



SSN Conference 2008
Day 2 – Friday 14 November

Case Study Seminar - Involving Social Enterprise in Service Delivery: Adding Value
Presenter – Dr Sarah-Anne Muñoz

This workshop focused on the experience of **the BEST Procurement Programme** in the East Midlands, for which the **Sustainable Development Research Centre (SDRC)** acted as Research Partner. **Dr Muñoz from the SDRC** gave a presentation explaining the programme and setting out the main issues which face social enterprises in competing for public sector contracts.

The public sector partners in the programme sought to promote economic development benefits through the procurement process by supporting and strengthening the social enterprise sector.

The presentation indicated the actions taken to make the procurement process more accessible for social enterprises and to help build their capacity through training and guidance.

The programme aimed to generate ESE benefits (Economic, Social and Environmental), with sustainable development criteria being built into the procurement process.

Much more information on the BEST programme can be found on the SDRC website at <http://www.sustainableresearch.com/research/seru2.htm>

Participants in the workshop considered some of the issues involved through two practical exercises.

One involved the identification of different types of community benefits (economic, social and environmental, or a combination of these) from the introduction of a tricycle-based courier service. It revealed the extent to which the assessment of these benefits can be very much a matter of judgement, requiring that scoring of benefits should be backed up by an explanation from the assessors. It also illustrated the range of ESE benefits which can be identified for a relatively straightforward project.

The second exercise was based on the preparation of an outline specification document for putting a window cleaning service out to tender. **Participants were asked to consider how the delivery of ESE community benefits could be promoted** by including certain requirements and weighting these in relation to price and quality; establishing a process for monitoring the delivery of community benefits; and identifying which community benefits should be included in the evaluation criteria. The use of a Service Level Agreement was seen to play an essential part in these processes.

These exercises demonstrated the kind of careful thinking and procedure design work which is required if social enterprises and ESE benefits are to be promoted through local authority procurement procedures. **There is plenty of material and experience here which could be of benefit to practitioners in Scotland.** The workshop was also a welcome contribution in that it addressed the social and community dimension of sustainable development, which can so often be looked at primarily from an environmental perspective. It showed how economic, social and environmental components are intertwined in practice and should be considered together.

Andrew Llanwarne, IDEAction – Facilitator – 1 December 2008