

Network production – making the local mainstream

Creating networks of local producers can lead to 80-90% cuts in carbon emissions, by bringing local renewable and waste resources into the mainstream. BioRegional invented and delivered three examples of this model, which could be easily replicated by business and the public sector.



Three key benefits

Making local production and distribution viable can:

1. reduce transport emissions by 80-90%
2. bring local renewable and waste resources into sustainable management
3. boost local employment and enterprise.

BioRegional Homegrown

BioRegional established a network of 25 small, local charcoal and firewood producers, enabling them to act as a single supplier – exactly what the major retailers needed.

The BioRegional Charcoal Company (BRCC) organises bag design, printing, bar codes and all contact with retailers including B&Q, Sainsbury's and Tesco. Our products move an average of 35 miles from producer to store.

A study by Imperial College showed that transport emissions are reduced by 85% compared to imported charcoal. Sustainable management of the coppiced woodland, certified by the FSC, has also made these habitats more resilient to climate change. BRCC set-up a certified FSC “chain of custody” to allow small producers to certify their products at a more affordable cost.

Re-IY Centres

BioRegional is setting up a network of “Re-IY centres” that will bring re-use of waste construction materials into the DIY retail mainstream.

We have worked to enable the reuse of waste building materials in BedZED, the London 2012 Olympics and many smaller client projects. But sending construction waste to landfill remains business as usual; a shocking 13% of construction materials never get used and end up in landfill.

Re-IY Centres will collect unwanted building materials from construction sites and sell them to the general public and the small trade market. The network enables large contractors to save money by diverting from landfill, meet Site Waste Management Plan legislation and will improve their Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM scores. Individual centres can link up large-scale contractors with small-scale customers, and access funds and business support, through membership of the network.



TreeStations

BioRegional set-up the UK's first TreeStation in Croydon to turn local wood waste into a low carbon fuel, whilst improving the management of the borough's trees and woodlands.

TreeStations act as a focal point for local forestry/tree managers, taking waste such as tree surgery arisings and poor quality logs that would normally go to landfill. They operate at a scale large enough to make the use of this local timber commercially viable, and enable more use of local resources to reduce transport emissions.

The Croydon TreeStation diverts up to 10,000 tonnes per year from landfill, and has brought all of Croydon's trees under FSC-certified sustainable management.



Removing barriers with network production

Network production **removes three barriers** for small suppliers of local renewable and waste resources:

- access to large-scale markets that make their products financially viable,
- certification schemes that require money and expertise,
- business support and sustainability expertise.

The benefits can also work the other way, as with Re-IY Centres, which join up large-scale construction and demolition contractors with the small scale consumer and trade market.



Photo courtesy Madison ReStore,
Madison, Wisconsin, USA

Bioregionalism in action

These projects are part of our vision for a bioregional economy, where the use of local waste and renewable resources through nationally coordinated networks helps us live within our fair share of the earth's resources – what we call one planet living.