



Arcus Consulting: Case Study

Innovation Centre for Defra

Project Objectives:

Defra's vision for the Innovation Centre was to create an environment that would foster innovation and creativity, providing a resource where ideas could be captured, explored and developed into firm project proposals and innovative ways of working.

The physical build was required to provide high quality open plan office space, dedicated demonstration and meeting room facilities, that would also encompass a temporary working place for visiting project teams.



“The Innovation Centre has achieved all that the project team set out to achieve, Defra's high expectations were transformed into all round satisfaction from the day the Innovation Centre came into use.”

Karen Carr, Innovation Centre Manager, Defra



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Arcus Solutions:

Arcus provided a turnkey solution for the client that included all furniture, fixtures, fittings and consumables.

The final design layout and diverse features of the rooms have provided a versatile workspace that is accessible to all. To cater for the fact that the Innovation Centre is a temporary workplace, the use of movable walls, folding desks, extensive audio visual and IT installations allows each room/space to be quickly reconfigured by the project teams to suit their specific needs.

Sustainable thinking extended to decisions made in respect of new materials used. Such materials included carpet tiles manufactured using 86% recycled pile and natural rubber backing, acoustic insulation manufactured from sheep's wool and flooring manufactured from both reclaimed timber and natural linoleum. Wall finishes comprised of organic paint in some areas and others were covered with a natural hessian. All new timber used in the construction process and in the manufacture of the furniture was certified by Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or similar government approved sustainability schemes.

Delivering Value:

Throughout the construction programme the remaining six floors of the building were fully occupied. As a consequence of the excellent partnering approach by the team the project achieved practical completion without a single instance of disruption to the other users of the building.

In terms of procurement, a single stage design and build contract provided a timely start on site, so as to remain within the demanding time constraints. The development of both detailed and robust Employer's Requirements, ensured that compromise on quality and sustainability did not feature at any point in the project.

The appointment of furniture suppliers was made following a detailed assessment process. Their selection was based on the environmental credentials of each supplier, sustainability of their products, fitness for purpose of proposed furniture solutions and value for money. The selection of furniture was a process that commenced in the early design stages, as making the correct decisions was fundamental to creating the desired environment.

The overall outcome has been the creation of an environment which meets the needs of its users whilst maintaining Defra's sustainability credentials. By incorporating the re-use of existing materials in design proposals, savings of £90,000 were realised on the overall costings of the project.

“Our sustainable thinking extended to decisions made in respect of new materials used such as acoustic insulation manufactured from sheeps' wool.”



defra

Department for Environment
Food and Rural Affairs

Overview:

Client: Defra

Project: Innovation Centre, Reading

Disciplines: Multidiscipline

Value: £1.3m



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