

Case Study 9: The CIS Solar Tower Project

UK

Summary

The CIS Solar Tower project is a renewable energy initiative established by the Co-operative Financial Service (CFS) in Britain in 2004. The project aimed to resolve the damaged building structure, which had existed six months after the building was built in 1962. In cooperation with the organisation's ethos and business strategy, it had decided to adopt the solar photovoltaic panels to resolve the problematic issue.

Initially the main target for the initiative was the building as a whole. As a grade listed building, there were concerns over the new development. Guidelines and restrictions were made to ensure the preservation of historical feature and value of the building. The emblematic and symbolic significance of the building and the issue of climate change have both been seen as priorities for the participating organisations and stakeholders.

The project's cost was approximately £5.5 million, with significant financial support from national government and public agencies. The media frequently published the claim that the initiative was the largest solar tower in Europe. The project has received considerable and widespread praise and support for adopting the renewable energy system. But despite this, the environmental contribution generated from the solar technology has been uncertain.



Lessons learned

1. Clear details about design of the programme, development process and outcomes should be published by the project management.
2. Although the delivery of the project was considered successful, there has been much scepticism about the reality of its environmental and energy efficiency contribution.
3. Performance and environmental outcomes of the solar system can only be assessed over a longer-term timeframe