

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

BOARD MEETING ON 8 MAY 2008

ITEM 14

AGENCY REPORT

Recommendation

The Board is invited to **NOTE** the Agency Activity Report for April and May which represents a cross section of reports from within SEEDA organized for the first time according to the themes of SEEDA's Corporate Plan 2008-11.

GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

National Aerospace Technology Strategy

ASTRAEA

1. Good progress is being made in this project to develop and test new unmanned vehicle technologies co-funded by the Technology Strategy Board and SEEDA, other Regional Development Agencies and the Welsh Assembly. A number of successful demonstrations have taken place including flight demonstrations at both Parc Aberporth and off the South Coast - these demonstrations show the successful integration of industry partner systems in a live flight environment. Industry are also in the process of completing the specification for a phase II ASTRAEA programme which will cover the exploitation of some of the technologies being developed and seek to involve a wider small and medium sized enterprise (SME) partner base.

Innovation and Creativity

Professorial Fellows

2. A second Professorial Fellow has been funded to facilitate knowledge exchange between business and academia. The Fellow will work with the South East Photonics Network (SEPNET) and the Optoelectronics Research Group - one of the world's leading institutes for photonics research - based at the University of Southampton.

High Growth Business Coaching

3. The High Growth Coaching programme has started its second year after a successful pilot. SEEDA is currently recruiting the 20 companies for the programme from around the region. Findings from the evaluation of the 1st year of the pilot found that businesses would consider paying full market rate for the coaches on completion of the pilot yet just 15% would have considered coaching before their engagement. In summary, the Coach helped firms to gain clarity on how growth targets could be achieved, confidence that they could be achieved and a focus on the actions required to achieve them.

Innovation Team Consultation Paper

4. The consultation paper, issued in April for comments by the end of May, sets out SEEDA's proposals for supporting innovation and growth in the South East by the establishment of sub-regional place based Innovation Teams which will provide support to those businesses with the most potential to have an impact on the region's economy.

Design, Nanotechnology and Manufacturing Advice Service (MAS)

Designing Demand

5. Designing Demand has reached a key milestone with 15 workshops and over 200 companies engaged in design projects and workshops across the South East. A recent Maidstone design workshop was heavily oversubscribed with 25 businesses attending. The first SE Case Studies and a Design Newsletter have just been produced featuring the first six companies and showing how good design leads to increased profits. South East Design Case Studies are now appearing on the Design Council's Website.

South Coast Design Forum

6. SEEDA is part-funding the newly created South Coast Design Forum chaired by Wayne Hemingway, one of the UK's leading designers. The network is fast establishing a SE Design Community aiming to promote the potential of the SE's design community to businesses. The Forum reported the recruitment of its 200th business member in March.

SEEDA – University of Oxford CyberSEM Project

7. SEEDA is working with the University of Oxford Materials Department on a project allowing school pupils and teachers access to one of the UK's most powerful electron microscopes located at Begbroke Science Park. First schools involved in the project are Cherwell School and Leckford schools in Oxford; other schools across the South East will follow as the project builds momentum.

Manufacturing Advice Service (MAS)

8. The MAS III programme started on 1 April with new services including resource efficiency, supply chain development and manufacturing strategy toolkits.

Broadband and ICT

Leading organisations unite to create a smarter working South East

9. Senior executives from across the south east attended the launch of Work Wise South East at Farnham Castle on 16th April, which is promoting smarter working in the region. Phil Flaxton, chief executive of Work Wise UK, was joined by partners including SEEDA, Professor Yvonne Doyle - regional director of public health for NHS South East Coast, Mike Galvin, South East regional director for BT, Greg Skyrme, Centrica plc, and Richard Rowland, regional manager, London & Thames Valley First Great Western, to launch the new regional initiative.

Broadband developments in Ashford

10. SEEDA and Ashford's Future have completed work to produce a business model for optical-fibre broadband deployment as part of a major development. The model, based on the proposed Elwick Place development in Ashford, is adaptable to any type of residential / office / retail development.

International inward investment

11. SEEDA, since the previous Agency Report, has secured 10 foreign direct investments which will create 990 jobs over the next 3 years.

International business development events:

International Business Seminar – Brisbane

12. SEEDA presented at a breakfast seminar "Expand in to South East England" in Brisbane, Australia. The event was attended by over 50 delegates, produced a good number of leads and allowed SEEDA to present to key members of the Queensland business community. Follow up information was sent to the Commerce Queensland membership list of over 3,000 businesses.

India Activity

13. The International Trade Director (UK Trade and Investment South East), with SEEDA and South West Regional Development Agency's (SWRDA) joint India representative, undertook a highly productive meeting programme in India. The visit developed a number of good quality projects and provided the opportunity to promote both the South of England and the recently appointed South of England representative to senior level contacts in industry and government.

French Marine Event

14. SEEDA, together with Marine South East and the French Marine Cluster, co-hosted a reception for 80 French companies at Oceanology International, the largest gathering of marine science and ocean technology companies in the world. The event identified 14 companies with innovative technology solutions that are considering entering the UK market.

German Trade Shows

15. SEEDA attended E-world, one of the leading European trade shows in the Energy sector and CeBIT, the largest global IT trade show. The trade shows identified 3 potential investors and one of which has subsequently set up in the UK.

Governor of Wisconsin Visit

16. SEEDA met with the Governor who visited the UK to promote investment and trade opportunities and to further strengthen the ties between the South East and the State of Wisconsin. Wisconsin has a strong biotechnology and medical device industry sector.

SeaTrade 08, Miami

17. SEEDA exhibited with Associated British Ports (ABP) and eight other companies based in the South East on the "Southampton - Cruise Capital of Northern Europe" stand. The number of cruise liners visiting Southampton has grown rapidly over the last few years. Three potential investments were identified that have a timeframe of next year.

Investor development update:

Pharmaceutical/Life Sciences Employer Led Skills Initiative

18. SEEDA is working with several large industry players including Pfizer, Abbott Labs, Wyeth, GSK, Genzyme, UCB Celltech and Lonza, fDf (Higher Education Funding Council for England funded) and several universities in the region to improve the number and calibre of graduates and post-grads entering the pharmaceutical and life sciences industries. The industry has highlighted difficulties in recruiting graduates from the academic base in the region, in part due to the rapidly changing requirements of an industry which is looking to recruit staff with cross-disciplinary skills and wider business knowledge. The employer-led steering group is aiming to define the real needs of the industry to enable the industry-chosen universities including Reading, Sussex, Brighton, Southampton, Greenwich and Surrey to deliver courses and seminars to facilitate professional development and develop specific skills.

Marine and Leisure industry

19. April saw the launch of a new cruise ship- Ventura Although the ship, which can carry up to 3,600 passengers, was built at an Italian shipyard, Southampton has been chosen as its designated home port, demonstrating Southampton Port's strong global offer.
20. Ventura, operated by P&O Cruises, is the largest liner yet to have been built specifically for the UK market and will carry nearly 3,600 passengers and 1200 crew.
21. A second Cruise Ship, tagged the 'world's largest cruise ship' – the Royal Caribbean International Independence of the Seas - is also to be launched later in April and will be offering cruises out of Southampton throughout the Mediterranean and Northern Europe.
22. Associated British Ports' (ABP) Port of Southampton has awarded a multi-million pound building contract for a new fourth cruise terminal to Dean&Dyball, a Hampshire-based construction contractor.
23. The £19 million terminal is being built after ABP and Carnival UK signed a 20-year contract in December last year and will be capable of handling ships with a capacity of 4,000 passengers accommodating the largest cruise vessels afloat. Southampton's cruise business has seen unprecedented growth in recent years, with 289 cruise calls and well over 900,000 passengers expected in 2008.

Tourism

24. Over 250 members and stakeholders came to Ascot on 26 March to see Tourism South East launch their strategy for the London 2012 games and legacy and to hear Pam Alexander, chair of the South East Partnership, give the keynote speech. The strategy titled 'On Your Marks.....Get SetGo' is to reflect the launch stages up to and through the period of the Olympic opportunity.
25. Sustainable Tourism is a strong theme within Tourism South East's programme for the next three years. The programme was launched with a special publication of the first ever 'Guide to Sustainable Tourism for Dummies'®, part of the Dummies'® series of easy-to-use guidance books from publishers Wiley

of Chichester. A free new resource to encourage the tourism industry to 'go greener'

European Programmes of Collaboration

26. GROW was a 7.5million Euros programme between Andalucia, Emilia-Romagna, Noord Brabant, Malopolska and South East England which was launched in Seville in June 2005 and ended on December 2007. The total budget for the South East England will equal £2.53 million. Following the success of the GROW Programme (a legacy report will be available on the GROW website), participating partner regions have developed two successor bids for consideration under INTERREG IVC - PEOPLE and POWER.

POWER

27. SEEDA will lead this new Programme to explore the best ways of driving low carbon economies working with 6 other partners: Malopolska (Poland), Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Noord-Brabant (Netherlands), Stockholm (Sweden), Andalucia (Spain) and Tallinn (Estonia). The total budget of the mini-programme is £4.2 million (5.8 million Euros) with a co-financing rate of 75%. The South East region could expect to receive a similar proportion of the funding as in its predecessor programme GROW.
28. The programme is scheduled to commence in September 2008 and run through to December 2011. The bid proposes that, building on what worked well in GROW, SEEDA will host the POWER Secretariat which will also be jointly funded by the Environment Agency and SEERA. SEEDA will be the Lead Partner and accountable body to the European Commission for the programme.

PEOPLE

29. SEEDA negotiated for the Junta de Andalucia to take the lead and SEEDA to become a partner in the PEOPLE Programme. To provide innovative ideas and solutions to demographic and societal changes faced by the European regions this programme involves Andalucia (Spain) as lead partner and accountable body, Venezia (Italy), Noord-Brabant (Netherlands), Malopolska (Poland), Stockholm (Sweden), Timis (Romania) and South East England (UK). The total budget of the programme is nearly £2.9 million (nearly 4 million Euros) with a co-financing rate of 75%. Again, the South East region could expect to receive a similar proportion of the funding as in its predecessor programme GROW. The programme is scheduled to commence in September 2008 and run through August 2011.

Transenterprise II

30. Transenterprise II was a collaborative network of Enterprise Hubs and technopoles in France and the South East of England. The project is closing after 2 and half years' operation with outstanding outcomes:
- A series of International Workshops, Entrepreneur Days and International Exchange Days organised in France and in the UK, securing the platform for ongoing collaboration between the two regions
 - One International Meet the Buyer Event. It is estimated that at least £2m of business was generated as a result of this event.
 - A successful International mentoring scheme involving over 200 companies

- Transenterprise II Bilingual Website www.te2.eu.com and the Transmanche 100 Club, a networking forum for peer to peer exchange of business best practice.

SMART GROWTH

Business Link

31. The three-year contract SEEDA has with the Business Link providers for the South East has reached the end of a successful first year. During the last fiscal year, Business Link in the South East has advised in excess of 135,000 individual businesses and worked intensively with more than 14,000 companies. Customer Satisfaction results, provided by an independent market research company, stand at more than 87% with more than 90% of customers likely to reuse the service.
32. Business Link has issued two new Hot Topic papers on Exporting and Innovation. Hot Topics are based on independent surveys of Business Owners and Senior Decision Makers and the quarterly Business Monitor research. These have highlighted that more than 40% of South East small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) have sold to clients located outside the UK and that there is lots of untapped potential for exporting amongst SMEs. Innovation levels in South East SMEs is high, with a clear link made between innovation and a company's growth potential; common limiters to innovation are sited as lack of management time and finance.
33. According to the latest Business Link South East research, titled Better Planning (April 08), more than two thirds of businesses in the South East have trouble finding new business as a result of poor planning or the lack of a website. Without the proper business tools companies find generating business difficult. Business Link offers a variety of guides to support businesses including 'How to make money from your website'.
34. These guides and the Hot Topics can be found on the Business Link South East website launched recently www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast or by telephoning 0845 600 9 006 and speaking to an advisor.

Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP)

35. SEEDA continues its strong leadership of the Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP) and represents RDAs on the new national Transition Management Body, chaired by Martin Temple (current Chair of the EEF). The first version of the South East Transition Management Plan, which sets out how the South East publicly funded business support portfolio will be simplified, will be presented to the Transition Management Body at the 15 May meeting.

Business Link Enterprise Gateway Service

36. The Business Link Enterprise Gateway (EG) service continues to promote enterprise within the region's most disadvantaged communities reducing the number of economically inactive within the region through promoting self-employment and improved access to business support.

Client Event

37. The EG service ran a successful client event with over 50 individuals attending at the brand new Newhaven Enterprise Centre. The event EG Director presented at the event which provided information on how to overcome barriers to enterprise and helped clients with low self-esteem through sharing stories and best practice.

Southampton

38. In Southampton the EG service has developed an enterprise awareness programme for the Polish community. Individuals from the Polish community have been trained to deliver enterprise workshops in a mixture of Polish and English. Ongoing support has been provided by the EG service to budding Polish entrepreneurs to develop their business ideas further and these clients have been encouraged to take up mainstream support as their businesses have started up. Over 90% of participants were unaware of any business support mechanisms when they first accessed the programme.

South East Hampshire & the Isle of Wight

39. In South East Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, the Enterprise Gateway service has developed a small scale enterprise project aimed at the local Muslim community. The project has been developed in partnership with a local community development trust. The project aims to determine attitudes and barriers to enterprise, and identify a small number of individuals to participate in enterprise awareness workshops and who may act as future advocates for enterprise within the Muslim community. Grass roots contacts are being thoroughly utilised; the project is being promoted largely through word of mouth and workshops will be delivered in a local Mosque.

International Women's Day Events, Slough

40. The EG service ran two workshops at an International Women's Day event in Slough. Approximately 50 pre-start attendees from across Berkshire participated in the workshops on 'awareness to key skills / attributes to running a business' and 'explore your potential through art / colour'. Other exhibitors included Next Step, Reading Community Radio, the Resource Centre, HMRC and Social Enterprise Berkshire.

Business Resource Efficiency

41. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has discontinued the RDA BREW fund from April 2008, which was additional to the Single Pot. Work has therefore been set in hand, with Business Link and Sustainable Business Partnerships (who have delivered BREW projects) to devise a new business model. A new contract with Business Link has been negotiated which will achieve mainstreaming of business resource efficiency work within the core contract. An evaluation of the Business Resource Efficiency and Waste Programme 2005-08 in the South East has also been completed. The evaluation indicates that there is potential for SEEDA to integrate resource efficiency programmes further into all its major business-facing programmes such as IAS, MAS and Enterprise Hubs – this will be addressed as part of the development of a new business model.

Enterprise

Enterprise White Papers

42. The Government's new Enterprise Strategy 'Enterprise: Unlocking the UK's talent' was published on 12th March and contained a wide range of measures to support women's enterprise including an investment fund of £12.5 million focused on women, a national mentoring network for female entrepreneurs, joint working with the British Banking Association and High Street Banks to improve financial awareness and a pilot network of Women's Business Centres. The national Women's Enterprise Task Force, led by SEEDA, has pressed for a number of these measures and worked closely with Ministers to build compelling business cases for their inclusion. To oversee the implementation of the women's enterprise "package" in the strategy, BERR have formed a small Steering Group of which SEEDA is a member representing the RDAs.
43. SEEDA led the development of a joint RDA response to be submitted in early May. This will detail the substantial extent of RDA's current investment in enterprise initiatives and propose the role RDAs can play in ensuring the Strategy is delivered, within the context of BSSP.
44. SEEDA will also be working closely with Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) to implement the measures outlined in the strategy for 'olderpreneuers', working with Enterprise Insight and PRIME.

Procurement Readiness Roadshows

45. Working with the national Ethnic Minority Business Task Force, the Women's Enterprise Task Force has initiated a series of procurement readiness road show events across the nations and regions, with the South West and West Midlands events successfully delivered. North West, Yorkshire, Scotland events are planned in the next 8 weeks. The events aim to inform diverse business owners on how to become "procurement ready" and access the opportunities presented by 2012, and other public sector supply chains. BERR's 2012 team is providing support to the events, which hope to raise the profile of procurement opportunities amongst ethnic minority and women owned businesses.

Women's Enterprise in the South East

46. SEEDA has been refreshing the Women's Enterprise Strategy for the South East 2005-2010, to refocus priorities and activity for the final 2 years of its term. The revised strategy highlights achievements made in the South East, and realigns its 6 key strategic priorities to reflect areas that will be tackled going forward to 2010. In conjunction with this, SEEDA has also revised the format and members of its Women's Enterprise Steering Group, allowing opportunity to engage with more partners around the region ensuring that the refreshed strategy is effectively taken forward.

Train To Gain

47. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has awarded SEEDA contracts for two further services. The first is an extension to Leadership & Management activity - running from April to July 08. The second contract will run for a year and concerns specialist brokerage services to the 250+ firms in the South East employing between 1,000 and 4,999 staff. SEEDA is sub-contracting this activity to Skills South East who will establish a team of specialist brokers to

forge and maintain relationships with these firms providing tailored, hands-on advice.

48. SEEDA has also submitted a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire to the LSC for future Leadership and Management activity (spanning 3 years) and has been successfully shortlisted to tender formally for the work.

WorldSkills 2011 & Skills Competitions

49. As part of the South East Partnership for 2012, SEEDA with the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and LSC, has been heavily involved in plans for making the most of WorldSkills 2011 and skills competitions for the South East region.
50. WorldSkills is the largest vocational skills competition in the world with 48 countries competing in a variety of skills from plumbing and landscape gardening, to welding and automobile technology. In 2011, the UK will be hosting the event in London with a fantastic opportunity to recognise world-class standards, raise the profile of vocational education, celebrate UK champions and showcase key industries on a global scale.
51. In order for the South East to benefit from WorldSkills and skills competitions, there is an urgent need to increase awareness and develop a clear regional infrastructure that links into national activity. Key organisations have come together to drive forward developments over the next few months: these being SEEDA / LSC / SSCs / Skills South East / Association of South East Colleges (AOSEC) / Association of Learning Providers South East (ALPSE) and UK Skills. Driven by SEEDA and the LSC, an operational group will be meeting shortly to agree budgets and marketing opportunities and implement a South East Action Plan for the foreseeable future.

NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) Workshop

52. The Enterprise Laboratory in Kent has been commissioned to run ten workshops across Swale, Thanet and Folkestone using a new format of Skills for Life training with NEETs. Exploring the possibility of linking enterprise with Skills for Life, this project looks to upskill 150 NEETs with an Entry Level 3 Literacy accreditation and provide training for a further 150. Workshops will be run in association with existing local partnerships and enterprise gateways where appropriate. To date, five workshops have taken place, 90 adults fully trained, with 59 achieving full Entry level 3 accreditation. Five further workshops are planned during May and June, which will be accompanied by an evaluation which will help shape any future expansion of the project.

Digital Planetarium at INTECH

53. INTECH is a unique, exciting interactive centre administered by the educational charity, The Hampshire Technology Centre Trust Ltd, with the specific purpose of promoting the knowledge and understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). It aims to advance the education, knowledge and understanding of the public, in particular the young, in basic technological and scientific principles and processes, particularly through the improvement of links between industrial, commercial and educational bodies and institutions.

54. Launched in March, SEEDA's funding of £650,000 has allowed for the conversion of INTECH's auditorium into the UK's largest digital planetarium - a state-of-the-art facility which will:
- Provide facilities for students to learn about cosmology and astronomy and to prepare for the relevant elements of their Science and Physics courses;
 - Provide a centre for secondary school students in the local area to study the cosmology and astronomy elements of their Science and Physics courses;
 - Provide a centre for primary school children to learn about physics, (focusing initially on astronomy and cosmology at the Star Centre);
 - Establish a professional development centre for secondary science teachers (both specialists and non-specialists) to develop their science and particularly physics teaching;
 - Establish a professional development centre for teachers of primary school science to learn about science and particularly physics themselves and to develop their teaching strategies;
 - The centre could provide a base for the local Astronomical Society meetings;
 - Create and improve upon resources open to local people interested in astronomy and cosmology.
55. In the 18 days following the opening of the facility on the 21st March, the planetarium welcomed 10,180 visitors with excellent visitor reaction. The response from Schools has been dramatic - 59% of school visits for the summer term have chosen to include a planetarium show in their visit, and the total number of school visitors for next term has risen by 26% compared to last year. Teachers are recognising that the planetarium offers schools the ability to cover a difficult-to-teach topic in a dramatic and memorable way. INTECH is working with teachers to develop the content for the next presenter-led school planetarium show along with pre and post visit teacher support material. There has been an excellent reaction to the new planetarium and the level of interest looks set to continue long into the future.

SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY

Invest in Recycling Scheme

56. The Invest in Recycling competition for capital grants managed by EnviroBusiness SE on behalf of SEEDA has produced an overall investment of £720,000 in new capacity for recycling in the South East. The average leverage ratio was 2:1, with businesses overall invested £484,000, compared to SEEDA's investment of £238,000.
57. Two companies, in Kent and the Isle of Wight, were given support to build their capacity to produce biodiesel from waste cooking oil, and a company in Surrey received funding to import technology which will enable them to extract mercury from lamps, meters and other hazardous waste sources.
58. The two biodiesel business ventures should increase the recycling of waste cooking oils by over 6000 tonnes per annum in 5 years, directly displacing fossil fuel derived fuels and associated CO₂ emissions.
59. The mercury retort investment will create a unique capacity in the South East to render hazardous materials inert, diverting materials from hazardous landfill whilst generating value from the waste stream.

Pathway to Zero Waste Region Initiative

60. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) officials were briefed on and expressed support for the Zero Waste Region Initiative and in particular the proposed focus on construction waste material in Year 1. It has been agreed by partners that SEEDA lead the initiative, with support from the Environment Agency, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), and the National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (NISP). A Pre-project Director and Manager have been engaged for a 3-month period to develop the business and overall programme plan for the initiative by June. The intention is to start the delivery phase in early summer 2008, with a formal launch attended by Ministers.

Making the Most of 2012

61. The Visitor Economy Action Plan for 2012, entitled 'On Your Marks, Get Set, Go' was launched at Ascot Racecourse on 26th March as part of the Tourism South East Annual Meeting.
62. Tourism is likely to be the biggest economic beneficiary of the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. The Visitor Economy Action Plan was developed by SEEDA, Tourism South East and the members of the South East Visitor Economy Working Group for the 2012 Games. The Working Group is part of the South East Partnership for the 2012 Games, which is strategically led by SEEDA and Sport England South East
63. 'On Your Marks, Get Set, Go' sets the agenda for the Visitor Economy sector to maximise the positive economic benefit of the 2012 Games in the South East. It focuses on utilising the increased publicity generated by the Games to increase the global image and awareness of the whole region. It also seeks to develop consortia plans for those areas most likely to benefit directly from the Games. It will utilise Major Sports Events to generate tourism benefits and it will seek to leave a lasting legacy in terms of skills, employment and business success.

European Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)

64. There has been significant interest in the new European Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). There have been more than 100 formal Expressions of Interest submitted to SEEDA. SEEDA is helping applicants by reviewing the expressions of interest, and the majority are likely to result in formal applications. These expressions have resulted from the publicity on the SEEDA website and a series of workshops staged by SEEDA in February this year. During March more than 8,000 leaflets have been distributed to land-based businesses across the region, and we anticipate a flurry of new enquiries. Whilst this hump of work is putting quite a strain on SEEDA to work with applicants, we are extremely pleased with the level of interest and the number of collaborative ideas being developed.
65. The region has 16 bids for the Leader element of the programme from areas across the region. They are for small areas where populations must be less than 150,000. They are 'bottom up' programmes where projects are developed by local partnerships. SEEDA has spent a lot of time advising these bids.

Decisions on the bids are being made by a panel of partners and will be published by the end of May.

Eco Island

66. The Isle of Wight launched Eco Island, the Island's Community Strategy and Vision on 26th March. The Island's aim is to have the smallest carbon footprint in England by 2020. SEEDA Board member Bill Wakeham, alongside other speakers, addressed the well-attended event which set out ambitious ideas and plans for a more sustainable and self sufficient Island.
67. SEEDA is working with Island partners and the University of Southampton to explore the potential for a marine/tidal wave energy research centre and a renewables technology park on the Island.

Diamonds eco-footprint work

68. The Diamonds' Leaders Group endorsed in March a challenging ambition to deliver on the region's RES ecological footprint goal faster than in the RES:
 - To stabilize ecological footprint by 2014
69. As a follow-on, the Diamond's Ecological Footprint Policy Group chaired by SEEDA (Oona Muirhead) is to commission a 'Dummies Guide' to tackling ecological footprint that will include common elements, but also be bespoke to each Diamond. Such a guide will be valuable for all other local authorities; the intention is to launch it at a SE Diamonds Conference in September.

SEEDA Going Green

70. Confirmation has now been received of SEEDA's ISO14001 (environmental management) accreditation for its office based activities.

Equality & Inclusion

71. In preparation for the new approach in the Corporate Plan a significant amount of research and analysis work has been undertaken. This has included the conclusion of a major equality and inclusion statistics database for the region which will be available on the Regional Observatory website.
72. The first stages of this have been completed; this has included mapping the incidence and experience of migrant workers in the region, in both urban and rural areas. This will be used to inform the Regional Partnership on Migration's work with the Border and Immigration Agency. The objectives being to identify the region's need for migrant workers and also to identify issues around managing migrant workers.
73. 31st March saw the closure of two major 4-year EQUAL funded projects, Cultural Shift and EXODUS. These two projects have influenced regional and national policy in their respective fields of social enterprise and offender rehabilitation. Indeed, the Cultural Shift programme has supported the design of

the national social enterprise business support programme for social enterprise operated by Business Link.

74. The final version of the Agency's Gender Equality Scheme has been published: this outlines activities to support the reduction in gender inequality across the South East, including strategic activities that will take place over the next 3 years with key partners such as the RSPA and the Social Dialogue Forum.

The World's Creative Hub

75. Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) launched the Creative Economy Programme at the end of February. The South East is one of a number of pilots for Regional Beacons - a network of business support leads for the creative industries to define exemplar delivery to the creative economy. SEEDA will be working with Business Link to identify examples of good practice in business support to the Creative Industries, as well as a gap analysis to inform future support. RDAs have a number of commitments under the programme, and the leads for Creative Industries within the RDAs will be working together to ensure regions promote and support the creative economy.

Sea Change Fund

76. DCMS announced a £45million fund over 3 years aimed at providing cultural regeneration of seaside resorts. Dover is to receive one of the first wave of large grants of up to £4million. SEEDA is now working with English Heritage, Kent County Council and Dover District Council on plans to use the refurbishment of Dover Castle as the centrepiece of a regeneration project for the whole of Dover, connecting up the disparate parts of Dover to make a holistic visitor offer. There is also an open application for smaller grants of £200,000 to £1million, and SEEDA is working to identify, promote and support applications from resorts along the coast for these smaller grants, as well as for future large grants.

Tour of Britain

77. It was announced on 3rd April that Milton Keynes and Newbury will be the host towns for the second leg of the Tour of Britain cycle race on 8th September 2008. The 100 mile South East stage will see 96 top British and international cyclists compete in a four hour event. It is expected to attract thousands of spectators to the towns: the start will be in Milton Keynes and the finish in Newbury.

ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Thames Gateway

Economic Development Investment Plan (EDIP)

78. The three Greater South East RDAs continued to work closely with partners to develop the final version of the Economic Development Investment Plan which is due to be published in May. This will set out the initiatives to be taken

forward by the RDAs and Communities and Local Government (CLG) over the 2008-11 Corporate Plan period using the £275 committed as part of the Thames Gateway Delivery Plan.

79. It is intended that an Annual Commissioning Framework (ACF) will be published alongside the EDIP which will set out the RDAs and CLG contributions to the EDIP initiatives in the 2008/09 financial year. A draft of the ACF is to be presented to the Minister, Caroline Flint and partners at the Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership in May.
80. Arrangements for establishing a Joint RDA Board subcommittee for the Thames Gateway are progressing and a number of forthcoming meetings have been arranged.

Thames Gateway Funding

81. CLG recently confirmed that SEEDA had obtained a total of £31.3 million funding for physical development projects throughout the Kent area of Thames Gateway for the next 3 years. This represents approx 40% of the total funding allocated for North Kent, endorsing SEEDA's ability to deliver regeneration in the Thames Gateway.

Dartford

Northern Gateway Dartford

82. SEEDA's work to bring forward the comprehensive redevelopment of the Northern Gateway in Dartford Town Centre has taken a step forward with the acquisition of a further 0.4 ha of land in the heart of the Northern Gateway West. This is a key acquisition with SEEDA now owning approximately 40% of the site representing a total investment of over £12,000,000. Work continues to acquire the remainder of the land which makes up the Northern Gateway from private landowners.

Chatham Maritime

St. Mary's Island

83. The latest housing phase at Ventura Waterfront (Sector 7/8) released 58 units, of both private sale and affordable housing; 17 of these are either sold or exchanged. At the Fishing Village, 32 apartments are under construction and are forecast to be completed by the end of May 2008. 10 apartments have been exchanged and 3 have been reserved.

Queenborough and Rushenden, Isle of Sheppey

Land acquisitions

84. The land acquisitions SEEDA required in order to facilitate the new Rushenden Link Road were completed by the end of March. This process was complex and involved 8 land owners and 48 different legal documents. Contracts for the construction of the road should be awarded by summer 2008.

85. SEEDA also acquired further sites which are earmarked for a renewable energy centre, small business units and to enable the first residential area.

Woolston

86. Planning consent for the Woolston Riverside scheme, which was based on the Richard Rogers Masterplan, was obtained in March 2008. SEEDA's development partner, Crest Nicholson Regeneration (CNR) submitted a further planning application in March 2008, including a detailed application for phase 1, which will include a significant proportion of affordable housing.
87. SEEDA is currently in the process of tendering for an enabling works package and it is anticipated that a contract will be let by June 2008 with works expected to start on site shortly afterwards.
88. In April 2008, SEEDA secured US super yacht company Palmer Johnson as the primary occupier for the marine quarter. A further detailed planning application for the marine quarter is anticipated shortly.

Hythe

89. Planning permission for a new access road for Hythe Marine Park was secured in March 2008. A lawful development certificate is expected to be secured shortly, formalizing the B2 planning use of the site.
90. SEEDA also secured US super yacht company Palmer Johnson on a five year lease for part of one of the main hangars. This will form a twin production facility with Woolston based around Southampton water, and will create 800 skilled jobs. Meanwhile work has commenced on the refit of the building in preparation of their occupation in July 2008.
91. Other early occupation on the site has been secured by short term license arrangements to a number of marine companies and details of these occupiers will be available shortly.
92. SEEDA is currently in the process of procuring further improvement works contracts on the site and hope to be in a position to announce the re-opening of the heavy slip facility for commercial hire by summer 2008. This is likely to appeal to companies refitting both commercial craft and super yachts.

Incubation Physical Infrastructure

Joiners Shop Business Centre (Chatham)

93. Work has now started on site for the new Business Centre which will provide 45 new studio units (much needed new space for small and starter businesses) focusing on the Arts and Creative Design sectors. SEEDA's delivery partners are the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, Medway Council and Communities and Local Government (CLG). The project will refurbish the existing historic building, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument dating from the 1780's and bring it back into use.

Newhaven Business Centre

94. Opened in November 2007 with the lettings continuing to exceed expectations, approximately 50% let. The Centre has been very well received, providing a blend of business support, new workshop and office space, and regeneration for Newhaven. The Business Centre is of a highly sustainable design and is one of the few commercial buildings in the region to achieve Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'excellent'. Chairman Jim Brathwaite is scheduled to formally open the Centre in May 2008.

South East Excellence

Communities and Local Government (CLG) Select Committee Evidence

95. SEEDA submitted evidence to the Communities and Local Government Committee Inquiry into the skills capacity within local government to deliver sustainable communities.
96. SEEDA welcomed the decision by the CLG Select Committee to seek evidence on the broader range of planning skills required by local authority staff and elected members. The Inquiry is timely as Local authorities have a redefined role in the delivery of the Government's sustainable communities agenda; a shift confirmed by the Lyons Inquiry into Local Government and the White Papers on Strong and Prosperous Communities and Planning for a Sustainable Future. In addition to the existing (and substantial) local planning authority role, the challenges of these new responsibilities and of the Government's regional housing targets, New Growth Points and proposed Eco-Towns, demands a new, broader set of professional skills.
97. SEEDA's response drew on 2 pieces of research and consultation undertaken as part of its South East Excellence initiative (the brand name for the Regional Centre of Excellence for sustainable communities). One asked Councillors and developers about the skills, knowledge and behaviours they required to support sustainable communities, the others asked a sample of local planning authorities about the barriers to delivery they faced and the skills implications of these.
98. SEEDA has been invited to present the evidence at the Select Committee on the 12th May 2008.
99. Masterclass series: Future Trends and models of employment space needs SEEDA's Making Places report into the perceived skills barriers to delivery recommended that SEEDA support seminar series, one of which should look at emerging issues in spatial planning. As part of this series SEEDA supported the Urban Renaissance Institute (part of the University of Greenwich at Medway) run a masterclass on future trends and models of employment space on the 2nd April at the Aspex galley, Portsmouth. The event was intended to stimulate awareness and thinking amongst senior planning officers about the changing nature of work and the implications for spatial planning. The event was set within the context of consultation on Planning Policy Statement 4 (Planning for Sustainable Economic Development) and the SNR which emphasises local authorities playing a stronger role in the economic development of their areas. The event also complemented an earlier workshop into employment land reviews organised by the Assembly.

Transport and Infrastructure

Intermodal Port Access and Commodities Transport in Europe (IMPACTE) and Solent to Midlands Advancement of Rail Transport (SMART)

100. The IMPACTE project has been granted an extension and additional funding by the North West Europe (NWE) Interrg IIIB Steering Committee.
101. In April, the University of Plymouth, one of the IMPACTE project partners, presented the IMPACTE research at the International Association of Maritime Economists (IAME) Annual Conference in China. The aim of attending the conference was to share the findings from the research to experts in the shipping and port industry from all over the world, increasing awareness on the vital contribution of ports to the prosperity of the NWE economy. It also enabled feedback on how to improve the 'Clustering of ports in a socio-economic and environmental framework' delivery package and how the NWE economy can contribute to world maritime economics as a whole.
102. SEEDA, through the IMPACTE project, has successfully achieved 48% match funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), for preparation works for the SMART project.
103. In March, SEEDA successfully concluded negotiations with Network Rail for the Southampton Tunnel Grant Agreement. This will allow funding for necessary studies towards the implementation of the SMART scheme. This Agreement forms precedence in terms of contracting with Network Rail and should allow speedy agreements to subsequent agreements with UK's rail delivery agency.

STRATEGIC INFLUENCE

Climate change briefing at the European Parliament

104. On 3rd March 2008 the South East England Brussels Office organised a briefing session for the European Parliament's Temporary Committee on Climate Change. The event was organised with support from South East MEP Caroline Lucas and show-cased best practice on tackling climate change in five English regions. The South East show-cased the dramatic reductions in CO₂ emissions achieved by Woking Borough Council.
105. The session was attended by MEPs, political assistants and the European Commission. Additionally, information on SEEDA's climate change policies and activities was distributed to all 60 full members of the Climate Change Committee and 40 substitute members, from all 27 EU Member States. It is hoped that the briefing session and the information distributed will ensure that the experience of English regions is taken into account in the drafting of the Committee's final report. The Brussels Office is currently planning follow-up activities to build on the success of the event.

Berkshire Economic Strategy Board

106. The first meeting of the Berkshire Economic Strategy Board (BESB), chaired, as an interim arrangement, by SEEDA, was held on 10 April 2008. This new Strategic Partnership has been developed in response to SEEDA's review of

the South East Economic Partnerships. BESB will be the overarching economic partnership for Berkshire. It will coordinate economic assessments and research and update the Thames Valley Economic Strategy to produce a Berkshire Economic Strategy. It will also provide the focus for economic input to the Local Area Agreements developed by the 6 Berkshire Unitary Authorities, and to a possible future Multi Area Agreement. The Board will engage with business via the existing Thames Valley Economic Partnership, which will continue to be supported by SEEDA in its work on innovation and inward investment.

SEEDA Visit to Oxfordshire – 22 April 2008

107. The Chairman, Chief Executive and members of the Executive Directors visited Oxfordshire on 22 April. In addition to discussion with the Leader of the Oxford County Council (Keith Mitchell) and the Leaders of the District Authorities on SEEDA's Corporate Plan and to discuss the implications of SNR, SEEDA also visited Bicester (including Bicester Village) and Oxford West End where a programme team has been set up by the County Council and City authority to take forward the development of this site. SEEDA contributes to the funding of the team.

PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire) Business Plan 2008-11 and emerging Multi-Area Agreement

108. SEEDA has been actively supporting PUSH in the development of its Business Plan for 2008-11 and Multi-Area Agreement (MAA).

109. PUSH are working towards Ministerial sign-off at the earliest possible opportunity. The MAA is likely to be the first in the South East and a great opportunity for PUSH to create the right conditions to support its Business Plan which focuses on the action needed for a step-change in economic performance in South Hampshire, aligned with the RES.

DEVELOPING SEEDA

110. To support implementation of SEEDA's new Corporate Plan, the Area Teams have been restructured to take a more outward facing, strategic role and create stronger strategic relationship with partners. A fifth team is being created, Deputy Area Directors and Area Policy Advisors are being appointed and the Area Manager posts refocused and upgraded to reflect new objectives in light of SNR and in support of the organisational development programme. Specifically, the Area Teams will:

- Strengthen their role as relationship managers and drivers of local strategies
- Shift away from a programme management role
- Develop an enhanced role as brokering negotiations between relevant SEEDA programmes with colleagues and local partners
- Play an instrumental role in establishing cross SEEDA Task Forces to identify key SEEDA activity in the sub-regions and diamonds.

111. The five new Area teams and their Area Directors are:

- Hants and Isle of Wight – Kathy Slack

- Kent and Medway – Susan Priest
- Sussex – Gilly Bartrip
- Milton Keynes/ Oxfordshire/ Buckinghamshire – Warren Ralls starting on the 16th June 2008
- Surrey and Berkshire – Nigel Horton-Baker starting on the 30th June 2008