



MEDIA RELEASE

SEEDA provides £8m to help South East businesses go green

25 January 2010

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) has allocated £3.8m to green businesses throughout the region and established a £4m sustainability loan fund.

The £3.8m will fund 2,500 businesses to develop initiatives within a framework of six sustainability-led projects. The projects focus primarily on waste reduction, sustainable procurement and the development of sustainable technologies. Qualifying businesses will undergo training and environmental audits in order to establish methods that boost profits through energy reduction.

The £4m South East Sustainability Loan Fund will provide additional support for businesses that contribute to reducing the region's ecological footprint. The fund will make between £20,000 and £200,000 available to every business that wishes to improve its green credentials. The move is expected to increase the competitiveness of micro, small and medium sized businesses in the South East.

Oona Muirhead, Group Executive Director of Strategy and Support, said: "The funding from the European Regional Development Fund comes at a time when so many businesses are working to grow out of recession. Investing in going green will help businesses to cut costs, increase profits and support long-term sustainable prosperity in the South East."

The South East European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Competitiveness Programme 2007-13 supports new ways of linking good practice between prosperous and less economically successful areas. This is achieved through collaborations with businesses throughout the region and sharing best practice wherever possible.

The fund has a total allocation of over £21m to be awarded over the seven year period. Further funding rounds are to be held in early 2010.

Oona adds: "The ERDF has supported some exciting and innovative projects and we look forward to see how the funding helps businesses as it is rolled out throughout the region."

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Notes to editors

Round one projects being funded:

1. **Sustainable Supply Chains through Innovation led by the Centre for Creative Design, University for Creative Arts** – A consortium of three organisations looking to improve sustainable procurement among innovative SMEs, assisting 140 businesses and contributing £1.5m to the local economy.
2. **Procurement and Sustainable Supply (PASS) led by Reading Borough Council** – A programme actively encouraging SMEs to participate in tendering for Public Sector contracts by simplifying processes and increasing the methods by which businesses can apply for them.
3. **ZeroWISE Bulky Waste led by Re-made South East** – A partnership conducting an innovative research project to reduce volumes of waste going to landfill by finding recycling, re-use and energy-from-waste solutions for bulky waste streams from public and private sector sources.
4. **ZeroWISE Construction led by Re-made South East** – A partnership delivering a range of initiatives to instil a zero-waste strategy among the construction industry, forming a re-use and recycling network that will reduce waste by a total of 80,000 tonnes.
5. **Sustainable Marine Transformation (SMART) led by Marine South East** – A project targeting waste reduction and resource-efficient manufacturing among the 4,000 marine sector businesses in the South East.
6. **PLATO: SUSTAIN led by PLATO GB Ltd** – A project raising awareness of the cost benefits of sustainable business practices among the CEOs and senior managers of 130 key South East SMEs.
7. **Design & Innovation for Business Sustainability (DIBS) led by WSX Enterprise** – A programme stimulating action from SMEs to incorporate sustainable design into their products and services, cutting resource costs and attracting environmentally-aware customers.
8. **SMART led by Business Support Kent** – A project using expert briefings, workshops and promotional campaigns to encourage the take-up of sustainable technologies within the construction industry, presenting a major opportunity for construction SMEs to develop new business.

Round two projects being funded:

1. **Retrofit South East led by Radian Group Ltd** – A project which plans to develop a model for low carbon retrofit of social housing that will help to transform businesses and reduce carbon emissions from existing housing stock across the South East region. It will use an exemplar demonstration project of 14 social housing properties in Petersfield, Hampshire, as the centrepiece for an innovative programme of research, training & skills development, dissemination, awareness raising and promotion on the theme of low carbon refurbishment.
2. **South East Sustainability Loan Fund led by Finance South East** – A £2 million ERDF project combined with £2 million from the South East European Regional Development Fund Competitiveness Programme 2007-13 for a total of £4 million to offer loans from £20,000 to £200,000 to SMEs that deliver products or technologies that will contribute to a reduction in the rate of the region's ecological footprint. The programme has also provided funding of £5.5 million for other business support projects spanning three years in 2009 alone. The fund has a total allocation of €23.7 million to distribute to projects over the seven year period. Further funding rounds will be held early next year.
3. **Pathways to Zero Waste led by Environment Agency** – This project aims to accelerate the pace of change that diverts material from landfill by promoting resource efficiency and innovative waste management in the South East. This three years project is aiming to save 3,500 tonnes CO₂, remove 400,000 tonnes of waste from landfill and create 55 new jobs.
4. **Energy Grants for SMEs led by Business Link Kent** – The project loans out energy saving meters in order to identify potential cost savings for businesses who can then apply for a grant of up to £500 in order to assist them in making improvements.
5. **Sustainable Routes led by Ngage Solutions Ltd** – A project providing grants to businesses in the South East region to create green travel plans with views to reduce the South East carbon footprint.

6. **Zerowise Sustainable Food Waste Solutions led by Remade South East** - A project that will be working with partners in the South East region to reduce the amount of food waste that is being sent to landfill with the introduction of waste trials and collections in the areas of Kent and Sussex.
 7. **Low Carbon Futures led by Kent County Council** – The project develops and pilots an online engagement tool for SMEs for the capture of carbon emissions and the creation of an innovative 'Facebook' style learning networks.
- More information on all these projects and the South East ERDF Competitiveness Programme, can be found at:
www.seeda.co.uk/European_Initiatives/European_Regional_Development_Fund/South_East_ERDF_Competitiveness_Programme/
 - SEEDA has managed the ERDF programme on behalf of the region since December 2007. The South East was the first English region to have its programme adopted by the ERDF.
 - **SEEDA, the South East England Development Agency**, is the Government-funded agency responsible for the sustainable economic development of the South East of England – the driving force of the UK's economy. Through supporting businesses, encouraging innovation, developing skills and engaging with public and private partners, we aim to create a successful, sustainable future for the region.
 - **SEEDA's support helped deliver the following** over the period 2005-2008:
 - o 17,500 jobs created or safeguarded
 - o 32,500 people helped to get work
 - o 10,000 businesses created or attracted to region
 - o 137,500 businesses assisted
 - o £638m investment, 45% levered from private sector
 - o 200ha Brownfield land remediated
 - o 148,500 people assisted in skills development
 - For further information on future funding calls for the South East ERDF Competitiveness Programme 2007-13, please contact Gemma Starr, SEEDA on (01483) 470180
 - For further information on the South East Sustainability Loan Fund, please contact Sally Goodsell, of Finance South East (01276) 608527
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