
South West
Observatory



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South West Observatory

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Structure

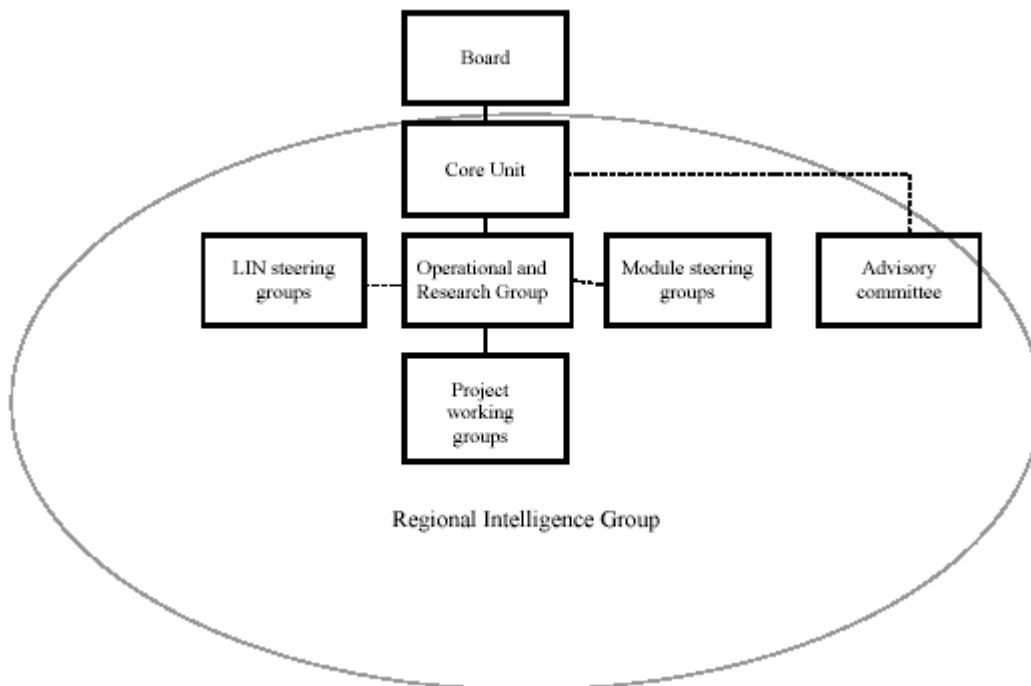
The South West Observatory has a distinctive modular structure.

<i>Module</i>	<i>Principal/Sole Funders</i>
Core Unit	SW Regional Development Agency, SW Regional Assembly
<i>Thematic Modules:</i>	
Public Health Observatory	Department of Health
Environment Module	Environment Agency SW
Skills and Learning Intelligence Module (SLIM)	SW Regional Development Agency/European Social Fund
Regional Planning Module	SW Regional Assembly
Business and Economy Module	SW Regional Development Agency

<i>Local Intelligence Networks</i>	<i>Area</i>
Gloucestershire Local Intelligence Network	Gloucestershire
Wiltshire and Swindon Intelligence Network	Wiltshire and Swindon
Intelligence West	Former Avon area
Somerset Intelligence Network	Somerset
e-base	Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole
In Devon	Devon, including Plymouth and Torbay
Local Intelligence Network Cornwall	Cornwall

Organisational chart

The lines in the diagram represent reporting, or contributing personnel. The South West Observatory has a modular structure, hence the complexity of the diagram.



Local Intelligence Networks are made up of researchers in Local Authorities, Local Learning and Skills Councils, Health Authorities and others in each of the region's seven former county areas (1974 local government reorganization). They undertake research to support local policy needs but also work closely with each other and the regional tier of the Observatory in order to produce the most rounded picture of the South West.

The Observatory works together through a quarterly Operational and Research Group, and project groups as necessary. These are all part of a wider regional network in the Regional Intelligence Group.

The coordination of the South West Observatory is the responsibility of a central Core Unit, funded principally by SWRDA but with additional contributions from the SWRA and Environment Agency. The Core Unit is advised by an Advisory Committee drawn from modules, local intelligence networks and partner organizations as appropriate.

In many ways it makes sense to think of the South West Observatory as a process by which public policy research can be integrated within the region, rather than a separate entity.

Staff Structure

The modular structure means that many people work within the Observatory project. For many, specifically 'Observatory' work is only a part of the job function, or cannot be easily extricated from 'the day job'.

Core Unit

All phone and fax numbers, and address, as shown in general enquiries.

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Hazel Newman
Analytical Assistant (Part Time)
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Rachel Hartnell
Administrative officer
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And housed within the Core Unit

Noreen Orr
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Ray Perrins
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Nick Harrison
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Brian Nute
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South West Public Health Observatory

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Environment Module

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Skills and Learning Intelligence Module

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Regional Planning Module

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Business and Economy Module

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Local Intelligence Networks

Local Intelligence Networks are made up of researchers in Local Authorities, Local Learning and Skills Councils, Health Authorities and others in each of the region's seven former county areas (1974 local government reorganization). They undertake research to support local policy needs but also work closely with each other and the regional tier of the Observatory in order to produce the most rounded picture of the South West. Representatives of each of these networks meet quarterly as the Local Intelligence Networks group.

Somerset Intelligence Network (SINE)
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/sine/home.asp>
Contact - Carrie Anne Hiscock
CAHiscock@somerset.gov.uk

Intelligence West
<http://www.intelligencewest.org.uk/>
Contact - [Laura Grady](mailto:laura_grady@bristol-city.gov.uk)
laura_grady@bristol-city.gov.uk

Life in Devon

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/devine/>

Contact – Louise Taylor

ltaylor@devon.co.uk

Gloucestershire Local Information Network

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/Environment/Glin/index.asp>

Contact – Karen McDonald

Karen.mcdonald@gloucestershire.gov.uk

LINC (Local Intelligence Network Cornwall)

<http://www.linc4info.org.uk>

Contact - [Ben Bolton](#)

bbolton@cornwall.gov.uk

E-Base, Local Intelligence Network for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole

<http://www.e-base4info.org.uk>

Contact – Anita Hansen

anita@e-base4info.org.uk

Wiltshire and Swindon Intelligence Network

<http://www.intelligencenetwork.org.uk/>

Contact - [Julie Seddon](#)

julieseddon@wiltshire.gov.uk

Key partners

- Board – Steering Group

The Management Board takes responsibility for the overall direction, funding and activities of the Observatory. The Board meets approximately quarterly, and is made up of senior representatives of nine organizations, with an independent Chairman. The Board membership is as follows:

- Independent Chairman: Professor Martin Boddy, University of the West of England
 - South West Regional Development Agency: Jonathan Coe, Head of Policy (Chair 2003)
 - South West Regional Assembly: tbc
 - Government Office for the South West: Tim Render, Regional Director, DEFRA (Chair 2004); Also David Luckhurst, Head of Communications & Intelligence as Chair of Advisory Group (2003)
 - Department of Health: Dr Gabriel Scally, Director of Public Health for SW
 - Local Authorities: Niki Lewis, Head of Corporate Services, Wiltshire County Council
 - Environment Agency in the South West: Neil Davies, Manager, Regional Policy Unit
 - Higher Education Regional Development Association: Stephen Wilks, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Exeter University
 - CBI in the SW: Sarah Morris, Deputy Regional Director
 - Core Unit: Philip Tucker, Director (non-voting)
- Operational and Research Group

This group is made up of practitioners in the main regional bodies on the Board, representatives of the thematic modules and local intelligence networks. This group meets

eight times per year, and is the main forum for implementing the overall Observatory work programme. Specific tasks are undertaken by project groups drawn largely from the Operational and Research Group.

- Advisory Committee

This group meets quarterly, and is made up of representatives from GOSW, SWRDA and SWRA, and modules as appropriate. Its main function is to advise the Core Unit in drawing up papers for the Board.

- Regional Intelligence Group

Please see Regional Research Networks below.

- RDA role

The SW RDA is the largest funder of South West Observatory activity, being the principal funder of the Core Unit, Business and Economy Module and Skills and Learning Intelligence Module, as well as making contributions to each of the Local Intelligence Networks. The RDA is represented on the Board, Operational and Research Group and Advisory Committee. There is regular contact between the Observatory and SW RDA, with specific support in such fields as legal matters and communications. Much Observatory activity relates to such RDA responsibilities as the Regional Economic Strategy and the South West Regional Skills Partnership.

- Regional Chamber (Assembly) role

The Regional Assembly is the sponsor of the Regional Planning module, whose activities specifically relate to information needed in the monitoring of Regional Planning Guidance (SWRA being the Regional Planning Body for the South West). The Observatory has also produced reports to support work of the Assembly in the fields of rural economy and the 2001 Census.

- Government Office role

Government Office for the South West represents the interests of 10 Government Departments. It supports the development of the SWO as a regional resource to inform policy making and implementation. It is represented on the Board by the Director of Sustainability, Intelligence and Rural Affairs, and also on the Advisory Committee, Operational and Research Group and project groups. The Government Office also contributes information and analysis to the Observatory in the fields of social exclusion and crime. The South West Public Health Observatory maintains desks in the Government Office in Bristol; the Regional Director of Public Health is also a member of the Management Board.

The Government Office additionally runs the Regional Intelligence Group. This network meets quarterly and is the broadest based network of public sector researchers and analysts in the South West.

RDA and GO Intelligence Functions

GOSW's Regional Intelligence team, a unit within its wider Communications and Intelligence team, is responsible for data sourcing, interpretation and presentation to support GOSW planning and implementation of programmes and initiatives; brief Ministers and Government Departments; and to provide an evidence base to inform and influence policy development regionally and centrally, especially in relation to achieving Departmental Public Service Agreements (PSAs). In its external role it supports development of intelligence capacity and sharing in the region, primarily via the Observatory and the Regional Intelligence Group. It currently has 3 full time staff.

Contact: David Luckhurst
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GOSW, Bristol
0117 900 1768
DLUCKHURST.GOSW@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

There is also an intelligence unit within the South West RDA, which has a good working relationship with the Observatory.

Contact: Jonathan Coe
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South West RDA, Exeter
01392 214747
Jonathan.Coe@southwestrda.org.uk

Other Regional Data Producers

- Environment Agency – South West Region

The Environment Agency-South West Region leads on the environmental module working with many other environmental organisations represented on a steering group that meets quarterly (the chair is a rotating one moving around the collaborators).

The Agency also fills the editor role for the regional state of the environment reporting information gathered and regularly maintained on the web site linking with each organisation's own, as well with national and European information.

There are already a number of data sharing agreements in place with other national organisations and the Agency wants to promote such pooling of resource, expertise and knowledge. Several of the Agency's data sets are already in the public domain via public registers and accessible via their national web site too. Regulating potential pollution producers and processes and then monitoring the results on the environment is essentially a transparent process for all to see the job is being done.

Linking with the health factors and economic consequences, whilst promoting better skills, learning and more preventative planning measures are all reasons why the Agency fully supports the Observatory initiative and its data, information and analysis sharing goals.

- Countryside Agency

Although not a formal relationship, the Observatory has regular contact with the regional officers of the Countryside Agency.

- Centre for Rural Research – Exeter University

The CRR is an important centre for research in rural policy, food, economics and environment, and contributes significantly to the Rural Research Priorities Group. SWRDA provides funding for the CRR to contribute to regional public sector research.

In addition, the Observatory has close working relationships with the SW Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, Sport England SW, lottery distributors, English Heritage, Arts Council, SW Screen, Wildlife Trusts and many more. The Observatory shares offices with the regional regeneration centre ('Creating: Excellence'), the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative and Equality South West.

Regional Research Networks

- Regional Intelligence Group

This group operates under the aegis of the Government Office for SW. It meets quarterly and is open to all involved in appropriate research in the region. It acts as a broad sounding board and discussion group for research activities within the region, and aims to help shape the research agenda for the Observatory. This group additionally played a major role in defining the role and purpose of the Core Unit.

South West Observatory – Main Functions

The South West Observatory aims to ensure that those making decisions about and within the South West make full and appropriate use of the best available evidence about the region. It does this through the provision and interpretation of objective, timely, relevant, and reliable information and intelligence.

Headline Objectives are to:

- Develop an Observatory network that:
 - brings together well-regarded thematic and geographically focused modules, working with the Core Unit to collate, analyse, present & disseminate evidence in and across areas of expertise
 - supports and enhances the work of individual modules
 - promotes the use of evidence by helping to ensure that it is understood, placed in context, and appropriately interpreted by decision makers
- Encourage and enable a shared understanding of the region and its parts by:
 - developing consistent definitions and approaches to the use of evidence
 - undertaking cross-cutting analysis and research on key policy areas at regional level and appropriate sub-divisions within it

- Promote efficient and effective collation, analysis, presentation and dissemination of the best available evidence about the region through collaboration with regional partners
- Identify and, where appropriate, address gaps in the provision of information and analysis to help ensure that region has an appropriate evidence base for effective decision making
- Identify key issues of future importance to the South West through its analysis of research and intelligence
- Work closely with decision-makers to ensure that the evidence from the Observatory is timely, relevant, readily accessible and of quality.

Commercial data sets held and used

The Observatory has joined the Pan Government Agreement (PGA) with Ordnance Survey, this entitles the Observatory as a whole to most of the OS products, including Master Map, LandLine, Raster Background and Addresspoint. Any of the modules can use these maps provided they follow the agreement on usage. The RDA, Assembly, Government Office, Local Authority representatives on Local Intelligence Networks and Environment Agency are covered by the same, or a very similar, agreement.

The Environment Agency in the South West uses various quasi-commercial datasets that include geological data from BGS, soil survey data from the Soil Survey. These are not readily available to those outside the Agency. The Agency also has access to many national and regional datasets from very many sources – most can be summarised under infrastructure such as power lines, water pipes etc, and various other reference sets such as aerial maps, etc. All are summarised or used in to produce the State of the Environment reporting information.

Other data sets

Business Economy Module: Econ(i) – is a system of regional economic and social accounts based on a range of data sources (principally ONS). It allows access to a broad range of detailed and consistent information on aspects of regional economic structure and performance (including sub-regional information). Details at www.swbem.org.uk

LSC datasets (Individualised Learner Record and National Pupil Database) are used to inform the planning and provision of post-16 education and training, and cover the whole of England and Wales.

Events – past and planned

- Core Unit

Adult Basic Skills in the Workplace – 8th January 2002, Dillington House, Somerset

Craft and Skilled Trades – 30th May 2002, Bishops Hull House, Taunton

Skills and Learning: Improving Public Health – 27th November 2002, Lord Haldon Hotel, near Exeter

Census Preparation Workshop, Exeter, November 28 2003

Conference 'Measuring the Quality of Life in SW England', Exeter, January 23 2003

Census Key Statistics Workshop, Taunton, March 14 2003

SW Economy: Structure & Performance – One day conference, October 2003

Environmental Modelling workshop – October 2003

Econ(i) workshops – October-November 2003

E-learning workshop, Exeter, February 2004

Conference 'Disparities in the South West', Bristol, March 4 2004

Crime & Health workshop, Weston super Mare, March 2004

Public health Scientific Conference, Weston super Mare, May 2004

e-base Launch Event, Wimborne, June 2004

Environmental Monitoring Workshop, Taunton, June 2004

Workshop on Tutor Training, July 2004

Local Intelligence Network Cornwall launch event, Newquay, October 2004

Coast and Public Health, Torquay, November 2004

Environmental Monitoring Workshop, Spring 2005

Sustainability Workshop, Spring 2005

SELD Rural Regeneration Workshop, Exeter, September 2005

Census Seminar: 'Return of the Jedi?', Environment Agency, Exeter, October 2005

Public Health Observatory Lunchtime Seminar, SWRDA, Exeter, October 2005

SELD Older People Workshop, Poole, October 2005

SLIM Lunchtime Seminar, GOSW, Bristol, November 2005

Environment Module Lunchtime Seminar, GOSW, Bristol, December 2005

Regional Planning Module Lunchtime Seminar, SWRDA, Exeter, December 2005

Third Annual Conference 'New Age for the South West', Exeter University, March 2006

Publications

Census Bulletins (various)

<http://www.swo.org.uk/census/index.asp>

- Core Unit

South West Rural Economy – Taking Stock

http://www.swo.org.uk/Library/documents/rural_economy_rept_final_draft_v4.pdf

Barometer (Key SW indicators)

<http://www.swo.org.uk/barometer/index.asp>

Adult Basic Skills in the Workplace Final Report (March 2002)

http://www.swslim.org.uk/documents/themes/LT1_Report.doc

Craft and Skilled Trades Final Report (July 2002)

<http://www.swslim.org.uk/downloads/SL1247.doc>

Skills and Learning: Improving Public Health (Feb 2003)

http://www.swslim.org.uk/documents/themes/LT3_Report.doc

Good Practice Case Studies in Sector Skills Development (March 2002)

http://www.swslim.org.uk/sectors_casestudies.asp

Methodology for assessing the economic contribution of the voluntary sector in the south west region (June 2002)

<http://www.swslim.org.uk/downloads/SL1208.doc>

Reaching Out Across the Region (Sept 2002)

<http://www.swslim.org.uk/documents/skillsissues.pdf>

Moving Towards Inclusion (April 2003)

http://www.swslim.org.uk/inclusion_report.asp

South Devon Airport Study

<http://www.swo.org.uk/census/index.asp>

Productivity in the South West

<http://www.swbem.org.uk>

State of the SW Environment

<http://www.swenvo.org.uk>

South West Regional Accounts and Econ(i) Software

<http://www.swbem.org.uk>

HES Public Health Indicators

<http://www.swpho.org.uk/hesdb/index.htm>

The South West Skills Market – A Review of Supply and Demand' September 04
http://www.swslim.org.uk/research/demand_supply/index.asp

South West Economic Review
<http://www.swbem.org.uk/additional/Economic%20review%20summer%202003.pdf>

State of the South West 2004
http://www.swo.org.uk/State_of_the_South_West/index.asp

Travel to Work in the South West (Commissioned by South West Regional Assembly)
<http://www.southwestid.org.uk/download/4149492c02628774010262da0bfd0181/Travel%20to%20Work%20Report%20Final.pdf>

Migration to Urban Areas in the South West (Commissioned by the South West Regional Assembly)
<http://www.southwestid.org.uk/viewResource.do?id=4149492c021181cc01021566ee600780>

Domestic Abuse Bulletin
http://www.swpho.org.uk/domestic/dom_violence.pdf

South West Observatory also maintains a wide number of reports and datasets on the South West Intelligence Database
<http://www.southwestid.org.uk>

State of the South West Web Update
http://www.swo.org.uk/State_of_the_South_West/index.asp

What's Changed in the South West? Hard copy summary of the on-line update of the State of the South West report (March 2006)
<http://www.southwestid.org.uk/download/4149492c0a468977010a46d3ef810020/Whats%20Changed%20final%20PDF.pdf>

Pre-Conference Report, (March 2006)
<http://www.southwestid.org.uk/download/4149492c0a468977010a4717d6c70079/Conference%20paper%20FINAL.pdf>

Barometer 6, (March 2006)
<http://www.southwestid.org.uk/download/4149492c0a4ba32c010a4be1a25e0037/Barometer-6%20PDF.pdf>

Periodicals and Newsletters

Periodicals and Newsletters
SLIM Quarterly Bulletin & fortnightly SLIM-lines e-newsletter
http://www.swslim.org.uk/news.asp#news_bull

Environmental Newsletter (ad hoc schedule)
<http://www.swenvo.org.uk>

South West Labour Market Review (with Job Centre Plus) twice yearly

Finding the Dots, Culture South West's research e-bulletin quarterly

Newsletters are produced on varying schedules by many of the Local Intelligence Networks

Website

The Observatory has 5 thematic websites and a core unit site, most of which have been developed in house. Usage ranges between 1,500 and 10,000. Sites are mostly either plain HTML or Active Server Pages, using a mix of Javascript and VBscript. The Core unit uses a database driven metadata system to ensure all pages have correct metadata.

Research Database

The South West observatory commissioned a system, SouthWestID, which acts as a research database. This database was launched in 2004 and now holds over 1200 items. Currently individual modules – especially Skills and Learning and Public Health - have some research material on their own sites.

Metadata

Most of the sites now use e-GMS metadata or are in the process of adding it to their sites. In the case of the Core Unit this data are drawn from an Access database.

GIS

There are no GIS based Web pages on the South West Observatory, although one module - Public Health – has experimented with a basic system. There are static maps on most of the Observatory sites. The Observatory is involved with an ODPM funded e-government project to support sustainability appraisals which makes considerable use of MapXtreme and XML functionality.

Internally the South West Observatory and partners use desktop GIS, with an approximately equal split between ESRI and MapInfo products.

Research and other work in progress or planned

Public Health

- SW Focused Health Poverty index report
- Series of bulletins highlighting drug misuse issues in the South West
- Exploration of relationships between nutrition and health
- RTC (Road Traffic Collision) Bulletin
- Updated smoking bulletin
- Work relating to health effects of distraction burglary

Environment

- Mapping regulated industry in the South West
- Quality assurance on the IPPC part b data is currently underway to check the data collected from local authorities on their regulated industries. Work is in progress to cross-check the data with a number of different sources:

- A geographic comparison is being undertaken between the public register data and that which is held on the Environment Agency's national GIS layer. This has indicated a number of concerns. Firstly in the number of processes recorded (438 processes recorded in the south west on the Environment Agency's national datasets and 1606 processes recorded on the Local Authorities public registers,) and secondly in the geographic location of the processes themselves.
- We have also looked at those processes listed in the EU database. The following link will take you to this dataset - http://www.eper.cec.eu.int/eper/Find_facility.asp?all=true&PollutantId=0&ActivityId=0&Year=2001&CountryCode=UK

From this comparison 21 processes were listed in the EU database and not in the Local Authority public registers. In addition, Cornwall data is currently being checked by a county co-ordinator.

Early exploration has started of how we may be able to assist the Isle of Scilly AONB team to track down what data is available to chart progress against their AONB management plan. This work will be a pilot for the rest of the region and will be carried out in close conjunction with the South West Landscape Forum's initial populating of data onto SouthWestID

Improving availability of data for Strategic Environmental Assessments Work is underway with the Regional Assembly (who lead on Strategic Environmental Assessments – SEA) to develop a more direct route to the data required to complete an SEA in the South West. This will also be accessible via SouthWestID.

Common indicators

Joint work to identify common indicators for use by health and environmental sectors is progressing and as part of that work identifying the relevant data to report on the environmental outcomes highlighted in the Regional Environment Strategy.

Skills and Learning Intelligence Module

- Project development work on the SW Forum on Age and Employability
- Re-establishment of the Healthy Labour Market Review Group
- Developing the Final Report for the Graduate CPD Learning Theme.
- Ongoing resource identification, abstracting and development of the SLIM databases of research; labour market data; skills networks; consultants etc
- We are planning a Learning Theme on age barriers to employment and training in the South West to take place from January to March 2005.

Cultural Sector

- Complete a Cultural Sector Researcher/Consultant Database
- Complete the report *Culture, Community & Civil Renewal: South West Examples* to inform ippr and DCMS research projects
- Progress work on the Attendance and Participation research brief
- Progress work on the Cultural Indicators research

Business and Economy Module

- Regional Accounts update to 2001.
- Economy/environment accounts.
- Sensitivity of South West to oil price rises.
- Economic policy simulation and forecasting models
- Production of Econ|j on-line tutorials.
- Statistical bulletins on Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings and Annual Business Inquiry (ABI2) data
- Analysis of (SWRDA) Key Sectors.
- Regional Accounts and Environmental Accounts for 2001

Regional Planning

- Current production of Annual Monitoring Report for 2005

Sub-regional observatories

Public Health Observatory

Clearly the size of the SWPHO, its length of establishment and links with the wider PHO network, make it stand out amongst the thematic modules of the South West Observatory. However, it is important to note that whilst established first, SWPHO was always intended to be part of a wider Observatory project. Therefore the links between the PHO and the rest of SWO are very strong, and the joint work conducted with the Skills and Learning Intelligence and Environment Modules are listed above.