



The Community Carbon Reduction Programme, CRed. Summary.

Background to CRed

The University of East Anglia's School (UEA) of Environmental Sciences continues to be regarded as one of the very best research and teaching institutions in the world for interdisciplinary environmental sciences. The School has the highest research assessment 5 ** grade denoting international excellence, and the highest "Excellent" grading for its teaching.

In May 2003 the School launched CRed - a community Carbon Reduction Programme based in the East of England and focusing on Norwich and Norfolk. It has put the area on the world map by taking real action to address the biggest environmental challenge confronting everyone on the planet - Climate Change. CRed is building a community of organisational and individual partners, now over 10,000 in number, who are planning and acting to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) to meet a target of 60% reduction by 2025. Although CRed's early focus was on Norwich and Norfolk, it has always been the Programme's intention to propagate the CRed partnership approach to carbon reduction, and to this end new CRed communities are now being established across the UK, as well as in the United States, China, Japan and Australia. This illustrates the powerful call to action that CRed is able to deliver.

The Government has set a target of 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. CRed believes that this timeframe is too long and is therefore taking a leading role in this mission and has built a community of partners who are committed to cutting their emissions of carbon dioxide to meet a target of 60% reduction by 2025.

CRed has established the following objectives:

- To provide a practical infrastructure to enable communities to generate their own carbon reduction programmes
- To promote best environmental practice and sustainable development within communities
- To form links with local communities on carbon emissions
- To identify and overcome the obstacles preventing the adoption of low carbon practices
- To provide opportunities for people of all ages to understand how the behaviour of society may impact on the future environment
- To provide case study material for research
- To disseminate exemplar case studies at local, national and international levels to inform politicians on carbon reduction policy
- To provide research opportunities to compare the effectiveness of the different approaches to delivering changes to the environment

The value CRed to Local Authorities and Strategic Partnerships

Whether acting on their own or through Local Strategic Partnerships the majority of UK local authorities are now adopting a leadership role and establishing programmes and actions to tackle climate change. Typically these programmes require goals to be set and measurable targets to be stated and achieved. Establishing practical actions that are achievable, measurable and reportable for an issue as broad and complex as climate change is a significant challenge which can demand substantial resources. In response to this challenge the CRed System has been designed specifically to enable the initiation, recording and monitoring of practical actions with the



minimum of administrative support. This reduces the risks associated with long term employment of staff dedicated to the CRed Operation. Experience shows that for a typical CRed Operation in a local authority setting, staff time is required for updating the initial contacts database; inputting paper pledges to the system; responding to calls about local events and carbon reduction actions; and developing and implementing an events/activities/meetings plan. As much of this activity is usually part of ongoing existing activities, additional staff time required tends to be relatively low, perhaps in the order of one day per week.

Existing UK CRed Operations

- Suffolk
- Essex
- North Norfolk
- Chester
- Birmingham Cut Your CO2
- Better Climate for Camden

The experience gained from these operations has been used to ensure that the System is flexible and comprehensive.

These operations have enabled CRed to develop a series of carbon reduction pathways for individuals, householders, business and a range of other organisations. This comprehensive set of tools for engaging the broadest possible audience makes the CRed System the most complete device available to organisation looking to run a carbon reduction programme.

How CRed Works

CRed has three distinct but integrated operational elements.

- Firstly CRed raises awareness of the importance of tackling climate change and helps participants to understand the profile of their own CO2 emissions. Through information disseminated at events, the media and via its website, CRed is able to illustrate the need for action.
- Secondly, once motivated to act, participants are encouraged to make a CRed pledge. The initial pledge is the first step on the journey to their lower carbon lifestyle. The CRed Pledge System records the action. Through time participants are encouraged to make additional pledges which, when combined, will eventually reach the 60% reduction that forms the basis of the CRed mission. To enable this outcome a series of carbon reduction pathways, which cover a broad range of applications of energy use (e.g. lighting, heating, appliances, transport etc), have been developed.
- Thirdly, each pledge is monitored and evaluated. For standard pledges the calculations are automated using reasonable assumptions about carbon savings. For larger and bespoke pledges the CRed Carbon Monitor provides a 'case-study' reporting framework, which allows others to see the results of larger scale activities and projects.

Learning from successful actions can then be used to stimulate greater participation. Learning from actions that are more difficult to achieve stimulates feedback to policy makers. This enables policy makers to evolve policy and facilitate change.

Setting up a CRed Operation

We believe that the key to a successful CRed operation is to reduce the resource spent on administration so enabling the maximum amount of resource to be allocated to stimulating actions on climate change.



The CRed System

The CRed System is a sophisticated online resource designed to support the CRed Community in terms of maintaining a list of its members, their interests, carbon saving goals, and their interactions and relationships.

Externally the system provides the CRed community with information, advice and access to a suite of online tools to help them in their many carbon saving efforts via the central website. CRed has developed a range of carbon auditing tools for use by business, households, schools and other organisations. Developing an understanding of the emissions profile for each participant is an important step in formulating an action plan.

Internally the system enables those operating a particular CRed to efficiently maintain communication with the wider community, and to collect and manage the wealth of data generated by the many CRed initiatives.

The internal system is browser based and accessed securely via the internet. It is hosted and maintained on dedicated CRed web-servers and therefore requires no technical or resource input from regional CRed teams.

Each individual CRed operation is provided with a dedicated administrative homepage and an unlimited number of individual team user accounts. This homepage acts as a portal to a bespoke programme management tool. The tool is designed specifically to allow low carbon community projects to be administered with minimal staff time and associated costs. This is achieved through a high degree of automation. An intuitive interface allows non-technical users to manage all elements of their CRed system – from data management through to performance reporting. The system fulfils this by providing conventional content and contact management facilities with specialised carbon monitoring and reporting. This tailored system is designed specifically for CRed communities at both individual action and project levels. The specific elements of the internal system are described below:

Public Website Content Management: This is the principle portal for information dissemination and access to the CRed tools, pledge system, news. Each regional CRed is provided with a suite of pages centred around a regional homepage, accessed via a prominent link on the central CRed site. These pages include a regional Matrix of Participation, regional Carbon monitor, regional pledge and sign-up and news with additional pages being provided upon request. The internal system provides administrators with direct control over all content within these pages.

Pledge Management: The system provides reporting and saving calculation of all standard pledges made and the facility for administrators to generate pledge certificates.

Contacts Database: The system holds a central list of all those associated with the regional community. The contacts database includes either a domestic or commercial profile for each entry, which is utilised and expanded upon as the online tools and advice systems are used. The system allows administrators to manage this database and utilise it for mail merging.

Matrix of Participation: A dynamic map and database of the relationships between CRed and its commercial partners, the matrix can be browsed from the public site and is fully maintainable through the administration system.

Carbon Monitor: A reporting and information dissemination system for carbon saving initiatives. Carbon monitor allows projects and initiatives to be described in terms of their aims, design, mythology, results and lessons learned. Information and savings are then reported dynamically via the public website.

Contact Management: The system provides the facility to track communication between CRed and its partners. This includes the ability to establish multiple threads of communication



regarding different initiatives with single organisations. The contact management system is designed to optimise efficiency and staff time when dealing with the wider CRed community.

HTML Email Announcements: The system provides administrators with the facility to create and send HTML news or promotional emails to their CRed community. These emails are generated with the appropriate logos and branding specific to the regional CRed community. The email system is highly flexible, allowing administrators to easily send emails to a filtered sub-set of the main community – for example to all domestic members or all transport businesses that are members of the CRed community.

Central Team Diary: The system provides administrators with a central diary to help co-ordinate team activities.

Design & Print: It is important that, if possible, each CRed Operation has a local feeling to it. It is possible to use standard CRed materials if resources do not allow for bespoke design and print to be developed. The CRed brand must be retained within bespoke designs and CRed HQ will need to approve designs produced by local CRed Operations. However, CRed can be used in conjunction with other brands where this is considered as more productive in terms of reaching local audiences. Indeed, it may be that the CRed Brand is used in support of a more locally recognised brand.

Steering Group: Establishing a team that will drive forward the CRed Operation is important. We all have responsibility for tackling the challenge of climate change so ideally the Steering Group should reflect a broad mix of participants. CRed HQ can advise on this if necessary.

Press, PR and Marketing: Raising awareness about the importance of taking action, the kinds of actions that can be achieved and stimulating people to act is paramount to a successful CRed Operation. Planning communication and marketing is an important feature of maximising the impact of limited resources. CRed HQ is able to offer advice and support.

Working with businesses and other organisations

Importantly, and unlike other systems, the CRed System enables the user to engage with all sections of the community. Carbon reduction pathways have been developed for both the domestic and business communities. This is important to the CRed partnership ethos, which seeks to involve the broadest possible spectrum of energy users. This approach also enables CRed to introduce a multi-national approach to carbon reduction, as working with multi-national companies, such as HSBC and the Norwich Union, allows CRed to influence business operations worldwide.

Impact Evaluation: The CRed System incorporates automated evaluation of CO₂ reductions from specific carbon reduction actions. Where pledges are non-standard evaluation is more complex and needs to be conducted on a case by case basis. The automated system is included in the Carbon Monitor (see above). However, we strongly advise that a more robust evaluation is performed annually to establish a more precise reality of the impact. This evaluation uses specifically designed questionnaires and produces invaluable information including the rate of pledge achievements; barriers to achieving desired goals; and the extent to which additional carbon reduction activities have been inspired.