

Phoenix Product Development

case study



environmental goods & services sector

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Managing Director

INVEST
Essex



Essex County Council

Phoenix Product Development

contributing to sustainable water management

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Phoenix Product Development, based at Basildon in Essex, is the company behind propelair® - a revolutionary new air-assisted approach to toilet flushing. The propelair® process uses atmospheric air to create the flush, saving some 84% of the water used in a conventional toilet. The product, which is at prototype stage, has already attracted worldwide interest for its potential contribution to sustainable water management and improved hygiene.

During a 5 year development programme propelair® has been extensively and successfully tested by organisations such as the Water Research Centre. “We have been an Industrial Collaborator to the government-funded Water Cycle Management for New Developments (WaND) research programme,” says Managing Director Garry Moore. “We are also collaborating with Exeter University and the Water Research Centre on waste water collection technologies where propelair® has proved to make an important contribution to simpler installation.”

With successful laboratory testing completed and funding in place, propelair® is now moving to the next stage of development – design for manufacture. As part of that process, the

company has relocated to Basildon from its original base at the University of East London. “We needed office and workshop space. Getting the right mix at an affordable cost was proving difficult in London,” says Garry Moore.

“We had a lot of help from Essex County Council’s Essex Innovation Programme at that stage - they were good listeners and showed that they understood our business. They helped us to find a suitable unit and also provided us with a mentor who provided good business advice and helped us with a successful bid for a research grant from East of England Development Agency.”

Relocation to Essex offered other important advantages, according to Garry Moore. “The county has a strong production infrastructure and good skills in the disciplines we need. We were able to find highly-skilled subcontractors and production facilities to supplement our own

resources. It means we can move into production without establishing our own factory. As we expand, we’re confident that we will be able to recruit the right people for our assembly and administrative operations.”

The county’s transport links will also contribute to the company’s future plans. “Collaboration is important to our business,” says Garry Moore. “That means a lot of travelling so it’s great that Essex has a good road, rail, sea and airport infrastructure. Part of our manufacturing will have to be sourced overseas, so having international seaports and an airport close by will help to streamline our supply chain.”

International markets also feature strongly in propelair’s® development. “The Middle East is a good example. Water is really precious there, so any product that reduces water consumption and waste can make an important contribution to the management of the water cycle. Essex gives us the right base to serve growth markets like that.”



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Tel: 01245 702480 **Email:** contact@investessex.co.uk **www.investessex.co.uk**

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