource efficiency business support within the Business Link IDB model
- The target audience for Business Link and the target audience for the national delivery partners can be very different. There is, therefore, a mismatch in support needed and support offered – this can raise expectations of businesses without an appropriate and available solution. It can also lead to criticism of the Business Link approach because it does not lead to enough referrals
- The generalist nature of the Business Link Advisers means that the intervention was usually a light touch one. Despite this, it has led to some of the quick win savings being identified and implemented
- Confusion by Business Link Advisers over the range of initiatives at both national and regional level.

It is clear that Business Link needs to play a key part in the BRE support mix. However:

- It should not be seen as the panacea
- Key systems, training and development are required to make it work effectively and funding provision needs to be discussed and agreed
- It does not replace the need for specialist brokerage and advice in every case. This support is still required but how it is funded and delivered needs to be discussed and agreed
- Even when this all works well, Business Link can only provide the IDB elements. Defra, DECC, BERR and the RDAs need to agree roles and responsibilities in delivering the solutions for business. We have a range of 'solutions' at a regional level which vary depending on funding allocations. Whilst keeping the opportunity available for regional flexibility, we should work towards an agreed common level of support.

PART 2: BUILDING ON THE PILOT AND BSSP TRANSITION & RECOMMENDATIONS

6. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This second part of the report looks at the future role of Business Link in Business Resource Efficiency. Since the end of the BRE Pilot, all regions have continued to encourage Business Link to play an active role in this area. However, this is in a rapidly changing context, with Business Support Simplification and the results of the Delivery Landscape Review having a major impact on how businesses will receive BRE support and how this will be provided.

This section of the report outlines this changing context; highlights the current planned support in each region for transfer of BRE IDB to Business Link; and summarises the range of regional support available to businesses.

In addition, it summarises the key recommendations for the future and the roles and responsibilities of both national and regional agencies.

7. THE CHANGING CONTEXT: BREW, BSSP, PRESWM, DLR and heightened role of Business Link and Regions

Both during 2007-08 (when the BRE Pilot was being developed and delivered) and in the six months since, there have been significant developments in the BRE support arena. The key developments are summarised below.

7.1 Closure of the BREW programme and reduction of one to one business support

From 1 April 2008 the ring fencing of landfill tax funding within Defra for spend on BREW ceased and the BREW funding programme was closed. The associated funding to the former BREW delivery bodies has been significantly reduced and the RDA specific funding was removed. There are a number of implications of the funding cuts:

The national Defra funded delivery bodies are no longer able to provide 1:1, on site support other than to those businesses likely to deliver large-scale savings, i.e., generally larger businesses that would not traditionally use Business Link as a route to obtain support.

This has resulted in a gap in support which some regions are able to fill whilst others are not.

In terms of the brokerage element of IDB, this has reduced the options for referral and brokerage. Where the Business Link offers a BRE IDB service which brokers to national services such as Envirowise, the service levels of these bodies have changed, thus requiring re-training and a rethink of the Business Link brokerage models for BRE. There is anecdotal evidence that this has disengaged a proportion of Business Link Advisers who, having recently made the effort to get to grips with the BRE agenda, have found that the solutions are no longer there.

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7.2 Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP) and the role of Business Link

The national BSSP is now positioning Business Link to act as the primary brand and access channel for all business support. There is, therefore, an even greater impetus for all partners to ensure that Business Link is able to undertake this role with regard to BRE.

A critical issue here is the need to agree on the diagnostic elements of BRE that should be provided by Business Link as part of their core or even potentially enhanced IDB service, as opposed to that provided by Defra/BERR funded national providers or those operating on a regional basis.

There are currently different interpretations of diagnostics and delivery between different organisations. This needs to be agreed for effective progress to be made.

The positioning of Business Link as the primary gateway for all publicly funded business support places increased demands on Business Link from all specialist areas (not just BRE). Consequently there is greater competition for Business Link air time by all of the BSSP products.

7.3 BSSP and the Improve you Resource Efficiency product

Under BSSP, all BRE support comes under the Resource Efficiency product offer. This offer now appears to be near finalisation, but still requires considerable finessing in order to ensure that BRE support, both regionally and nationally, is provided in a cohesive manner which delivers against business need. It needs to ensure that this covers not just Defra and DECC funded activities but RDA funded activities too. The RDAs welcome the constructive approach that Defra has taken on this to date.

It is clear that any enhanced or specialist IDB offering via Business Link will need to be initiated at the regional level. This means that there will be differences in approach by each region to fit with the specific model of Business Link delivery.

7.4 Delivery Landscape Review

Defra's BRE Delivery Landscape Review and the implementation under the Resource Efficiency Product need to ensure that there is less confusion for all stakeholders as to the relative roles of the various national delivery partners. This has, understandably, been a particularly difficult aspect for Business Link Advisers to grasp and has led to numerous inappropriate referrals.

The RDAs would welcome a more streamlined, simplified national agency approach, augmented by regional provision, as appropriate, to ensure delivery against the principles of BSSP and to help clarify the support available by national partners.

8. REGIONAL RESPONSE POST BRE PILOT AND REMOVAL OF BREW FUNDING

8.1 BRE integration into Business Link

In every region, Business Link is still required to mainstream RE activities. In some regions this has meant the retention of the 1,000 target or an increase in this 'planning assumption' which is measured quarterly (see Table 8.1)

Table 8.1 - 2008/09 Business Link planned assumptions for Resource Efficiency activities.

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RDA	Current target for BL	Comments
East of England	1,000	Current retention of the planning assumption. This will be kept under review to ensure it is appropriate and effective.
South East England	IA referrals 5,500 IA brokerages 500 Businesses supported with Resource Efficiency 4,000 Businesses supported with CSR 2,000	The planning assumptions this year still include 'business supported' but in addition new targets around the Intensive Assist (IA) process have been introduced that measure the number of customers signposted to relevant information (counted as a referral) and the number of customers helped to specify what they need to do/procure, get the right solution provider and follow up to make sure they do it (counted as brokerage).
South West	1,600 IAs to include resource efficiency (no planning assumption set for referrals)	This planning assumption is supported by ongoing provision of 2 specialist coaches embedded in Business Link to ensure ongoing CPD for all BL Advisers and gateway staff.
East Midlands	No specific planned assumption set	Resource efficiency diagnostic take up is being measured on a fortnightly basis, and discussions are being held with Business Link to assess how we measure 'light touch' diagnostics. However, no specific targets have been set because it was felt that this may lead to the tool being used inappropriately (e.g. used to meet a target rather than where it is required by a business)
Advantage West Midlands	1,000	Final definition of planning assumption will depend on details of regional project submission
Yorkshire Forward	1,000	Current retention of the planning assumption. Will take a view in the medium term as to if a target is the best approach, it is maintained for now.
North East	1,000	RDA will continue to embed BRE into the diagnostic process and to ensure that it is delivered across all activities. Planning assumptions will be reviewed in light of changes to BSSP and national delivery landscape.
North West	No referral planning assumption No IA brokerage planning assumption Businesses supported with Resource efficiency 835 Businesses supported with CSR 362	No referral or brokerage planning assumptions were set to preserve BL position as a demand led IDB provider 2008-09 planning assumptions include those delivered through SP and ERDF activity
London	N/A	No – but BLIL have internal soft targets for referring/brokering, ensuring that clients are given three choices of environmental support solutions, wherever possible

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Differences between regions in the levels of resources that are currently planned to be invested in this area results in differences in the priority given to this agenda. Most regions have either amended the original planning assumption (target) or have agreed that a target based approach is inappropriate (see earlier for a discussion over the conflict of introducing a target in an IDB model).

8.2 BRE solution provision within the regions

Since the removal of Defra funding specifically to the RDAs to look at this area, many RDAs have sought to 'bridge the gap'. There are particular opportunities for this in some regions through the new European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programmes. It should be noted, however, that the levels of funding and prioritisation of Resource Efficiency as a key issue within each region differs. There will, therefore, remain a variation in the level of support that is offered through the RDAs and ERDF funded activities (see Appendix 7, Table A7.1, Summary of current and planned solution provision). The recommendations for the migration of BRE IDB to Business Link, cross over with the wider BSSP agenda. As such, they are part of a range of issues that Defra, DECC and the RDA's should work together to address.

Table 8.2 Proposed recommendations in light of BRE Pilot

AREA of ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION
NATIONAL BRE FRAMEWORK	A formal working group incorporating RDAs, Defra, DECC, Business Link, Defra-nominated delivery bodies and Local Authority representation should be established to guide the delivery of IDB migration to Business Link .
MARKETING	The regions pool all existing marketing and communications materials into a shared library for adaptation and use across all regions and that this should be provided in coordination with Business Link so as to be a national activity with regional flexibility.
DIAGNOSTICS	The RDAs should share all existing diagnostic toolkits and research to ensure the high quality of diagnostic services and share best practice.
COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK AND TRAINING OF BUSINESS FACING STAFF	The RDAs work with Business Links, Defra and DECC to establish appropriate competency levels for Business Link Advisers within the context of the BL National Occupational Standards. Regions to pool training and development material and share best practice.
GATEWAY STAFF	There is a need for all Gateway staff to be able to manage BRE enquiries. It is therefore recommended that each Business Link either provides adequate training of staff in-house to undertake this activity or sub-contracts this to a specialist provider.

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DEFRA DELIVERY LANDSCAPE REVIEW AND FUTURE SOLUTION PROVISION	<p>As part of the DLR, Defra and DECC should recognise that having a number of national delivery organisations increases the complexity for Business Link Advisers trying to understand the best place to broker to. Fewer national solution providers would reduce this complexity, in line with BSSP.</p> <p>RDAs should work with Defra, BERR and DECC to clearly define what the national and regional programmes will deliver and how they can be better integrated as part of BSSP.</p>
BROKERAGE AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS	<p>The RDAs to work with Business Links and the national and regional support providers to develop appropriate referral systems.</p>
FUNDING	<p>Appropriate levels of funding are provided to support this agenda.</p> <p>The RDAs should work with Defra, BERR and DECC to establish a joint approach to ensure business needs are met in relation to both IDB and follow-on delivery.</p>

9. DEVELOPING BUSINESS LINK'S ROLE IN RESOURCE EFFICIENCY INFORMATION, DIAGNOSIS AND BROKERAGE

The BRE Pilot has provided much good practice on which to build. There are also a number of key learning points that need to be taken into account.

With the migration of RE IDB to Business Link, it is vital that the national and regional partners work more closely together. There are a number of areas where this needs to take place. Table 9.1 provides a starting point for an action plan to address this. It takes the recommendations and learning points of the Pilot programme along with the activities that are currently in place or in development in each region. Where possible, timelines have also been included.

In order to make this happen, the RDAs need to work with Defra to build on the existing positive joint working and activity, including:

- Nationally – a clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities of key delivery bodies (it is anticipated that this will emerge from the DLR)
- Regionally – a firm commitment to increase the capacity of Business Link to take on the IDB for RE which shows clearly the timescales for this to take place and the level of IDB to be taken on by Business Link
- Jointly – to agree how to fund this activity, to ensure effective brokering, to ensure that the customer journey and ability to improve resource efficiency are at the heart of the design of activities. To establish appropriate metrics to ensure that the system is working correctly.

Table 9.1: Draft Action Plan

This constitutes a draft proposal for discussion between the RDAs and Defra, DECC and BERR. Delivery of this draft action plan is subject to agreement by all parties and then the securing the resources required for its coordination and delivery. The action is plan is based on the premise of facilitating regional flexibility where it is needed.

AREA of ACTIVITY	PRINCIPLES	PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION AND ACTION REQUIRED	LEAD	TIMESCALES
NATIONAL BRE FRAMEWORK	<p>Ensure that the ‘Improving your Resource Efficiency ‘ product adequately and appropriately reflects regional issues such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marketing • diagnostic approaches • the customer journey, including referral to national and regional service providers • definitions and data capture, • performance measures and reporting • funding 	<p>A formal working group incorporating RDAs, Defra, DECC, Business Link, Defra-nominated delivery bodies and Local Authority representation should be established to take this work forward.</p>	<p>DEFRA</p>	<p>Group established October 2008</p>

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<p>MARKETING</p>	<p>Raising awareness of the benefits of RE, thus encouraging businesses to enquire about available support via the IDB service</p> <p>Reduced proliferation of marketing materials and increased sharing of resources</p> <p>Development of new material accessible to all, in line with Business Link and BSSP Solutions for Business branding guidelines</p> <p>More integrated national delivery partner and regional marketing campaigns and events</p>	<p>The regions pool all existing marketing and communications materials into a shared library for adaptation and use across all regions and that this should be provided in coordination with Business Link so as to be a national activity with regional flexibility.</p> <p>RDAs work with Business Link and Defra to develop and co-ordinate information provided on the businesslink.gov website and on regional sites</p> <p>RDAs work with Defra to share ideas and plans for the transition to the use of Solutions for Business brand for the RE product.</p>	<p>Joint RDA and Defra</p>	<p>October-March 2008</p>
<p>DIAGNOSTIC APPROACHES</p>	<p>Tighter and clearer definitions of the different levels of BRE IDB provision.</p> <p>Clear feedback to Defra as to the level of diagnostics undertaken by Business Link in each region with a view to developing standard levels of diagnostic where possible.</p>	<p>RDAs and Business Link operators share best practice on RE diagnostic toolkits.</p> <p>Build on existing good practice, particularly the work of <i>emda</i>, SEEDA and Yorkshire Forward.</p> <p>The RDAs take this work on diagnostics with the aim of agreeing a definition for a IDB at 3 main levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Light touch b) Deeper IDB undertaken by a Business Link generic advisers c) Specialist IDB undertaken by an environmental specialists, linked to the delivery of a solution. <p>RDAs report on anticipated numbers of IDB interventions that will take place in their region at each of the three levels.</p>	<p>RDAs in consultation with Defra and national delivery bodies</p> <p>RDAs</p>	<p>October 08-March 09</p> <p>March 2010</p>

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		RDAs to discuss with Defra the need for more specialist IDB and, if this is something that needs to be addressed in all regions, to discuss potential funding sources, including from Defra.	RDAs/Defra	April – June 2009
COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK AND TRAINING OF BUSINESS FACING STAFF	<p>Agree a set of relevant competencies for Business Link staff within the context of the Business Link National Occupational Standards.</p> <p>Training programmes in place to ensure that staff are at the correct level</p> <p>Pooled resources and sharing of best practice in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction training for new recruits • Ongoing CPD • Conducting BRE interviews – this could involve training that Business Link advisers could use to support them during this process 	<p>That the RDAs work with Business Link to establish agreed Resource Efficiency competency levels for Business Link staff.</p> <p>That this takes into account the ongoing work of <i>emda</i> and Yorkshire Forward in particular.</p> <p>Training of Business Link staff aimed at establishing, monitoring and managing appropriate levels of competency with a region needs to be part of the RDA negotiations and discussions with its BL delivery contractor. Furthermore, management of competency levels (in all areas of BL delivery) should be considered in setting performance specifications at the re-tendering stage.</p> <p>Any information to and engagement with Business Links on the roles and remits of national players must cover all national delivery bodies so that the Business Links are not overwhelmed with information. This should be channelled through the respective RDAs.</p> <p>Regions to share training and development materials and to share best practice.</p>	TBC	<p>Consideration by the RDAs of the work undertaken by YF in March 09 with a view to roll out</p>

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GATEWAY STAFF	Gateway helpline staff receive appropriate training as the front line support.	Each region should assess the appropriate levels of training for BL staff. RDAs to discuss with Defra and DECC how this relates to national helplines (eg Envirowise) and other key agents such as Environment Agency.	TBC	March 2009 to have an agreed plan
	Reducing the complexity of the national support offer	As part of the DLR, RDAs discuss with Defra that having a number of national delivery organisations increases the complexity for Business Link Advisers trying to understand available brokerage options. Fewer national solution providers would reduce this complexity, in line with BSSP.	Defra	September 2008 – March 2009
	Further develop the RE product with clearly defined roles and responsibilities of national and regional funders	RDAs to work with Defra to clearly define what the national and regional programme will deliver and how this can be better integrated as part of BSSP.	Defra, RDAs	September 08 – March 09

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<p>BROKERAGE AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS</p>	<p>Agree appropriate brokerage and referral systems between Business Links and the national and regional support providers</p>	<p>The RDAs to work with Business Link and the national and regional support providers to develop standardised brokerage and referral systems.</p> <p>Business Links and the national/regional delivery partners need to agree systems to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree definitions for a BRE ‘signpost, ‘referral’ and brokerage, to inform the type of data that should be collected during the customer journey. • Establish working arrangements to ensure that after brokering to a national partner that Business Link Advisers are ‘kept in the loop’ with regard to what happens to that business and further support needs identified. • Establish (where it does not exist already) a main contact within each delivery partner and each Business Link to ensure effective working relationships. • Investigate how some of the initial information collected by Business Link can be utilised by all delivery partners to reduce the amount of form filling and paper work needed. This could require partner access to regional CRM systems. • Make it a requirement of the national delivery partners to refer businesses back into the Business Link gateway so that a business can access other, non BRE advice (if appropriate). <p>Ensure that this happens, and is done to a consistent standard.</p>	<p>RDAs</p> <p>BL’s</p> <p>National Delivery Partners</p> <p>Regional Delivery Partners</p>	<p>December 08</p> <p>Phased approach. Timescales to be determined</p> <p>Will be dependent on stages of development of regional CRM systems – timescales to be determined. Proposal to trial in one region?</p>
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Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

FUNDING	Agree scope of additional funding for this service	<p>The RDAs to work with Defra/DECC to clearly establish a minimum level and standard of support envisaged for businesses in relation to both IDB and delivery.</p> <p>The RDAs and Defra/DECC to work together to identify how this should be funded, resourced and delivered. This should include a review by the RDAs and Defra/DECC as to the role of the RDAs in this area and the use of national funding to ensure a minimum, standard level of service.</p>	Defra/DEC C/ RDAs	

APPENDICES

BRE Pilot Framework
One Planet Economy Task and Finish Group
BRE Pilot Project National Framework for Delivery
Stage 1: April 2007 to March 2008
FINAL

Aim of this Framework:

To provide a framework for RDAs to achieve the commitment to deliver, by 31 March 2008, a comprehensive Business Resource Efficiency Advice Service, accessed through Business Link, to 1,000 SMEs per region, and 10,000 in total, (that do not have Environmental Management Systems in place) including on-site 'audits' of resource efficiency.

This framework proposes a national approach that achieves a robust and consistent approach to delivery of targets, measures and interim milestones whilst providing regional flexibility in its implementation.

Background

RDA Chairs met with the Chancellor on 14 March 2007 to discuss the RDAs' Budget proposals. Part of the discussion focused on the role that RDAs could play to help the Government to enable businesses to reduce their carbon emissions, particularly through existing mechanisms, notably Business Link. The Chancellor expressed interest in this idea and RDA Chairs agreed to swiftly provide the Chancellor with details about how this could be achieved. Richard Ellis, EEDA's Chair, wrote to John Healey, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, on 19 March having consulted all RDAs, outlining the RDAs' proposals. Based on this letter, the Chancellor made the following announcement in the Budget:

"To support small and medium-sized businesses on energy efficiency, each of the nine English RDAs will pilot in 2007-08 a streamlined business resource efficiency advice service, through Business Links. This will include on-site audits of resource efficiency, delivered consistent with, and coordinated through, the Business Support Simplification Programme."

Building on this announcement, David Marlow, EEDA's Chief Executive, proposed an RDA Task & Finish Group to track this work. Chief Executives, at their meeting on 5 April, agreed that request and asked that the remit of the group be expanded to also cover:

- Engagement with the Committee on Environmental Markets & Economic Performance
- The Energy White Paper and follow-up of the RDAs' ten commitments

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- Revisions to the RDA Tasking Framework to highlight the importance of RDAs' contribution to addressing climate change.

RDA Chief Executives asked David to circulate to them, for comment, the terms of reference for the Task & Finish Group.

The RDA commitment

The proposal which Richard Ellis put to John Healey on behalf of the RDAs was that RDAs would, for the year 2007-08:

- Run Pathfinders in all regions providing onsite 'audits' and advice for a minimum of 1,000 businesses in each region that do not have environmental management systems in place.
- Commit £2.5 million from their existing resources to deliver these pathfinders with an expectation that at least 10,000 businesses will benefit.
- Work with Defra to agree the extent to which these Pathfinders can utilise the RDAs' existing allocation of BREW funding for 2007-08.
- Make available generic advice including, for instance, lighting, heating/cooling, micro renewable, water, waste, material reuse/recycling, raw material specification, advice on regulation and fleet management.
- Refer to national expertise where larger scale or more specialist advice is required.
- Diagnose needs and broker to appropriate solution providers.
- Conclude each audit visit with a written report and secure a commitment to action.
- Follow up at appropriate intervals with the companies concerned to track action and moves from commitments to result.
- Enable a detailed evaluation to be made of the return for the public sector investment.

Considerations and rationale:

Early discussions between RDA and with partner organisations (including Business Link), the Group has made the following observations:

- This project needs to become operational as soon as possible if targets are to be met. Therefore existing structures and mechanisms need to be used during this first stage in the project.
- The Government's Business Support Simplification Programme places Business Link (Business Link) is the primary access brand for publicly funded business support through the nationally agreed information, diagnosis and brokerage (IDB) model. Business Link is therefore no longer associated with delivery: Business Link is well placed to raise awareness, provide generic information, diagnose business needs in this area alongside other business requirements, and broker businesses to specialist advisers in areas of identified need. Business Link do not directly sell particular products and services to business, but could play a crucial role in raising the profile of sustainability amongst businesses and connecting them to the appropriate specialist brokerage and delivery organisations.
- The diagnostic process, carried out by Business Link Advisers, could be 'adapted' to satisfy the on-site 'audit' requirement. The Business Link diagnostic generally result in an agreed action plan at which point a specialist organisation/provider could be brokered in. In the case of resource efficiency this might include Envirowise, the Carbon Trust, local NGOs or private supplier.
- Envirowise and the Carbon Trust (the Government subsidised resource efficiency services) currently do not have the capacity to provide on-site audits to 10,000 businesses nationally, therefore we would propose that RDAs work with their

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Business Link Providers to ensure the respective diagnostic process operating in their region takes account of a number of key resource efficiency questions.

- We would further propose that all RDAs adopt the Tasking Framework Business Support measurement on Resource Efficiency and Waste (4m) to record progress.
- The Enworks toolkit is currently being adopted by almost all RDAs to measure and record business progress in resource efficiency. We would propose that this is also used to capture and monitor business outputs and change. Recording would be carried out by both Business Links and their brokered delivery partners.

Proposed National Framework

Target definition for the Business Resource and Efficiency Advice Service, including 'on-site' audits:

The service delivered to a business will consist of a minimum of a diagnosis on their needs and aspirations, carried out by a Business Link Business Adviser. Alongside general business enquiries, the Business Link Adviser will ask questions that raise awareness of environmental issues and carry out an assessment of their potential to benefit from more specialist support on resource efficiency. The service will usually be carried out on site and may result, where applicable, in a referral to one of a number of providers including BREW delivery partners.

This service is currently described by Business Link as their diagnostic process and is measured by the RDAs as the Business Support measure. The outline of questions (BRE toolkit) which will be asked by the Adviser (which may be adapted or expanded to reflect local services and priorities) are contained in Appendix 2.

RDA ask Business Links:

- To deliver the above defined Business Resource and Efficiency Advice Service to 1,000 businesses, recording them as Business Supports under measure 4m in each region by 31st March 2008.
- To incorporate, and adapt where necessary, the BRE toolkit contained in Appendix 2 into their general diagnostic model.
- To record any trends or issues arising from the service.
- To build relationships with local BREW partners, determining their capacity to deliver referrals.
- To deliver, where appropriate, a quality, 'hard' referral to a relevant BREW partner and to record the referral to the partner on the Enworks toolkit or other appropriate recording arrangement. Conversion rates for these may be set regionally depending on the local capacity of BREW partners and/or other supply.
- To follow up progress on BRE with the business before 31st March 2008 and record this within in the action plan using the Enworks toolkit (or other appropriate recording

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arrangement.

- To 'train' all Business Link Advisers in BRE information/knowledge and how to use the toolkit
- To produce a suite of information materials on BRE for businesses (some of which could be developed collaboratively across the nine regions in collaboration with the One Planet Economy Task and Finish Group)

Where mechanisms already exist for delivery of the service, consideration needs to be given as to how the Business Link will be involved.

Opportunities for collaborative working:

The RDAs will work collaboratively through the One Planet Economy Task and Finish Group and the Business Link Management Group to make use of best practice already developed in relation to the training of Business Link Advisers and the marketing of the service and products.

a) Training for Business Link Advisers

Information on the following projects, which have a proven successful, will be made available for use:

- The Envirowise training programme for Business Advisers – currently in a self-teaching format on CD
- *emda's* Competency Model and training package for Business Link Advisers

b) Provision of central suite of information

The RDAs have agreed it would be prudent to maintain the various marketing messages developed within each region. These have become well established and it may cause unnecessary confusion amongst local businesses if we were to change them at this stage. The Business Link, however, may want to develop a set of information nationally. Should this be required the group will endeavour to provide a national Business Blueprint and guidelines. RDAs will engage and work with BusinessLink.gov to avoid duplicating effort.

Monitoring of outputs:

This will be done through Business Link's central reporting mechanisms and the Enworks Toolkit/or appropriate local reporting arrangement. The Business Links report quarterly to their RDAs on the Tasking Framework outputs and will include outputs under the measure 4m.

The Business Supports should be reported in total, with relevant supports allocated to the

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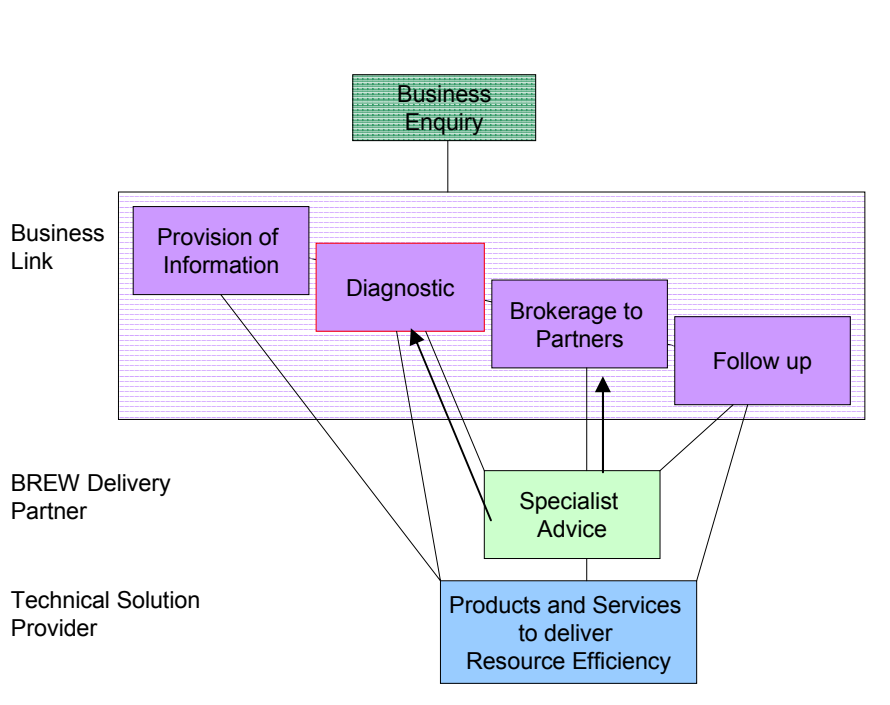
sub-output 4m (Business support on Resource Efficiency and Waste). It is the 4m outputs that will be counted towards the BRE Pilot Project's targets. In some instances these are double counted with other types of Business Supports, but in either case, the total 4m outputs will be counted.

The 4m output will be forwarded by each RDA to EEDA for collation on a quarterly basis once received from respective Business Link Organisations. Interim reports on progress will be compiled in November 2007 and February 2008 for presentation to RDA chairs and the Treasury.

Typical Regional Delivery Model

A graphical presentation of the model, detailing the Business Link role is given below. The point at which the Business Link Adviser will deliver their interaction with the business on resource efficiency is outlined in red.

Diagram A1.1: Typical delivery model



An important point to note on the diagram is the arrow returning from the specialist advice box recognises that, in some cases, businesses may go direct to these organisations. These organisations will, however, refer them back to Business Link where the advice or diagnostic actually required is more general.

Outline Questions that were provided by the OPE group to act as the baseline level of discussions between a Business Link Adviser and a business. This was adopted/amended by some of the RDAs. Please see example from EEDA below



BUSINESS ENROLMENT FORM – Green Business Review

Captavia Company ID No: (Please ensure this is populated to enable us to match with Captavia at the end of the year).

Name of Adviser: Team:

Client Name:

Name of Business:

Address:

Town: County:

Postcode: Telephone:

Email: URL:

How would you best describe the activities of the company? (e.g. manufacturing, retail, construction, finance, services, land-based, etc.)

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Green Business Review

	Y	N	?
Do you have any of the following – ISO14001, EMAS or BS8555	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>			
Do you spend less than £50,000 per annum on electricity and gas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you currently monitor your energy consumption and set targets for reduction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you explored opportunities for renewable and green energy use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you thinking about reducing your carbon footprint?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would you consider using a carbon offsetting scheme?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you minimise use of transport where possible and use clean fuels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there pressures from your customers or supply chain to become “greener”?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a current environmental policy statement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your business comply with all relevant environmental legislation & regulations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you carry out COSHH and risk assessments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your products and services designed to minimise environmental impact?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Could you identify all waste streams and set targets for reduction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you segregate waste and recycle where possible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there opportunities to optimise your processes to reduce waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

Do you identify opportunities to reuse materials such as packaging wherever possible?

If you are currently undertaking any building works have you explored opportunities for low carbon development?

Total out of 16

	Last Year	Next Year
	Final Month/ 200_	Forecast Month/ 200_
Year ending:		
Sales		
Net Profit before Tax		
Depreciation		
Total Employment Costs <i>(Wages, Salaries, NIC and on-costs e.g car allowance etc)</i>		
Average number of employees (full time equivalent) including Directors		

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

1	
2	

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

3	
---	--

Solutions Identified	Proposed Action	Person Responsible	Completion date

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Plug-in handed out: Yes or No

Definitions of a Business Assist

Business support – Number of businesses assisted to improve their performance

Definition of business:

The three main types of business are sole proprietorships, partnerships and companies and these include:

- Sole traders
- Start-ups of all sizes, whether or not VAT registered
- Independent spin-outs from established businesses, universities and other research and development organisations
- Not for profit companies, social enterprises* and community enterprises
- Farm enterprises
- New to the region branches of businesses which remain established elsewhere in the UK (expansions)
- Foreign direct investment bringing new enterprises to the region, both first time investment and subsequent expansions.

*Businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.

Definition of support

A minimum of:

- 2 hours or more of consultancy advice/other non-financial assistance; or
- grant or equivalent, of £250 or more of funding

Types of assistance

Provision of consultancy support, information, advice and guidance to individual businesses operating within the region. The assistance can be personal face-to-face, telephone or web-based dialogue at conferences, seminars, workshops or through networks. Activities should support the project objectives and be directed to improving the performance of the business. These may include support for:

- management/leadership
- corporate social responsibility e.g. awareness raising on statutory and legal responsibilities
- participation in new supply chains
- marketing
- use of R&D
- process and resource efficiency, eg, in use of ICT, waste management
- environment management
- quality assurance

Q. When can they be counted?

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

A. When each business within a project has received a minimum of 2 hours or £250 of financial assistance. A business can only be counted once within a project irrespective of the number of times or forms of assistance it receives.

Evidence Requirements

Business - Name, Address inc post code, Tel no. Contact details. Ownership. Type of business

Type of Assistance – grant letter to business (minimum of £250); letter, standard form (signed by Finance Director) confirming consultancy support provided and hours.

Date(s) assistance received.

Exclusions

Distribution of mail-shots and brochures – electronic or hard copy.

Notes

The output unit of measurement is the **business assisted**. The outcome measure is to improve their performance. In counting the output there is no need to demonstrate performance improvement; this is an outcome measure which will be assessed during the project evaluation.

Grant equivalent may include financial assistance such as loans or equity investment.

4m Business support – Number of businesses helped to improve their resource efficiency

Definitions

Helped – Same as “Assisted” definition for the core output – (4) Business

Resource Efficiency - Resource efficiency is associated with optimising the efficiency of resource inputs into a business to make more with less, thereby improving an organisation's profitability and reducing its impact on the environment through a reduction in resource depletion, pollution and waste. The inputs into a business are usually considered as being energy, materials, water and improved design.

Exclusions

- All businesses not assisted to improve resource efficiency

Notes

The definition assumes the same the core output but in this instance only for the number of businesses assisted to improve their resource efficiency

Table A.4.1: Factors affecting the design and implementation of the Pilot

What were the Business Link principles of operation & other factors that influenced the pilot?	What were the implications for the pilot and future plans?	How did the regions respond to this?	Is this an outstanding issue, post pilot?
<p>Business Link is IDB only</p> <p>Business Link does not deliver “business support solutions” as such.</p> <p>Business link are now tasked with delivery of IDB <u>only</u>, the brokerage element enabling those businesses needing support to access either publicly funded or commercial service providers⁶</p>	<p>Impartiality of Business Link is a positive thing and the fact that Business Link started to take a more proactive role in this area is a good platform in which to build</p>	<p>Pilot introduced and mainstreamed RE into the general Information and diagnostics services.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>Business Link is an impartial demand led service and therefore resists any form of target around BRE.</p>	<p>A measured approach was required, working with Business Link to inform and increase awareness on BRE in order to stimulate demand, whilst working within the IDB demand led model.</p>	
	<p>The BRE Pilot requirements initially proposed that the Business Links should provide on site “audits”. After lengthy discussions, this was changed to reflect the Business Link role to provide IDB assistance to business on a business-led basis, and that it was inappropriate and unrealistic to expect a generalist Business Link Adviser to carry out a BRE “audit” as part of their IDB role.</p>	<p>Although different approaches have been taken in different regions to deliver against the BRE pilot requirements, it is important to recognise that the Business Link IDB role does not represent delivery of an environmental or BRE audit. In some regions, where additional regional support is available, it was possible to supplement this with more in-depth support.</p>	

⁶ Some regions (notably East Midlands) do provide grants, delivered through Business Link, to help with implementation. The idea being that a client goes through the information and diagnosis, and then is brokered out for further support, but can get a grant from business link (known as a Business Transformation Grant) to help with this. The East Midlands have provided a Resource Efficiency Grant as part of this and have plans for a repeat of this, this year. Other regions are looking at the establishment of voucher systems.

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

<p>What were the Business Link principles of operation & other factors that influenced the pilot?</p>	<p>What were the implications for the pilot and future plans?</p>	<p>How did the regions respond to this?</p>	<p>Is this an outstanding issue, post pilot?</p>
<p>Business Link is demand led and does not push specific products or services.</p> <p>Business Link maintains an element of customer choice in that the business are empowered to select service providers based on the recommendations made by Business Link through their brokerage service</p>	<p>Conflict between the need for the provision of support to reflect Government policy requirements and the areas of need identified by businesses.</p> <p>Possible expectations from national delivery partners that this pilot would lead to a large number of referrals</p>	<p>Perception of whether the pilot has made an impact</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Generalist vs specialist advisers</p> <p>Whereas in the past Business Link have at various stages offered specialist services or advice, the “core” Business Link IDB service in most regions is now based on a generalist or holistic approach to encompass all the needs identified through a diagnostic process.</p>	<p>Expectation that generalist advisers would need to develop some specialist skills in order to perform BRE IDB. In developing solutions to deliver the targets set for the BRE pilot, this was a significant issue, as many Business Link operators had valid concerns about the demands that different technical business support topics were placing on their advisers.</p>	<p>Need for training of Business Link business facing staff</p> <p>Need to agree the level of depth - this varied across regions depending on what further ‘solutions’ were available. Need to incorporate minimum core requirements in the National Occupational Standards for Business Link Advisers.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

What were the Business Link principles of operation & other factors that influenced the pilot?	What were the implications for the pilot and future plans?	How did the regions respond to this?	Is this an outstanding issue, post pilot?
<p>Traditional target audience for Business Link</p> <p>Traditionally, Business Link's customer base has been micro-businesses including pre-start and/or start-up businesses (those trading for less than 12 months).</p>	<p>In many cases this means that the majority of businesses engaged with Business Link are not suitable recipients of the BRE national support services available. For example, if they are a micro business, their energy bills may be under the Carbon Trust threshold.</p> <p>Those businesses suitable for BRE support would not necessarily (historically) approach Business Link in the first instance for support but would probably either seek out providers directly or contact local authorities or the Environment Agency.</p>	<p>Positive impact in that Business Link can reach a new target audience and get key RE messages and also stimulate RE changes across a broad business audience</p> <p>Negative impact in that national support providers and Defra perhaps did not see the BRE Pilot translating into a large increase in referrals</p> <p>Negative impact if Business Link Advisers successfully raise awareness of BRE as an issue but cannot then provide any support in implementing solutions.</p>	<p>Yes - this is even more important with the transfer of all IDB to Business Link.</p>
<p>Re-contracting of Business Link services</p> <p>All RDAs have restructured their BL Provision since assuming responsibility for the contracts in April 2005</p> <p>In most cases this has resulted in a rationalisation and restructuring of Business Link services e.g. from a county-based service to a sub-regional or regional service.</p>	<p>During the BRE Pilot year, the majority of regions were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In process of re-contracting (eg Y&H where the service moved from 4 operators to one with resulting structural and staffing changes); • In a transitional year; • In the first year of a new region-wide operation; or • About to commence reorganisation. 	<p>In some regions this had staffing implications and changes in management and reporting systems.</p> <p>There were also contractual issues concerning imposing a target that is not within the contract.</p>	<p>For most regions this transition has now happened. However it is still to take place in the South East</p>

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

What were the Business Link principles of operation & other factors that influenced the pilot?	What were the implications for the pilot and future plans?	How did the regions respond to this?	Is this an outstanding issue, post pilot?
<p>Traditionally Business Link have not had a strong role in BRE or good links with the specialist national support providers</p> <p>Although there are variations across the country, Business Link have not historically had a strong role in this BRE advice or support.</p> <p>Historically, there has also never been a common method of referring or brokering from Business Links to BRE support providers.</p> <p>In fact, in many cases the Business Links may have only had very limited contact with those providers.</p>	<p>Need for up-skilling of advisers, as mentioned above,</p> <p>Need to agree brokerage arrangement.,</p> <p>A fundamental aspect of the BRE pilot therefore required that brokering arrangements were established between Business Link and BRE support providers to ensure customer need was being addressed and all stakeholder expectations were clear.</p>	<p>Training of advisers as discussed above.</p> <p>Variable approaches to referrals and brokerage. Aim for one common system so that there is a clear and auditable process of brokerage.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Confusion over what to broker to: solution provision</p> <p>There was confusion over the complex range of service solutions provided (both from national and regional partners).</p> <p>There is also quite a variation in the type and levels of support available regionally.</p>	<p>In some regions the Business Link IDB could be supplemented by existing additional support.</p> <p>In other regions the Business Link IDB was the only activity available.</p> <p>Need to train Business Link Advisers on the range of support available from national and regional support providers</p>	<p>Different solution provided in different regions depending on where national support was targeted and the level of regional funding available.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

East Midlands Development Agency Marketing material

resourcefutures

Adverts 1

Tap into better profits with resource efficiency

Straight talking on resource efficiency

Minimise waste and harvest the profits

Build better profits with resource efficiency

Call 0845 058 6644

Call 0845 058 6644

Call 0845 058 6644

Call 0845 058 6644

Business Link

East Midlands Development Agency

resourcefutures

emda - December 2007

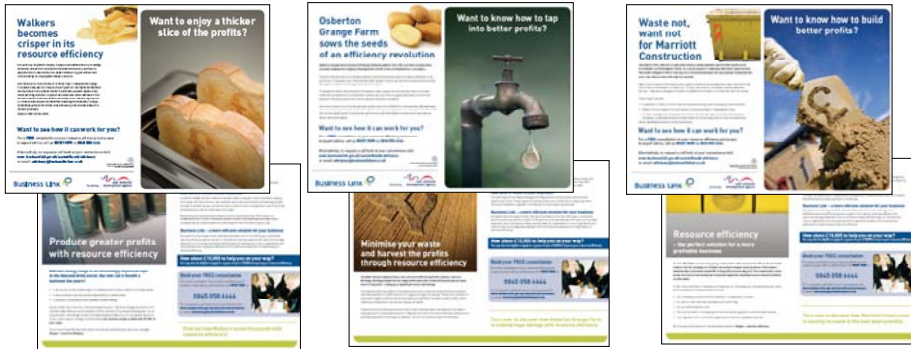
Minimise waste and harvest the profits

Build better profits with resource efficiency

Enjoy a thicker slice of the profits with resource efficiency

Tap into better profits with resource efficiency

Leaflets 1



Evaluation Pro forma

Self assessment Evaluation of the Regional Business Link Resource Efficiency Pilot-
March 07/08

Business Link: Region:	Total number of SME interventions* (please see summary sheet and amend if necessary)
1. Briefly describe service provided	
2. Information and Diagnostics (Good and not so good points)	
3. Training (Good and not so good points)	
4. Brokerage (Good and not so good points)	
5. Legacy (Good and not so good points)	
6. Case studies Please provide details of any suitable case studies that highlight positive examples and tangible results for inclusion in a joint RDA public report.	
7. Further Information	

*Provide a breakdown if necessary

Prompts:

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

Question 2– IDB

Were there any significant issues encountered in adapting the IDB model for this purpose?

Did you utilise any specialist advice / guidance / development support in the integration of Resource Efficiency / Environmental diagnostics into the IDB model? Please give details.

To what extent did the advisers engage the businesses with the resource efficiency/ environmental agenda? Eg, was it an integral part of the overall diagnostic process or was it additional questions added to the end?

Was delivery of the diagnostic reviewed during the pilot to ensure that advisers were using it appropriately and that the approach was consistent between the advisers?

Did the diagnostic result in more light-touch interventions (e.g. subscriptions to e-newsletters etc.) than more intensive interventions (e.g. site visits etc.)?

Question 3 –Training

Were Business Link Advisers positive about mainstreaming environmental issues and resource efficiency into the core Business Link offering? Was there any general feedback?

Did you use any external resources in developing and/or delivering the adviser training? If so was this free support or did you have to fund this? Please give details of who and what.

Was the adviser training felt to be adequate to a) identify clients' potential environmental issues and b) identify appropriate environmental business support organisations to refer clients to?

Have Business Link Advisers requested any further up-skilling in the area of identifying, prioritising and referring environmental issues? Is further environmental and resource efficiency training included in staff CPD?

Question 4 – Brokerage

Has the pilot stimulated any discernible increase in demand for environmental business support and/or resource efficiency advice?

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

Did the environmental business support organisations respond well to and feedback on referrals made to them?

Were there any issues/feedback from business support organisations regarding the appropriateness/accuracy of need of the referrals?

Did your Business Link request and/or receive qualitative feedback from client companies on the quality of service provided during the diagnostic and any subsequent support and was this fed back into developing the pilot?

What relative proportions of referrals were made to a) national environmental business support organisations and b) regional or sub-regional environmental business support organisations?

Are you aware of any difference in the levels of support uptake between a) national environmental business support organisations and b) regional or sub-regional environmental business support organisations?

How many and what proportion of diagnostics resulted in a referral to a third party?

How many and what proportion of referrals produced a result in the form of a site visit and attendant cost savings (or other tangible quantitative improvements)? Please comment on any variation between the above.

Question 5 – Legacy

Are the resource efficiency elements of the IDB still being used and has it been reviewed in light of the pilot and/or feedback from advisers, clients and environmental business support organisations?

Are there any targets specifically for environmental reviews/referrals this year? Please give details.

What gaps / hurdles / barriers do you still face with delivering resource efficiency / environmental diagnostic going forward?

Question 7- Further information

Other critical successful factors e.g. tools (Enworks/Kent model), marketing activities, National Programmes support.

Table A7.1: Summary of Current and Planned Solution Provision by Region

RDA	SUMMARY OF THE SERVICE PROVIDED
<p>East of England</p>	<p>Specialist Resource Efficiency Support Resource Efficiency East</p> <p>Given the strategic importance of Resource Efficiency and in order to support the above business link activity, EEDA has supported the creation of a single integrated resource efficiency programme for the East of England – Resource Efficiency East.</p> <p>Resource Efficiency East aims to provide a single integrated targeted business support programme for SMEs, providing specialist support for solutions for businesses seeking to improve their resource efficiency, promoting the benefits to organisations of such improvements, and measuring the impact of the solutions provided. The programme has been developed in conjunction with Business Link East and will provide the brokerage arm of the mainstreamed Business resource Efficiency IDB model, piloted successfully in BLE last year. It will provide a portal for access to the supplier support funded through national government (subject to the Delivery Landscape Review currently being implemented by Defra), and added value regional support designed to complement the national, thereby meeting customer requirements for simplified access to appropriate expertise. Resource Efficiency East will help small and medium-sized businesses become both more resource efficient and at the same time more competitive. Resource Efficiency East will help businesses to cut their energy consumption, carbon emissions and other resources over the next three years giving firms a sharper competitiveness edge.</p> <p>The importance of the efficient use of water for land based industries in EofE is widely recognised and EEDA is working with key partners has produced guidance for business on using water more efficiently. Further initiatives include working with groups to look at potential solutions in the very dry spots of the region, eg, shared reservoirs.</p> <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The East of England's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Approximately £83 million to be invested in supporting low carbon economic growth. • Renewables East. Approximately £1.8mn to maintain and enhance their sister agency support role, driving forward renewables development in the region. • The Innovative Crops Project (InCrops). Approximately £1m for the period 2008–2013 and additional ERDF funding. Establishing and operating a distributed enterprise hub in Alternative and Non food Crops. It will develop the use of low carbon bio-renewables derived from plants, promoting innovation and technology transfer and the development of products to enhance business opportunities, productivity and growth. • The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). To improve competitiveness of the agricultural sector and to safeguard and enhance sustainable rural businesses across the region including; contributing to the increased use of renewables, water efficiency etc • MAS EAST - (£tbc) delivers significant measurable improvements to businesses by helping them improve their performance and productivity

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

South East England	<p>Specialist Resource Efficiency Support</p> <p>SEEDA have funded an interim programme of support for 2008-9 including 1-2-1 audits and are currently setting up the trial of an incentive scheme to help businesses take action on resource efficiency. This specialist support is delivered by the Sustainable Business Partnerships and other partners in the south east. The incentive scheme will promote the private sector capacity offering to business on resource efficiency and explore an alternative route to the previous delivery model. This has a budget of £0.5m and will aim to achieve 800 Business supports on resource efficiency.</p> <p>From April 2009 the programme will be replaced by an ERDF and single pot joint funded programme of activities. SEEDA are currently working with partners to develop a three year strategy for support on business resource efficiency which will progressively reduce public subsidy for support over time, whilst increasing capacity within the market for supply of services and the uptake of services by businesses.</p> <p>Zero Waste Initiative</p> <p>SEEDA is working with WRAP, EA and other partners to develop a comprehensive end-to-end approach to waste reduction and reuse leading to a materials market. The programme was initially intended to address all business waste streams, but had to be curtailed due to reduced funding, and is <i>focusing</i> in the first three years on construction, food waste and waste wood.</p>
South West	<p>Specialist Resource Efficiency Support</p> <p>Envision - £1m funding approved in 2008/9 (ERDF matched by Single Pot)</p> <p>This programme (which previously ran under the BREW funding programme) is now ERDF funded in 2008/9 to deliver high quality specialist advice and guidance to SMEs across the region. The service provides a free advice and guidance service (up to 2 hrs). Those businesses needing substantial support then pay to join the scheme (on a heavily subsidised basis) providing at least 2 days on site support where a mentor works closely with the business to identify and help implement recommended changes. The programme will provide advice/guidance to 454 businesses and substantial support to 187 businesses. The programme will also comprehensively report on environmental outputs in those businesses supported.</p> <p>From April 2009 to December 2013 the Envision programme will be replaced by a new ERDF "Environmental Performance in Business" Programme which is currently being commissioned. This will provide a resource efficiency specialist diagnostic service (operated via Business Link) backed up by ongoing business support subsidised via a revenue "development voucher" scheme. The programme may also include a capital grants programme and a wider awareness raising/behavioural change campaign. The project has yet to be finalised but total programme costs of up to £20m (ERDF matched by Single Pot) are possible, with a minimum target of 2800 business assists required in the South West ERDF Operational Programmes.</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Resource Efficiency KTN and Resource Efficiency KTPs</p> <p>The KTN project (£100k funded by the RDA for 2008/9 pending the Technology Strategy Board review of KTNs) funds a regional REKTN manager post, providing a networking and knowledge transfer link between the regions businesses and</p>

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

	<p>academic research/support. The project is currently looking at several key innovative resource efficiency issues including innovative ways to recover value from shellfish/finfish wastes and the use of autoclaves in improving waste management. The project target is to support 200 businesses in 2008/9.</p> <p>Similarly the RE KTP scheme funds Knowledge Transfer Partnerships where a KTP "associate", linked to a University, works in a businesses to address resource efficiency issues. This scheme commenced under the BREW programme and will continue until the allocated fund of £240k is exhausted. There are currently 2 RE KTPs in place with a further 4 applications currently under consideration,</p> <p>TUC "Greening Workplaces" Project - £475k allocated over 3 years from April 2008.</p> <p>This is an innovative programme which funds the TUC to use trade union membership to address resource efficiency from within their employing organisations. The project will fund training and support for a number of workplace champions and the promotion of resource efficiency as a key issue for organisational success. The project target is to support 400 businesses with 180 people developing their skills.</p>
<p>East Midlands</p>	<p>Specialist Resource Efficiency Support</p> <p>In March 2006, <i>emda</i> launched the regional Programme for Implementing Resource Efficiency (PIRE) <i>focusing</i> both on the <i>how</i> and the <i>what</i> in terms of helping businesses build their productivity through efficiency, innovation and skills development. Since then over £7M has been invested including £2.97M of Defra BREW funding that supported our regional coordination role. These investments have been made into four areas of activity; Strategic Development, Communications, Markets Development and Direct Interventions (direct business support).</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Starting this year, based on the above priorities and including some new targeted specialist services such as the Biomass Accelerator, Energy Connections and Skills4Energy which alone is set to deliver 1200 training opportunities, PIRE will combine single programme, private match and ERDF funding to create a programme worth at least £12.5M for resource efficiency in our businesses including funds for specialist resource efficiency support for business.</p>
<p>Advantage West Midlands</p>	<p>Specialist Resource Efficiency Support and Other</p> <p>Regionally funded extension to the NISP programme. Outputs here are jobs created & protected, new business starts and substantial resource efficiency benefits. Likely level of annual spend is £0.5m.</p> <p>A regionally funded SME support project that will provide an environmental support element within the BSSP model. Likely level of annual spend £1.5m.</p>
<p>Yorkshire Forward</p>	<p>Resource Efficiency Yorkshire (REY).</p> <p>REY is our new, primary RE programme and is jointly funded by Yorkshire Forward and the European Regional Development Programme. £9.8m (2007/8-2010/11)</p> <p>The overall aim of the programme is to <i>increase the competitiveness of regional businesses through the wide-spread adoption of resource efficiency measures.</i></p>

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

	<p>The programme will (i) establish clear priorities using research and best practice (ii) make Business Link the primary access channel for BRE support and work to increase the capacity of BL to undertake this role; (iii) work with partners and stakeholders to minimise duplication in line with BSSP principles. The programme has been designed in line with the emerging PRESWM product.</p> <p>There are three target audiences:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General business community – the aim is to increase the awareness and implementation by businesses to reduce their consumption of resources (energy, waste, water, raw materials) and to embed this activity into their practices in the long term. Examples of activities here include: support around Environmental Management Systems, Supply Chains, Sustainable Procurement, Sub-regional green business clubs. 2. Environmental goods and services sector, namely environmental consultants, equipment suppliers and the recycling industry. The programme will support these businesses to grow in order to meet the increased demands by businesses for more resource efficient goods and services. Examples of support here include an expanded recycling market development programme and the development of the Green Business Support Organisations Network. 3. Key national and regional partners and stakeholders. The programme will co-ordinate and integrate with partner activity while keeping the needs of the business customer at the heart of all activity. <p>The programme outputs are: job and business creation; business support; skills; increase in GVA. The RE improvements will be measured using the BREW basket of indicators and translated into an equivalent reduction in greenhouse gases.</p> <p>A key part of the programme will be a competency training programme with Business Link Yorkshire.</p>
<p>North East</p>	<p>Specialist Resource Efficiency Support</p> <p>The Midas Project ends in September 2008 it has been operating to the Business Link IDB model and uses the regional service provider register to broker in technical consultancy. Clients have been provided with an on-site visit in the order of 2-3hrs and provided with an in-depth diagnostic report covering the findings from the review. The reports contain recommendations for further action together with a list of proposed service providers to assist in undertaking the activity if the client chooses to do so. Midas helps the client to contract with the service provider and have been able to provide up to 60% subsidy towards the cost. Midas then provided an after-care service once the client had completed the work with the service provider. This could include additional support to undertake further recommended work or capital investment and assistance to access funding from other sources such as the Carbon Trust or ECAs etc. The Midas project has been a great success diagnosing over 920 companies and assisting over 300 companies to undertake further activity via the support of a service provider. It is estimated to have saved regional businesses £10m gross (2006 to date).</p> <p>In-line with BSSP it is intended to migrate this activity to BLNE</p> <p>Other projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Renew – This is an investment of £1.5m Single Programme plus a further £700k ERDF for energy and environment sector support. This project will help to develop and grow the energy and environment sector in the region focusing on low-carbon energy opportunities and sustainable waste-management (including recycling and reprocessing sectors). The project aims to assist over 100 businesses an lever over £20m of investment into the region. ii) Energy Resource Efficiency – this project is being incorporated into the regional

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

	<p>MAS offering. It will support manufacturing businesses to improve their energy efficiency through a mechanism of organisational change by the dissemination of best practice from other companies to the workforce.</p> <p>iii) Community Energy Solutions – is a project supported by BERR to help alleviate fuel poverty especially in off-gas situations. It works with communities and households to seek solutions to alternative renewable energy supplies or to provide other solutions for gas connection.</p> <p>iii) Community Renewable Energy (CoRE) – this project is using a social enterprise model to establish community based renewable businesses. CoRE assists communities to identify and establish the most appropriate solution for their community.</p>
<p>North West</p>	<p>Specialist Resource Efficiency Support</p> <p>Enworks - Environmental Business Support Project</p> <p>Remaining budget £4.997m</p> <p>A comprehensive regional environmental business support programme linked into the IDB service provided by Business Link NW to increase the productivity of businesses in the NW whilst reducing their impact on the environment. The project improves the market penetration, quality, consistency and impact of resource efficiency and waste minimisation support to business in the region by working hand-in-hand with businesses to maximise the potential for improved productivity, cost savings, raw materials savings, pollution reduction and increased sales. Outputs achieved to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + 5,000+ businesses advised. * 5,500+ jobs created and safeguarded. * 2,800+ Environmental policies and action plans developed. * 280+ EMSs initiated. * 1,700+ people trained receiving qualifications. * £27m+ sales increased & £54 million sales safeguarded. + 1.2 million m³ water saved. * 2.4 million tonnes materials not used. * 33,000 tonnes of waste diverted from landfill. * Substitutions: 2.4m kWh electricity, 25,000 litres diesel, 1,000 tonnes materials. <p>Other</p> <p>Envirolink Northwest - Centre of Excellence for Waste Technology Project</p> <p>Remaining Budget £1.5m</p> <p>This unique project brings together a partnership from both the public and private sector, to co-ordinate and support the waste technology and management industry in the Northwest, covering research, development and demonstration of waste treatment technologies in the Northwest utilising the strengths of national specialist and regional programmes to develop end-use technologies and markets for recovered commercial, industrial and domestic waste materials. Outputs to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Jobs created 77

Business Resource Efficiency Advice and the role of Business Link

	<p>+ Jobs safeguarded 231</p> <p>+ Businesses engaged in new collaborations with UK knowledge base 24</p> <p>+ Number of businesses involved in supply chain projects 437 Innovation</p> <p>+ support initiatives 21 Businesses assisted with resource efficiency</p> <p>+ 194</p> <p>Please also be aware that we have several other projects in development which are not yet contracted:</p> <p>A) Low Carbon Demonstration fund</p> <p>B) Low Carbon market Development Programme</p> <p>C) Reducing Priority Wastes in Key Sectors</p> <p>D) Innovative behaviour change</p> <p>E) Energy efficiency for large users</p>
London	<p>BRE Support Initiatives</p> <p>The London Development Agency is currently running programmes relating to resource efficiency which were originally supported by Defra's Business Resource Efficiency and Waste funding. These include:</p> <p>A Better Climate For Camden - a carbon-focussed initiative that works with both large and small enterprises to increase energy efficiency and thus reduce their emissions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towards a Greener Food and Drink Sector - a sector-based RE programme that is operating pan-London • Green Business - a South London based initiative that is working with businesses - predominantly SMEs - on industrial estates • Smartworks - a pan-London project that provides tailored RE support for SMEs <p>In terms of ERDF funding, we have just completed the first procurement round and will be funding a number of RE projects - they are still in contract negotiations so details are not yet available, but this could be provided on request, once the process is completed.</p> <p>In addition, the LDA is also funding the Green Procurement Code, which provides support for businesses of any size/sector relating to purchasing recycled content products, as well as the wider RE agenda. The LDA also funds the Green Organisations programme which is made up of two initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better Buildings Partnership - which brings together all the large commercial landlords in London, to support/work with them to improve the energy efficiency/reduce the carbon footprints of their buildings • Green500 - which is a pan-London initiative that works the with tenants of the above and other large businesses, providing carbon mentoring support to guide them through the actions they need to take to reduce their carbon emissions and other associated climate change impacts.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BSSP – Business Support Simplification Programme

BREW – Business Resource Efficiency and Waste

BRE – Business Resource Efficiency

PRESWM – Promoting Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Waste Management

IEMA –Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment

SFEDI –Government recognised UK Standards Setting Body for Business Support and Business Enterprise.

ERDF – European Regional Development Fund

KTN – Knowledge Transfer Network

KTP – Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

A definition of business resource efficiency

Business resource efficiency is about how organisations can effectively manage their use of resources such raw materials, energy, water, transport or even the workforce, in order to minimise waste and the amount of material used. It can help them comply with environmental legislation requirements. It can reduce costs, too. With growing supply chain and consumer pressure to reduce environmental impact, it is a key commercial consideration. Businesses that are resource efficient save money, increase their competitiveness, and reduce their impact on the environment.

(based on) Source: Business Link East Midlands