

# Creating a world-class research centre

Environment and Sustainability Institute

[www.exeter.ac.uk/esi](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/esi)



An outstanding building and facilities



Interdisciplinary research



A living laboratory



Working with businesses

Enhancing lives by improving people's  
relationships with the environment.

Environment and Sustainability Institute

Contact:  
[esienquiries@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:esienquiries@exeter.ac.uk)  
+44 (0) 1326 255795

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Humanity has changed our planet more rapidly and extensively in the last 50 years than in any other period. Unprecedented gains in human wellbeing and development have come at the cost of the ecosystems on which we rely. Reversing ecosystem degradation whilst meeting increasing demands for the benefits they provide requires significant changes in our relations with the environment.

The University of Exeter's Environment and Sustainability Institute (ESI) is leading cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research into solutions to problems of environmental change; in so doing we are enhancing people's lives by improving their relationships with the environment.

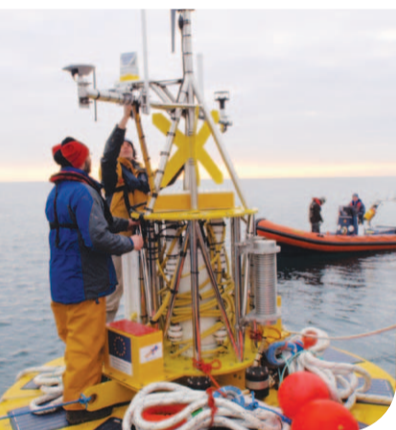


## An outstanding building and facilities

Based on the University's Cornwall Campus, the research centre has been designed to the highest standards of environmental performance from design through construction to occupation. Realising these aspirations is a considerable challenge, however the ESI is a powerful catalyst for change. During construction the Leadbitter Group worked hard to minimise waste from the site. By December 2011 (eight months after work began), all construction waste had been recycled or reused. This one example demonstrates the value of targeting a classification of BREEAM\* 'outstanding' for the building.

The ESI combines cutting-edge research facilities with interactive work areas and social space for over 100 academics, researchers and professional staff.

\* BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) is the leading and most widely used environmental assessment method for buildings. 'Outstanding' is the highest classification.



## Interdisciplinary research

Interdisciplinary research in the ESI is founded on the development of close and mutually beneficial working relationships between academics, businesses, organisations and research partners. We believe that collaborating with experts from a range of disciplines, industries and sections of society helps find creative solutions to complex problems of environmental change. In addition to this expertise, the ESI benefits from the wealth of related research projects underway across the University of Exeter at any time.

Research at the ESI spans three interrelated themes: clean technologies, natural environment, and social science and sustainability.

## Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as a living laboratory

Cornwall is the perfect location for the ESI, providing easy and convenient access to a diverse range of marine and terrestrial habitats, a wealth of natural resources, and creative and resilient communities. To name but a few, the county's resources include a coastline of almost 300 miles, unique ecological and social landscapes, a natural harbour at Falmouth reputed to be the third largest in the world, annual sunshine hours that are amongst the longest in the UK and a legacy of marine, earth and environmental technologies. Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly offer an exceptional opportunity for the study of ecosystem services.



## Working with businesses

The ESI is working with businesses in Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly and beyond to translate research and expertise into innovative business practices, products and services.

A team of specialist Knowledge Exchange Managers is facilitating knowledge networks and research clusters. Incorporating academics, researchers, business partners and non-profit organisations, each group is exploring solutions to complex problems of environmental change. Together they are addressing a variety of environmental challenges and business opportunities including clean technologies, conservation, ecosystem goods and services, and behaviour change.

## An inspirational project

The University's success in Cornwall, the development of the campus at Tremough and our wider engagement across the county inspired the establishment of the ESI. The research centre was commissioned by the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) in November 2008 and a Commissioning Panel was set up the following year in September 2009.

An investment in the ESI of £30 million was confirmed in July 2010. It included £22.9 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Convergence Programme, £6.6 million from the SWRDA and significant support from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

For further information about the ESI, please visit [www.exeter.ac.uk/esi](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/esi)

Photography: Apex, Matt Berry (courtesy of Butterfly Conservation), Matt Jessop, Alistair R MacNichol, Russell Pike (courtesy of Cornwall AONB) and Nick Southall.