

Torbay i-Tree Eco project (2010)



Background

The UK pilot of i-Tree Eco analysis of urban forests took place in Torbay in 2011, led by Treeconomics and Torbay Council. Key aims for the project included raising awareness of the value of the urban forest, a need for more strategic and pro-active management of urban trees, and a desire to test the applicability of the US-developed i-Tree Eco models within the UK.

Outputs

The full report was produced by Treeconomics. It summarised data on the number and health of trees in Torbay's urban forest and assessed the quantity and monetary value of air purification, carbon storage and carbon sequestration ecosystem services (Rogers et al., 2011a). The results and review of the use of i-Tree Eco was presented nationally and internationally (e.g. Rogers et al., 2011b).

Impacts

- **Successful pilot and exemplar of ecosystem service valuation:**
 - Demonstrated the usability and value in i-Tree Eco assessments, leading to other projects gaining support and funding e.g. Edinburgh, London[†].
 - Widely referenced and used as a case study within UK government policy and non-government guidance documents, e.g. UK's Natural Environment Audit (Bateman et al., 2014); Independent Panel on Forestry (2012); Woodland Trust (2015); LI and TCPA (2012).
 - Torbay's results were used in a scientific paper demonstrating the cost-benefit value of four tree species (Sunderland et al., 2012).
- **Informed local tree policies:**
 - Referenced within Torbay's Tree and Woodland Framework (Torbay Council, 2013), including specific recommendations around preference for large stature species, pro-active tree management, improving the tree database and increasing public engagement with trees.
 - Results cited within Devon's Ash Dieback Action Plan to demonstrate the risk and potential loss of ecosystem service value from ash trees using Torbay's results (Wolton, 2016).

- **Helped to raise profile of urban forest benefits nationally:**
 - Torbay's i-Tree Eco project and its £-value for trees was widely reported in UK media.
 - Helped raise profile of urban forests to policy-makers where previously it fell within a gap of responsibility[†].
 - Improved policy-maker's understanding of services and benefits of urban trees and the techniques behind evaluation, which has helped them brief high-level officials on this topic[†].
- **Catalysed further interest in and investment into Torbay's trees:**
 - i-Tree Eco evidence used by tree officer to secure a budgetary increase of £25,000 in two separate years[†].
 - Torbay's i-Tree Eco findings used to justify and secure funding for an i-Tree Eco Tree trail, a partnership between Treeconomics and the NHS tying health with environmental engagement[†].

References

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