

INTO SOMERSET CASE STUDY – *Environmental Technologies*

Ecos

Award-winning, Langport-based Ecos (Ecos Trust, the charitable arm and Ecos Homes, a subsidiary of Ecos Trust) promotes sustainable design and construction in the South West's building industry. Its Somerset location has helped it grow into a nationally recognised small business.

Based in a sustainably self-converted warehouse at Great Bow Wharf - which also serves as a spacious working environment and offices for other businesses, and conference and meeting facilities for the local community - the company aims to support local suppliers within the mainstream building industry.



Given its location in a predominantly rural county, the focus is on designing sustainable developments for rural communities, rather than urban populations. Charles Couzens, Director of Ecos Trust, says, "Our Somerset base provides us with an opportunity for regional networking and knowledge transfer without the need to travel too far, enabling us to effectively service customers throughout the South West."

The benefits of Somerset's internet access and communication links have played a significant role in the business successfully marketing its events programme and seminar and conference series, proving its rural location is not a barrier.

Working closely with other South West organisations, Ecos offers a comprehensive self-build and design advice service, for new builds and renovations. Add-on services include staging the annual Homes for Good sustainable homes and gardens trade and consumer exhibition, which has helped put the region on the map as a hub of green technology.

Lucy Duman, Director of Ecos Homes, says, "As a small business in Somerset we benefit from County Council and District Council support with councillors and planners attending our events. Nearly all of our business is focused in the South West, and Somerset offers the perfect location. With two rail lines; a bus link to London; close proximity to the main road and motorway arteries; and Bristol, Exeter, Swindon, Bath and Cardiff easily accessible by car or public transport. It's the best of both worlds, a feeling of being off the beaten track, but not too far off!" Staff do not have to contend with busy rush hour traffic every day and lifestyle benefits include easy access to beautiful beaches, a strong community based infrastructure, a choice of excellent schools and a great quality of life.

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