



World Business Council for
Sustainable Development

Case Study

2008

DuPont Funding Biodiversity

The business case

In 1990 DuPont started a greenfield project in Spain's Tamón Valley, an area with low biological diversity dominated by fields and eucalyptus plantations. The company built an industrial complex that manufactures fibers and crop protection products and hosts a financial center, procurement services and other functions for the site as a whole and its 1,200 employees. The greenfield project includes habitat restoration, visual and noise impact reduction through biodiversity, cultural element preservation and restoration and livestock grazing, all of which enhance the company's license to operate and save the company money.

Intensive agriculture had turned the 800-acre Tamón Valley in Asturias, Spain into an area with low biological diversity dominated by two huge monocultures: fields and eucalyptus plantations.

In 1990 DuPont started a greenfield industrial site in the valley, the triangle formed by the cities of Oviedo, Gijón and Avilés, crossed by the Alvares River and its tributary, La Fontanina, dedicating it to the conservation of the natural habitat, including local flora and fauna. A greenfield is a piece of undeveloped land, either used for agriculture or just left to nature.

The Asturias complex's industrial activities include the manufacture of fibers and crop protection products, and one more facility for chemical ingredients is being built and is expected to be producing at commercial scale by the end of 2009. The site also hosts a financial center that handles mainly European transactions, a team providing procurement services, and support groups that provide external relations, engineering, human resources, safety, health and environmental services covering the whole site. Run by strategic partners, the site hosts the Convergys European Human Resource Centre and the CSC IT Service Centre.

Approximately 1,200 people work at the facility, including both employees and contractors.

Founded in 1802, DuPont puts science to work by creating sustainable solutions essential to a better, safer, healthier life for people everywhere. Operating in more than 70 countries, DuPont offers a wide range of innovative products and services for markets including agriculture, nutrition, electronics, communications, safety and protection, home and construction, transportation and apparel. With revenues in 2007 of US\$ 29.4 billion, the company has 60,000 employees worldwide and more than 40



Site in 2007



research and development and customer service labs in the United States, and more than 35 labs in 11 other countries.

Targets

Working with community groups and the local university, DuPont launched a long-term program aimed at increasing biodiversity and favoring those species most in need of protection. In addition, there were cultural elements worth preserving as tokens of local heritage that the community values.



Recovered peat bogs

Activities

Four programs were designed to meet those goals, namely:

1. Habitat restoration program

Now complete, the habitat restoration program consisted of planting over 160,000 trees and shrubs of 52 native varieties, recreating lost habitats including: monospecific woodland, mixed woodland, wetlands, peat bogs, riparian vegetation, etc.

Chief among the restored habitats is La Furta wetland, whose 14 acres of lake and marsh are a refuge for 1,000 water birds, including nationwide rarities - a must for local bird watchers. The most recent restored habitat was a peat bog. Peat bogs have traditionally been altered by man for centuries and are unique and protected ecosystems consisting of special plant and animal communities. DuPont started an environmental education program at La Furta with an expert hosting visitors twice a week and has now handed the program over to Corvera Council, who handles an average of 3,000 visitors a year.

The new habitats have attracted a large amount of wildlife (birds, water fowl, wild boar, otter, etc.). In fact, in addition to building chemical plants and several service centers while creating wealth and employment in the area, the land managed by DuPont is richer in wildlife than it was 20 years ago.

2. Visual & noise impact minimization

DuPont used the excavation soil to build new or raise actual hills to minimize both visual and noise impact on the surrounding community. Some planting was done to ensure a more environmentally integrated landscape.

This is evergreen program has reduced by 90% the potential visual impact of the facilities on local communities and roads. In addition, DuPont has saved US\$ 500,000 by simply relocating, not removing, about 100,000 cubic meters of excavation soil.

3. Preservation and restoration of cultural elements

Prior to DuPont's presence at the Valley, the local community's main activity was agriculture. The associated local infrastructure, like barns, cottages, etc., had both cultural and emotional value for the community. DuPont decided to preserve and restore those elements to demonstrate its respect for the local heritage.

Under this program, ancient and typical barns, cottages, fountains, a grist mill and a lime kiln were restored and are part of a new industrial landscape. A feature of this program that is much appreciated by the community and for which DuPont has been a pioneer is

the use of centuries old place names to designate the different parts of this state-of-the-art site.

4. Maintenance of fields by grazing livestock

DuPont has a huge green site and maintenance includes maintains all its fields, cutting the grasses as appropriate. The company decided to do it by introducing grazing livestock (cattle, horses, sheep and donkeys). The breeds selected are all indigenous to the area and in need of protection. They are also perfectly adapted to local climate and therefore, less expensive in upkeep.



La Furta wetland

Using grazing livestock for field and surrounding area upkeep reduces field maintenance costs. This program, which includes the sale of surplus stock, serves the maintenance needs of 100 acres of land surrounding the production units.

Results

DuPont's Asturias greenfield program has:

- Increased local biodiversity
- Saved the company money
- Is a source of community interest and education
- Been designed and implemented in cooperation with local partners (NGOs, the local council, the local university, local associations, etc.)
- Provides the basis for research on new techniques and models.

About the WBCSD

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) brings together some 200 international companies in a shared commitment to sustainable development through economic growth, ecological balance and social progress. Our members are drawn from more than 30 countries and 20 major industrial sectors. We also benefit from a global network of around 60 national and regional business councils and partner organizations.

Our **mission** is to provide business leadership as a catalyst for change toward sustainable development, and to support the business license to operate, innovate and grow in a world increasingly shaped by sustainable development issues.

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