

From a China Clay Pit to world-famous visitor attraction and educational centre

2001 Countries covered: United Kingdom

Summary:

The Eden Project is an innovative and sustainable solution in mine closure design. The inspiring garden at the Eden Project is at the cutting edge of sustainable horticulture. One of the largest indoor rainforests that has been developed in the world has been achieved with an integrated, multidisciplinary approach with an awareness of the need to plan for the social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts.



Description:

China clay was a strategic mineral of national importance in Cornwall (UK). Its exploitation took place for over 160 years. In 1994, the china clay pit was nearing the end of its economic life. At that point, Tim Smit came up with the idea of building the world's largest greenhouse. From this seed a stunning environmental centre that is attracting millions of visitors from around the world has grown. The Eden Project is a fascinating outcome of post-mining regeneration, which is considered as one of the UK's Landmark Millennium Projects. This project is innovative because the restoration does not follow the conventional way, such as simple tree planting. Instead the china clay pit has turned to a world-famous visitor attraction and educational charity. The Eden Project is an innovative project that demonstrates how the impacts of mining can be converted from liability to opportunity and benefit for communities. The start of the project was in 1996 and the integration was done in 2001. Each Eden Project focuses on a unique aspect that explores humanity and ecology. Within 16 years of operation, the Eden has 18 million visitors, 400 full time staff and inspired an economic renaissance by contributing more than 1.7 billion Euro to the local economy. Future plans for Eden are for it to become a world-leading educational charity and in that way play a key role in bringing about positive social and environmental change.

Good practice areas:

Economic sustainability

In conventional mine closure practices, there are no new economic activities. In the Eden project, the economic impact is impressive. New jobs have been developed and important growth of the local economy has been noticed after the establishment of the educational center.

Environmental sustainability

In about 50 hectares of once-degraded industrial land, over a million plants, with 6,000 different plant species, are growing.

Social responsibility

The Eden Project is an educational charity and tourist attraction. Its aim is to promote public education and research in flora and fauna and other aspects of the natural world. The large amount of tourism that is created by the Eden Project has huge positive effects on the local surrounding area.

Organisations involved:

The Eden project is an educational charity. Eden Project Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Eden Trust, a company limited by guarantee and a UK Registered Charity (number 1093070).

Innovation category:

Marketing

Impact on the mining value chain

- MINE CLOSURE / WASTE management (incl. Permitting)

Linked policies

Cornwall Local Plan

Transferability:

All stages of the implementation of the project are transparent. Furthermore it can be easily transferred to other similar activities.

Innovation drivers and barriers

Drivers:

Economic

Boosting of local economy through tourism: A higher quality of life and an overall increase in the standard of living

Other

Socio-cultural drivers: Environmental Transformation of a disused Cornish claypit into a temperature-controlled environment for an entire rainforest, as well as hundreds of other plants., educational activities, promotion of volunteering

Barriers:

Economic

High demand for infrastructure funds

Other

The moon landscape topography and the nature of the ground

Impact Area

Area:

Environment, Ecosystem services and quality of natural resources

Impact on listed area:

+: Restoration of an old mine in the end of its useful life (e.g massive biomes, stunning plants)

Area:

Human/Social, Quality of life and standards of living

Impact on listed area:

+: Exhibitions, summer concerts, year-round family events etc.

Area:

Human/Social, Education and skills

Impact on listed area:

+: Educational activities: learning about plants, gardening tips, community workshops, etc.

Area:

Economic, Employment

Impact on listed area:

+:full-time staff, seasonal staff, volunteering, internships

Area:

Economic, Financial flows and profitability

Impact on listed area:

+: The increase of tourism supports the local economy