

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

BOARD MEETING ON 18 JUNE 2009

ITEM 14

AGENCY REPORT

Recommendation

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

GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Global Markets programme

Inward Investment Activity

1. SEEDA has secured four inward investment successes which will create 27 new jobs over the next three years.

Business Development events:

Hannover Messe 2009 – Germany - 20-24 April 2009

2. In April SEEDA attended the world's leading showcase for industrial technology in Hannover, Germany. This year's event focused on energy efficiency in industrial processes and sustainable methods for generating energy. SEEDA Germany visited companies that had been identified as potential inward investors through a pre-marketing exercise. Two projects were generated as a result of SEEDA's attendance at the event.

Launchpad UK Launch – Belgium and Netherlands – 28 April/12 May 2009

3. SEEDA, Locate in Kent and UK Trade & Investment hosted two events to launch Launchpad UK, SEEDA's softlandings package. The events were targeted at companies with international expansion plans, as well as multipliers. The event involved one-on-one meetings with potential investors and six companies have expressed interest to participate in a scheduled visit to the region on 9 June.

Technopolis Business Breakfast – Finland – 7 May 2009

4. SEEDA presented to over 40 Finnish high-tech businesses at the Technopolis Business Breakfast event organised by UKTI Helsinki. The event targeted Finnish Information and Communication Technology and environmental technology companies looking to expand their business into the UK. It also featured a presentation from a successful Finnish telecare company, Navigil Ltd, that SEEDA recently helped to set up in Surrey. SEEDA's participation in

this event has resulted in a number of new business opportunities, including new inward investment leads and a potential new expansion project.

Goddard Composites visit – 6-9 April 2009

5. Goddard Composites, a potential US investor into the region, operate within the renewables sector and have made several visits into the Kent area. The latest visit programme organised by SEEDA included introductions to British Board of Agreement and Building Regulatory Consultancy, which was facilitated in conjunction with South East Consortium for the Built Environment. Goddard is expected to become an investment success in June 2009.

Research and Development Programme

National Aerospace Technology Strategy

Alphasat

6. SEEDA has now provided its £12m share of the £36m funding agreed across the Greater South RDAs in support of the Alphasat satellite programme. The European Space Agency has reported that the high level industrial activities relating to Alphasat are progressing well following a preliminary design review held in November. This positive outcome will now enable specific equipment and components to undergo similar design reviews against the specifications stemming from the payload system engineering activity.

Next Generation Composite Wing

7. SEEDA are investing £2.6m in this national collaborative Research & Development programme aimed at developing and maturing technologies to increase the level of composite material in future commercial aircraft wings. As part of the technology dissemination strategy for the programme, key representatives from the industry provided a briefing to South East universities as part of a workshop looking at a wider strategy on composite technologies for the region.

Innovation and Creativity Programme

Innovation and Growth

8. Four Innovation and Growth Team grant framework agreements have now been signed by partners. These cover West Surrey and North East Hants, Thames Valley, Solent (including Isle of Wight) and Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire starting in June 2009, providing intensive support to over 1000 clients. They will deliver five products which form part of the government's Solutions for Business' portfolio.

Sector Consortia

South East Centre for the Built Environment

9. The SEEDA supported South East Centre for the Built Environment (SECBE) Libya office, was opened by Her Majesty's Ambassador to Libya, Sir Vincent

Fean, SEEDA Chair, Jim Brathwaite, and SECBE Chair, Bob Heathfield in Tripoli on 19 May. The new office, a partnership between SEEDA, UKTI and SECBE, will help south east construction companies take up emerging opportunities in the Libyan construction sector, as the country engages in an intense period of development. SECBE will also have a presence in Abu Dhabi.

South East Health Technologies Alliance

10. SEEDA has commissioned the South East Health Technologies Alliance to work with regional businesses and universities in developing thinking around a Communications Science and Innovation campus with an initial focus on Assisted Living. On 24 April, they presented a first draft of the report to key stakeholders at a workshop held in Southampton. The workshop achieved significant buy-in from business, universities and representatives from BERR and the Technology strategy Board. Feedback from the workshop is currently being incorporated in to the final report, which will help to guide the next steps in the development of the Science and Innovation Campus.

Leadership and Management

11. SEEDA brokered a Leadership and Management Summit between the three Regional Development Agencies concerned with the Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area, SEEDA, East of England Development Agency and East Midlands Development Agency, held in Milton Keynes on 18 May. The aim of the meeting was to ensure that Milton Keynes South Midlands businesses get the best from the Learning and Skills Council's Leadership and Management offer without the issue of the RDA boundaries affecting the marketing or the offer. The partners attending the summit agreed to continue discussions which are leading to practical outcomes for the benefit of businesses.

Manufacturing Advisory Service

12. The new Manufacturing Advisory Service South East programme is up and running with effect from the 1 April. The winning bidder, following a competitive OJEU open procurement process, was EEF Ltd. A business plan has been agreed with EEF for the first year of operation until 31 March 2010. The programme will run for three years and will comply with the new Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform National Guidelines for MAS.

Design

Designing Demand

13. Following the expansion of the SEEDA Designing Demand programme providing the Design Council's 'flag ship' programme to South East businesses a further round of six design workshop seminars led by some of the UK's leading designers completed in April. Twenty five companies joined Sittingbourne MP Derek Wyatt at the Kent workshop.

Thames Gateway Institute for Sustainability (TGIfS)

14. The Thames Gateway Institute for Sustainability, established in March 2009, will be private sector led and has been set up to bring forward practical research that supports the delivery of sustainability in the built environment and beyond. The Institute's core activities include establishing close-to-market collaborative research projects, and using the value from these projects to meet its charitable aims. It will have a number of facilities in the Thames Gateway, including a base at the Bridge in Dartford, and a research centre in the Dagenham Sustainable Industries Park. The Institute will form an International network initially with Tongji University (Shanghai); Masdar Institute of Science and Technology; and VTT Finland.

Space Task Force

15. At the request of the Minister for Innovation to the RDA Chief Executives, SEEDA established a Space Task force to make the business case to government for investment in space and to demonstrate the growing importance of the space industry to regional economies. The Task Force is chaired by SEEDA with membership from industry, the RDAs, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, British National Space Centre, the Technology Strategy Board and the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform. Some key recommendations from a report commissioned by the group from Oxford Economic
 - Establish an "Innovation (Science) and Growth Team".
 - Consider the establishment of a UK Space Agency
 - Maximise the return from the UK/European Space Agency Space Facility, Harwell
16. The influence on government of the report and input from the task force was recognised by ministers (Ian Pearson and Lord Drayson) in a recent meeting, which will agreed to the formation of a Space Innovation and Growth Team. The Technology Strategy Board is considering how Space can be brought more directly into the National Technology Strategy.

SMART GROWTH

Enterprise

Business Link

17. SEEDA, with support from the Learning and Skills Council, is in the process of evaluating proposals for a new supplier to deliver the Business Link service in the South East. A Business Link Advisory Panel, made up of Business Representative Organisations and Local Authority representatives, has been set up to oversee the process and will provide valuable input into the process. The SEEDA funded and managed Regional Customer Relationship Management and Information System will be live from September 2009.

South East Business Support Advisory Board

18. South East Business Support Advisory Board met on the 7 of May 2009. The key purpose of the Board is to oversee the development of a Regional Business Support Simplification Programme Transition Management Plan and the development of a regional business support framework.
19. Simplification in Action at the local level featured prominently with a joint presentation from Local Authority colleagues and the SEEDA Area Team (representing the experience in Kent and Medway). The issues raised provided useful input for a good debate amongst members including the Business Representative Bodies.

Business Link - Enterprise Gateway Service

20. April and May has been a busy period for the Enterprise Gateway service with a range of events and workshops. An example of the impact can be demonstrated through the West Sussex Enterprise Gateway who attended the Jobs and Careers Fair in Crawley on Thursday 14 May. Over 1,000 adults and students attended the event and the West Sussex Enterprise Gateway service gave a 20 minute presentation entitled "You Can Do It" to 50 people. The presentation covered the very basics of becoming self employed. In total 25 people were engaged at the enterprise gateway service stand, five of which have gone onto receiving mentoring and are attending the gateway service workshops, the other 20 have booked onto the Business Link mainstream Business Start Up Workshops.

Train to Gain

21. New processes for running the Integrated Skills Brokerage service under the Business Link brand have been implemented successfully. In the change over period we have not noticed a drop in performance and hope that this will continue and improve over the next twelve months. The focus on performance for the year will be on engaging with employers, identifying learner starts and brokering this to training providers, and in maintaining customer satisfaction at 90%.

Women's Enterprise Regional Activity

22. Funding for SEEDA's South East Women's Business Services has been secured and the next phase of development of the pilot activity is now underway. These business support services, which focus on providing a women friendly environment for priority and hard to reach groups, is being delivered through the South East Business Link Providers and has commenced recruitment for 10 Women's Business Advisors across the region.

Enterprising Britain

23. SEEDA is looking for the most enterprising place in the South East, to enter the national competition Enterprising Britain 2009 (closing date for region entries was 30 April 2009). The UK winner will be announced in October 2009. Last years winners were Millbrook Technology Campus, a Southampton-based technology park who were highlighted as a shining example of how enterprise and innovation can bring social regeneration and opportunities that positively impact the local community.

Ministerial Summit on Social Enterprise

24. SEEDA participated and inputted into a key Ministerial Summit on Social Enterprise held in London. Ministers in attendance included Lord Mandelson, Ian Pearson and Kevin Brennan. The aim of the summit was to explore the role of social enterprise in the recession and in the future rebalanced economy, and discuss the practical help needed to enable social enterprises to start-up and for the sector to grow as well as secure commitment from across government and the RDAs to measurable actions to support the growth of social. Some of the points raised included opportunities in public service delivery, importance of asset backing for social enterprises, promotion of peer to peer networking and redeployment of individuals from economic inactivity into social enterprise.

Women's Enterprise Task Force research into women in the recession

25. The Women's Enterprise Task Force champion's women's enterprise and is managed by SEEDA and co-chaired by Pam Alexander. The Task Force has recently conducted some research into the effect of the recession on women's enterprise. Key findings from this piece of work suggest that, although women are over-represented in sectors which are most vulnerable in the recession, many growth-oriented women-owned enterprises have low debt and controlled overheads, enabling them to attract new business. Female entrepreneurs are fully aware of the economic environment in which they are operating but are optimistic about their sustainability in difficult times.

CompeteFor

26. The focus of business support for 2012 is CompeteFor - the pre-qualification questionnaire system supported by the business network and supplier support, delivered by Business Link and the Buying Engagement team to release contracts from the tier contractors outsourced to BiP solutions. CompeteFor is unique in providing support throughout the process and penetrating the supply chain, breaking contracts down to a size at which SMEs can compete. The CompeteFor programme is a partnership with all the RDAs, Devolved Administrations, Olympic Delivery Authority and London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games.
27. To date, nationally, there are almost 70,000 business registered on the system which is still growing at over a thousand a month. 45% of businesses have published to be business ready to tender. The South East is still the most active

outside of London with more than 12,300 registered and over 5600 or 46% published ready to tender for contracts. Overall the South East has won 143 contracts related to 2012. 18 contracts have been awarded through CompeteFor, because contract awards are delivered in different ways 22 suppliers on CompeteFor have won contracts.

Tourism

28. A Guardian national supplement was published in April 08, funded by SEEDA with Enjoy England and part of the recession busting campaign. This led with the launch of Tourism South East Ian Fleming niche marketing campaign which included the back cover of the programme handed out to all attendees of the James Bond exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in a joint initiative with Beaulieu.

Winning in Recession Workshops

29. A series of workshops focused on winning in the recession was developed and rolled out in March 2009. Five workshops were held in Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight respectively. A sixth is being held in Lewes on 13 May. Additional funding has been allocated in this financial year.

Engineering Skills

30. There is a continuing need within the current economic downturn to ensure skills within the marine/aerospace sectors are retained and the current workforce continues to be up-skilled. Following a report detailing the skills needs of the marine/aerospace sectors SEEDA has contracted with Farnborough Aerospace Consortium to develop a web-based mechanism to manage the redeployment, recruitment and placement of employees. The initiative started in April 2009 and runs until March 2011. It will be piloted within several major aerospace/marine companies and will put employers directly in touch with individuals wishing to work in that sector as well as highlighting vacancies (in association with the Continuing Employment Support Service, Job Centre Plus and Train to Gain brokerage service). The initiative will provide immediate and focused assistance to support particular skills and employment needs of employers.

SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY

Low Carbon Programme

Carbon Capture and Storage - Progress towards a Carbon Capture and Storage Cluster in Thames Gateway

31. As part of its work on the Green Economy, SEEDA is undertaking work on Carbon Capture and Storage - one of the four major low carbon business

opportunities identified in the Government's 'Building Britain's Future: new industries, new jobs' strategy.

32. Following an approach by the energy company E.ON, SEEDA has had discussions with the Department for Energy and Climate Change, East of England Development Agency and London Development Agency about a potential Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Cluster in the Thames Gateway. The Cluster would link fossil-fuel power stations with other major point sources of CO₂ in the Gateway via a pipeline network, which would eventually pump the captured, liquefied CO₂ out to voids (from exhausted oil and gas deposits) under the southern North Sea.
33. The CCS Cluster would make an important contribution to achieving a low-carbon Thames Gateway and could generate significant economic benefit, including job creation and supply chain development. The Department for Energy and Climate Change is very interested in the idea of a Thames Gateway Cluster, and has encouraged us to develop proposals. Government announced further support for CCS Feasibility Studies and Demonstrators in the recent Budget, and the European Union has confirmed plans to fund some 12 CCS demonstration projects. In mid-June, the Technology Strategy Board will issue a call for CCS Demonstrator projects; as the next step towards the Thames Gateway Cluster, we plan to develop a joint bid to this call with East of England Development Agency.

Major Retrofitting and European Investment Bank

34. SEEDA recently had a very constructive meeting with Christopher Jones, Director for New and Renewable Sources of Energy, Energy Efficiency and Innovation from the European Commission. At the meeting in Hastings we discussed the EU's proposed new SMART Cities initiative – where bids will be invited to support a wide range of environmental actions to be undertaken.
35. With partners we have started to develop initial ideas for a possible virtual SMART City bid in the South East. SEEDA has also been speaking to the European Investment Bank (EIB) which has expressed interest in supporting a major retrofit programme in the region. We believe we have many of the ingredients in the region for a major and successful programme of activity, and will work with partners to develop proposals which we hope will attract EU and EIB investment.

“No Nonsense Guide” to Tackling the Ecological Footprint

36. The Diamonds for Investment and Growth Leaders' Board approved the “No Nonsense Guide” at its last meeting and is committed to championing it. The focus over the next six months will be rolling the guide out across the Diamonds. During the following six months we will be evaluating how it has been used.
37. The guide is website-based and aimed initially at the eight Diamonds with a view to then being rolled out across the South East and potentially the country as a whole. Specifically it is aimed at the council leaders and other top decision-

makers in the South East to make effective strategic decisions to reduce their carbon footprint.

Sustainable Business Service

38. The Sustainable Business Service has recently reported its achievements for 2008-10, highlighting how it has helped many businesses to make significant cost and carbon savings during 2008-09. Through brokerage to environmental reviews and audits 230 businesses have on average made £2000 savings, totalling £460,000, with possible further savings totalling £690,000 if additional actions identified through brokerage are implemented.
39. During 2008-9 there were a total of 8,945 referrals for information and help made by the service and 596 brokerages to over 75 different business support products/services eg environmental reviews, Train to Gain Leadership and Management Grants and Carbon Trust Loans and Advice.
40. The Sustainable Business Service is managed by Business Support Kent on behalf of the South East Business Links. Six Sustainable Business Advisers deliver the service across the South East, with each Adviser being based in their respective Business Link.

SUSCON - Sustainable Construction Academy

41. SEEDA has successfully negotiated £2m of additional European Social Fund financial support from Government to address the need for sustainable construction skills within the Thames Gateway, which will also act as a means to help support businesses through the recession. The funding will kick start a pilot training programme as a pre-cursor to SUSCON – an industry-led Sustainable Construction skills academy, to be based at The Bridge site in Dartford, Kent. The programme will commence from July 2009 and run until December 2010.
42. The programme will up-skill and re-skill people to be ready to grasp new market opportunities within the green economy i.e. retrofitting homes within local communities. Given the impact of the recession on employment levels in the construction/built environment sector, the programme will provide (in conjunction with the Continuing Employment Support Service) a tailored training programme to increase employment and address economic inactivity. This workforce will be vital to the delivery of the Thames Gateway aspiration to be the first eco-region and a zero carbon economy.

Environmental Technology Skills

43. The European Social Fund programme has issued the final contract from the last application round. This is for Business Support Kent's Environmental Skills for South East Small and Medium Enterprises project. This will support the re-skilling and up-skilling of the SME workforce at National Vocational Qualification Level 3 and above in the Environmental Technology and related BioScience Technology Sectors.

Natural and Rural Resources

Forthcoming rural business event

44. A Rural Summit is being held on 30 June by the Commission for Rural Communities covering both the South East and East of England. The summit will focus on:
- How rural communities can help and support inspiring business people, employees, leaders or rural champions to gain visibility.
 - Improving how decision makers are informed and influenced on rural issues
 - Defining who are the leaders or champions on rural issues and how they might be better supported
45. The event will use case examples for decision makers to help them when making decisions, working with businesses or negotiating new programmes, which will ensure that 'Think Rural' is automatically part of rural proofing and mainstreaming.

Sustainable Communities Programme

POWER Project proposals submission – First call

46. The POWER Interregional Programme's first call closed on 12 May 2009. Eleven applications were received involving 37 organisations across the partner regions under the first call for proposals. The POWER partner regions will now begin the assessment of all the applications. A decision on approved projects will be taken at the SEEDA chaired steering committee in Brussels on 29 June and be made public in early Summer 2009.

ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Development Fund Programme

West Medina Mills and Stag Lane

47. The Phase 1 Remediation works at West Medina have been completed. Following the Isle of Wight Council's resolution to grant consent for the hybrid planning application scheme in April 2009, the Section 106 has been signed and planning consent granted in mid May. The Section 278 (highway works) has been signed and work on the junction (Horsebridge Hill and Stag Lane) started on Monday 18 May 2009. It is anticipated this will be completed by mid July 2009. It is envisaged the construction of the road will commence in late summer 2009.

Canterbury Innovation Centre

48. Work started in October 2008 and is due for completion in October 2009. The works are progressing well, in line with the budget and timescales. The roof is on, glazing being put in and internal partitioning ongoing. Close working with the University of Kent and other partners has helped identify potential occupiers. Ten visits have been arranged in June for innovative businesses to start to allocate the units. Interest is very positive with the environmental credentials of the building proving a key selling point, particularly to related businesses. Marketing and recruitment is being progressed, ready for opening in November.

STRATEGIC INFLUENCE

Area Teams

Surrey and Berkshire Area Team

Monitoring the Economic Downturn

49. SEEDA has led work with local economic development partners in Berkshire to produce a Berkshire support pack that will inform stakeholders and partners of all the local, regional and national support available to business. This will aid information flow and targeted action for those working on the front line with businesses. It will be regularly up-dated on line to ensure the content is always current. This was a direct response from local partners with SEEDA support in information gathering and coordination and means of dissemination

Capacity Building Sub Regional Partnership

50. SEEDA has now received agreement by Berkshire Economic Strategy Board and Thames Valley Economic Partnership (TVEP) at Board level to work on a merger plan and a single administration of their joint activities that will retain the involvement TVEP's major company membership in shaping economic development policy and action in the area. SEEDA, given its new focus, has been asked to lead the global competitiveness sub group combining the two organisations and providing strategic direction to key activities such as inward investment and innovation. This will include SEEDA commissioning inward investment case handling services from the two organisations, the development of the service by involving a range of other organisations including SEGRO, Thames Valley Chamber and Reading UK Community Interest Company and the development of a more focused inward investment strategy for the Thames Valley.

Shaping Delivery

51. SEEDA is now represented on the Board of Reading UK CIC Ltd, the organisation that has been given the go ahead to coordinate action in support of the Reading Diamond. SEEDA with Reading UK CIC's Chief Executive has been involved in a series of meetings with the Chief Executive and Leaders of the Councils of Bracknell, Wokingham and West Berkshire, the three key authorities with a stake in the Reading Diamond. They have all confirmed support and are working towards a conference before the Autumn that will start

to articulate their vision and objectives in line with the SE Diamonds prospectus.

52. Thames Valley University has recently announced closure of its higher education facility in Slough. Students are being transferred, there will be no job losses and the University remains committed to providing for the training needs of business in Slough through a new facility on the Slough Trading Estate. It is also undergoing a route and branch review of further education provision in Reading following a poor OFSTED report last year. SEEDA is working with the Learning and Skills Council, KPMG and the two local authorities to ensure appropriate and effective transition arrangements. This provision is critical to the economic competitiveness of the area and realising its potential to weather the recession and drive the upturn.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Area Team

Creation of North Hampshire and M3 Economic Board

53. The North Hampshire and M3 Economic Board held its first meeting on 26th May 2009. The Board has been established to drive forward joint working across local authorities and stakeholders in the North Hampshire area to bring increased economic prosperity to the area.
54. Over the past six months, SEEDA has played a key role in developing the evidence base and providing strategic advice which led to the formation of the Board. In recognition of this, Kathy Slack, SEEDA Area Director for Hampshire and IoW was asked to chair the inaugural meeting. The Board agreed to focus on four areas for the next 6-12 months:
- Skills - establish an Employment and Skills Board for North Hampshire to advise on employment and skills provision in the area, driven by the needs of employers.
 - Inward Investment - raise the profile of the North Hampshire economy and attract new investment to support sustainable economic growth. The first task will be to complete the North Hants 'Investment Proposition' that SEEDA is leading on, and to map local capacity and arrangements for managing investment enquiries.
 - Transport and infrastructure - to define opportunities for joint working on transport and broadband.
 - Hold a major business event in partnership with Business Link, with an emphasis on supporting businesses through the recession and preparing for the up-turn.
55. The Board has agreed to adopt a flexible, light touch approach to governance arrangements, with Local Authorities and stakeholders electing to join whichever strand of joint working they envisage benefit from.

Vestas Blades

56. In response to the workforce consultation on the future of Vestas Blades' Isle of Wight manufacturing facility, the SEEDA-led task force has taken forward a programme of support to the company.
57. Following the establishment of this taskforce in April, three open days have been held for Vestas employees. This gave employees the opportunity to meet

selected agencies including Jobcentre Plus, Business Link, VT (training provider), HM Revenue and Customs, housing and benefits advisors to get a better understanding of the support available to them. The open day will be followed by individual support sessions tailored to the individuals' needs.

58. SEEDA working with Jobcentre Plus has prepared a strategy to take forward a skills matching process. SEEDA are in contact with several companies who have expressed an interest in recruiting Vestas' staff and expect to be able to assist a proportion of employees into new jobs by the end of the consultation period in July.

Mapping the Economy Article

59. SEEDA have contributed to a double-page feature on the Isle of Wight economy which featured in The Times on Saturday 23 May. The newspaper is currently running a 'Mapping the Economy' series profiling the economy in areas across the UK. Following a request from a journalist researching a feature on the Isle of Wight, SEEDA produced a detailed briefing on key businesses, sector clusters and SEEDA's investment on the Isle of Wight. Kathy Slack, Area Director for Hampshire and Isle of Wight was interviewed and quoted in the article. The briefing provided by SEEDA was reflected in the final article which is positive and highlights the strength and diversity of the Island's manufacturing base, with a specific focus on boat building, aerospace, defence and electronics. The full article can be viewed at <http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/economics/article6345844.ece>

Support for Bushfield Camp

60. SEEDA has written to Winchester City Council to express support for early proposals for a 'knowledge-campus' on a 20 hectare brownfield site in Winchester. Proposals will be developed further by the Church Commissioners for England who own the site and development is expected to begin in 2012. SEEDA have offered support to Winchester City Council to maximise the potential economic benefit of this proposal for Winchester and the wider South Hampshire Diamond.

Kent and Medway Area Team

Women in Enterprise reception at Sheerness

61. Teresa May MP, the Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Shadow Minister for Women, attended a 'Women in Enterprise' event organised by the North Kent Enterprise Gateway on 13 May. SEEDA was represented at the event by Katie Lloyd, SEEDA's North Kent Area Manager, who outlined SEEDA's support for women in business. Other attendees at the event were business owners and local female residents. SEEDA's activities were well received and there was a lively debate on the issues faced by local businesses, such as accessing Train to Gain funding and local take up of the Enterprise Finance Guarantee scheme.

Working Neighbourhoods Fund – 'Thanet Works'

62. SEEDA has been working with Thanet District Council and partners to select initial project bids under the Government's Working Neighbourhoods Fund: the programme is known as 'Thanet Works'. The programme has been allocated £4.1m over three years and focuses on creating long term sustainable changes to skills and employability within Thanet. Its five themes are: securing jobs in

Thanet; removing barriers to employment; creating a culture of work; advice, signposting and contact; and delivery in key wards.

Ashford Economic Framework

63. SEEDA is supporting the Ashford's Future Company Ltd. and other partners to produce a revised Economic Framework for the Borough. The Framework will provide the basis for Ashford to achieve its targets of 31,000 additional homes and 28,000 jobs by 2031. It will focus on investing in the drivers of competitiveness, including improving business performance, attracting and retaining investment and encouraging specialisation.

West Kent Investment Strategy

64. SEEDA is working with the West Kent Partnership to prepare an Investment Strategy for West Kent. The Partnership, which covers the districts of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells, has appointed consultants to work with stakeholders to develop an economic vision for this part of the county, followed by a 20-year strategy to attract investment to West Kent based on the preferred vision.

North Kent Multi Area Agreement

65. SEEDA is continuing to work with partners on the North Kent on draft Multi Area Agreement (MAA) which is still on target to be signed by partners and the Government in July 2009. Bilateral negotiations are now underway with government departments around the skills / employability, housing and transport themes. The MAA will be underpinned by the North Kent Economic Development Strategy. A draft of the Strategy is currently being commented upon by partners, including SEEDA.

Thames Gateway

66. SEEDA continues to work closely with EEDA and the LDA to take forward the Thames Gateway Economic Development Investment Plan (EDIP). Projects are now coming forward for consideration by the Regional Development Agency / Communities and Local Government Joint Implementation Steering Group for 'funding in principle' decisions. Up to £80m has been allocated by the Communities and Local Government / Homes and Communities Agency to take forward the EDIP. As part of the cross RDA joint working, a workshop on the impact of the recession on the Thames Gateway is being organised with local partners and this will help inform the EDIP work programme going forward.

Sussex Area Team

Gatwick Diamond

67. The Gatwick Diamond is a business-led public private partnership. SEEDA, through the Area Teams, are well represented across the governance arrangements and partners are developing a detailed business plan which will support the delivery of the ambitious Gatwick Diamond Future Plan.
68. A new model of funding sub-regional partnership work in West Sussex will see SEEDA core funding directed to Gatwick Diamond and match a joint pot of funding from the eight Local Authorities. These funds will be used to build capacity in order to: develop joint investment planning, take forward key

priorities in Future Plan, target areas where investment will make a difference, including innovation, key sectors, and international markets.

Shoreham Harbour Project

69. SEEDA through the project lead and area team, continues to support partners in work to complete the technical planning and viability studies and to look at options for establishing a special purpose vehicle for delivering the long term project of up to 10,000 homes and 7,000 plus jobs.
70. A key part of the project is the development of an economic development strategy for Shoreham Harbour. The area team is providing strategic support and directly contributing to preparation of the strategy which will identify key growth sectors and the interventions necessary to secure these opportunities.

West Sussex

71. The area team is working with West Sussex County Council to develop and agree a new model for the sub-regional partnership which will enable SEEDA funding to be directed to Gatwick Diamond and the Coastal West Sussex (CWS) Partnership.
72. We are working with partners to ensure the CWS Partnership is a dynamic, private / public sector alliance, capable of driving sustainable economic development and growth. In particular ensuring investments in education and skills in this part of the coast are jointly planned and result in a coherent offer to business and the community.

Brighton and Hove / East Sussex

73. With the University of Brighton, SEEDA jointly hosted a visit by Christopher Jones, Director with the EU Directorate General for Energy and Transport. The visit took place in Hastings and involved a full day of discussions with key partners, visits to specific sites, including University Centre Hastings and Enviro21, and a dinner with senior public and private sector representatives.
74. We were able to demonstrate to Christopher Jones the full range of initiatives and projects supporting the low carbon / renewable energy agenda happening across the South East and to explore with him the major funding opportunities available through the EU to support these areas. Following the visit a small high level strategic group is being set up to explore further how we can develop a major multimillion euro "SMART cities" proposal to put to the EU and the European Investment Bank.

Innovation and Growth Teams

75. Partners involved in the two Innovation and Growth Teams in Sussex, East Surrey and West Sussex (to cover the Gatwick Diamond) and Brighton and Hove and East Sussex continue to develop their business plans. The Area Teams continue to work closely with the Partnerships to resolve any issues and to develop creative, business focused plans that meet the requirements set by SEEDA and which will ultimately benefit businesses across the areas.

Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Area Team

Innovation & Growth Teams

76. A grant contract has been signed between SEEDA and Open University to deliver the Innovation and Growth Activity across Milton Keynes and

Buckinghamshire. Open University agreed to act as contract holder for the consortium that came together to deliver this service from 1 June 2009.