

Somerset Hemp Development Council (SHDC) + CountyPay

Regenerative Hemp Economy Framework

A strategy to scale industrial hemp production for affordability, sustainability, and regional economic growth.

A Framework for Building a Scalable, Affordable, and Regenerative Hemp Economy

1. Vision

To make hemp one of the most accessible, affordable, and sustainable materials of the 21st century — supporting regenerative agriculture, rural economies, and low-carbon industries.

To position Somerset as a leader in industrial hemp production in the UK, creating affordable, high-quality hemp products while promoting regenerative agriculture, rural development, and sustainable industry clusters.

Somerset's mild climate, fertile soils, and strong agricultural tradition make it ideal for both hemp fiber and seed cultivation. This plan leverages these natural advantages to support farmers, create and maintain small processors, and new industrial applications.

By integrating data transparency and a hemp-backed local currency, Somerset can pioneer a model where agricultural output directly fuels economic activity in the county.

2. Core Objectives

Reduce production costs through cooperative farming and process efficiency.

Establish Somerset-based processing and manufacturing of Hemp with decentralized infrastructure.

Commercialise and stabilise regional markets with transparent pricing and diverse end uses.

Align regulation to lower compliance barriers and encourage entry.

Boost County economy via job creation, skill development, and export potential.

Encourage innovation and local value creation across the supply chain.

3. Strategic Pillars

A. Agricultural Expansion & Cost Efficiency

Develop hemp grower cooperatives to share machinery, seeds, and labor.

Establish training programs in regenerative and mechanized hemp farming.

Fund breeding programs to produce regionally adapted, high-yield, low-input varieties.

Introduce precision farming technologies (IoT, drones, soil mapping) to optimise input use.

B. Localised Processing Infrastructure

Create County-level decortication and processing hubs (public-private partnerships).

Develop mobile processing units to reach dispersed farms.

Offer grants or low-interest loans for setting up small-scale processors.

Pilot fiber and hurd cooperatives to aggregate materials for industry buyers.

C. Market Development & Industrial Integration

Incentivise industries (construction, textiles, plastics, paper, energy) to use hemp feedstocks.

Launch pilot projects (e.g., hempcrete housing, hemp bioplastics in packaging).

Introduce CountyPay as a local currency: credits issued against verified hemp output.

Create a Hemp Commodity Exchange for transparent price discovery and contracts.

Encourage government procurement of hemp-based materials.

D. Policy & Regulatory Alignment

Advocate for consistent national THC limits and licensing.

Simplify permit processes for industrial hemp farmers and processors.

Introduce tax incentives or rebates for hemp-based manufacturing.

Integrate hemp into carbon credit and soil regeneration programs.

E. Circular Economy & Sustainability Integration

Map hemp byproduct streams for reuse (hurds for energy, seeds for feed/oil).

Develop bioenergy and composting systems for non-commercial biomass.

Support zero-waste hemp processing certification standards.

Encourage co-location of industries (e.g., bioplastic + textile + seed oil).

F. Research, Innovation & Education

Fund R&D hubs focused on hemp genetics, fiber technology, and product design.

Partner with universities for applied innovation in hemp composites and green chemistry.

Build open-source data repositories for agronomic, economic, and technical performance.

Establish education campaigns to normalize hemp’s industrial and ecological benefits.

4. Implementation Timeline (Example)

Year	Focus	Key Deliverables
1	Foundation	Cooperatives formed, regulatory advocacy, pilot farms
2	Infrastructure	Regional processing hubs, mobile decorticators
3	Market Growth	Commodity exchange, first industrial buyers onboard
4	Innovation	Product diversification, R&D commercialization
5	Maturity	Scaled markets, export capacity, stable low prices

5. Success Metrics

50% reduction in hemp fiber cost within 5 years.

100,000+ hectares of hemp cultivated under regenerative standards.

10+ County-Level processing hubs operational.

Threefold increase in hemp-derived product adoption in construction, textiles, and energy.

6. Governance & Funding

Create a Hemp Council or Steering Group (farmers, researchers, processors, policymakers) - Somerset Hemp Development Council (SHDC).

Establish a Revolving Green Fund for infrastructure and innovation projects.

Encourage community shares or cooperative ownership in processing hubs.