

NEWS RELEASE

South East manufacturers get £6 million support boost

13 May 2009

A new £6 million commitment from SEEDA will fund free business advice for the region's manufacturers to help them drive the region out of recession.

This will build on successes over the past six years, where SEEDA funding for the Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) has:

- Delivered over £310 million of added value through manufacturing improvements
- Handled over 20,000 enquiries from businesses seeking advice
- Funded almost 3,000 diagnostics and over 1,000 in-depth company support programmes
- Arranged over 900 education and training events for local businesses

The Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS), a Solutions for Business Product, will be delivered in the South East by EEF, the manufacturers' organisation for the period 2009-12.

MAS offers free practical, hands-on support to the 21,000 manufacturing businesses based in the South East, focusing on improving profits and keeping manufacturers competitive, particularly now through the recession.

Pam Alexander, SEEDA Chief Executive, said: "The South East has the largest and most productive manufacturing sector of any UK region, with over 260,000 employees. Despite the many challenges these businesses are facing through the recession, it is the innovative, high value products and technologies they produce that may offer our best route into the upturn.

"SEEDA is committed to ensuring these vital businesses receive the advice and support they need, and MAS is an important part of this effort. EEF has done a fantastic job in delivering the service and we are confident they will continue to maintain this high standard of targeted help in the future."

David Caddle, MAS South East Programme Manager at EEF, said: "We are delighted that SEEDA has awarded the third MAS South East contract to EEF. Our aim is to deliver a programme of manufacturing support *for* manufacturers, *by* manufacturers, helping businesses to realise real, measurable and sustainable improvements whatever legislation or market conditions they face now and in the future."

For further information about MAS South East please visit the programme website www.mas-se.org.uk or contact David Caddle, Programme Manager davidcaddle@mas-se.org.uk, tel 0845 609 2121.

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Notes to editors

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

MAS South East

Originally set up by the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI), MAS is now a programme of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). The BERR Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) in the South East provides straightforward advice and practical support to improve manufacturing competitiveness.

Funded by SEEDA and delivered by EEF, the manufacturers' organisation, with the support of the Business Link network, SEEDA regards MAS as one of its key initiatives aimed at providing support to the manufacturing sector.

MAS South East supports manufacturers in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and Sussex. Manufacturers can reach MAS South East Specialists by calling the Information Desk on 0845 609 2121, by visiting www.mas-se.org.uk or by emailing info@mas-se.org.uk

Solutions for Business is a package of publicly funded business support products and services designed to help companies start and grow.

For further information, please contact:

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Case study: Space Gains for Tek-Tanks

Company Overview

Hampshire based Tek-Tanks, part of the Tek-Group, are the UK's leading supplier of standard and custom built water, waste and diesel fuel tanks for the marine environment. Suppliers of marine sanitation, marine toilets, water heaters and marine senders and gauges, Tek-Tanks started manufacturing custom designed plastic tanks in 1991 and have since developed into new product areas including moulded tanks, both custom and standard, pumps, toilets and custom fridge/freezer boxes.

Hands-on Support

Roger Dyer, MAS South East Specialist, spent two consecutive days working with the team at Tek-Tanks looking at lean tools and techniques and process mapping exercises. The aim was to show the company how big gains could be made by defining processes and removing non-value added activity and unnecessary waste.

Achievements

One area that has had a good result is in the clearing of clutter making way for valuable much-needed space and efficiencies. The workshop has now been completely redesigned with a new layout including space for an additional workbench, new bin systems, bar coded materials and a new saw. This directly enabled Tek-Tanks to take on another CAD draughtsman, increasing their sales capability by £60,000 whilst growing the core staff of the business and creating capacity to produce 53 extra tanks per year.

Martin Rye, founder and Managing Director of the Tek-Group of companies, said:

"I had always known there was plenty of room for improvement but finding the time to get on and make changes was proving difficult the intervention of MAS South East was the stepping stone we needed.

"The whole experience has been very positive and enjoyable and we now plan to use the services of MAS South East for a quarterly or half-yearly review to monitor our progress and continue to mentor us on our lean journey."