

A small world

With networking help from UK Trade & Investment, social enterprise BioRegional has started a collaboration with Mexican refrigeration giant Imbera



Fast facts

Company:	BioRegional
Industry:	Environmental Services
Target Market:	Mexico
UKTI Service:	Networking
www.bioregional.com	

If everyone on Earth consumed resources and generated as much waste as the average Briton, we would need the equivalent of three planets to support this lifestyle. It was with this statistic in mind that social entrepreneurs Pooran Desai and Sue Riddlestone set up charity BioRegional Development Group, in 1994. The pair knew that our excessive consumption of resources was the main factor behind today's environmental problems, and set out to do what it could to reverse this trend.

BioRegional has three main initiatives, One Planet Communities, One Planet Companies and One Planet Regions, which many developers and governments worldwide have adopted. The company has 34 employees, mainly in the UK, and in 2011 had a turnover of more than £2.2 million, with 70 per cent of its business being domestic.

Since 1994, BioRegional has become one of the UK's best-known sustainability organisations. The company has an impressive track record of successful projects both nationally and internationally, winning 22 UK awards and six international awards for outstanding practice. The various initiatives give developers a framework of sustainable practices based on ten guiding principles, including zero waste and fair trade, with which to plan building projects. BioRegional has worked with the BedZED community in London, California's Mountain Village and Masdar in the United Arab Emirates. The company also has a presence in Australia, South Africa, Portugal, Mexico, and China.

"The difference between us and our competitors is that we don't mind getting our hands dirty," says Daniel Viliesid, BioRegional's Mexico Representative. "We don't just give theoretical advice, we get actively involved in projects together

with our clients. We get closely involved with our projects, and learn a lot from them, especially when things don't go quite to plan."

Hot off the press

BioRegional started working internationally in 2001 and has been active in Mexico since 2010. The country's rapidly-growing economy and the fact that it has no mandatory carbon-reduction targets made it an attractive market for the company's programmes for clients working on voluntary emissions reductions and reducing costs. In April 2011, BioRegional approached a local commercial cooler manufacturer, Imbera, to offer help with its sustainable initiatives. Imbera had ambitious environmental goals and had already improved its coolers' efficiency by 85 per cent since 2001, but needed support to consolidate its overall strategy and develop a comprehensive sustainability message.

BioRegional

solutions for sustainability



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UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) had already helped BioRegional move into Mexico in 2010 by inviting the company to the British Construction Industry commercial mission in September 2010 and the Business for the Environment (B4E) conference in October 2010. UKTI also introduced it to local banks and developers and helped to raise the company’s profile by securing press coverage in a major Mexican newspaper. This publicity helped BioRegional assure Imbera that it was an established, trustworthy and reputable company. Imbera signed up to BioRegional’s One Planet Company initiative in July 2011, becoming the first company in the Americas, as well as the first refrigeration company in the world, to do so.

“We’re a British company that was new to Mexico,” says Daniel. “Sharing press coverage to Imbera’s senior management team was really helpful as they could see that we’re well-regarded at home and elsewhere. Thanks to UKTI getting us into the Mexican media, we could also tell Imbera about the mission and conference we’d taken part in.”

Cool runnings

BioRegional’s collaboration with Imbera

The UK and Mexico

Mexico is the UK’s second largest trading partner in Latin America and there has never been a better time to consider Mexico as a place to do business. Mexico regularly ranks in the top three emerging markets in which to do business, and is the fourteenth largest economy in the world.

Over the past decade, the country has seen economic growth and stable

is going well, as the two companies work towards reducing Imbera’s daily energy demands and overall ecological footprint. The cooling company expects to get at least 85 per cent of its energy from wind farms by the end of 2013 and is already ahead of the schedule that should see its buildings being carbon-neutral by 2025. BioRegional and Imbera will be paying special attention to the issue of waste management in the coming months.

The next two years will see BioRegional strengthening its relationship with Imbera, extending the One Planet programme to Imbera’s neighbouring branches in Colombia and Brazil. The company currently has an agent in Brazil, who is running workshops to demonstrate to other local businesses the benefits of sustainable practice.

“Companies should make the most of the UKTI experts,” says Daniel. “They understand both the UK and the target market, and can really bring these two worlds together. It would be foolhardy to go to a country without asking for help, especially when it comes to meeting the right people to help further your business. The UKTI’s service is there, so use it to the full rather than making expensive mistakes.”

inflation. With its impressive network of Free Trade Agreements (including North America and the EU) and its strategic location in-between the US and Latin America, Mexico has the potential to act as a springboard into the region as well as being an attractive proposition in its own right.

For further information about business opportunities in Mexico, please go to www.ukti.gov.uk/mexico

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