

SEEDA: AGENCY REPORT, DECEMBER 2009

GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Global Markets programme

Inward Investment Activity

1. SEEDA has secured seven inward investment successes since the last report, which will create 157 new jobs and safeguard 300 jobs in the region over the next three years.

Business Development events attended

The Competitiveness Institute Conference – Jyväskylä, Finland – 12 – 16 October

2. From 12 – 16 October SEEDA attended the 12th Competitiveness Institute (TCI) Global Conference, in Finland, to learn more about successful cluster development activity in challenging economic times. SEEDA's participation in the event comes at a time when the operational arm of the organisation is moving to a sector focus and cluster development work will be at the heart of each sector team's strategy.
3. Built around the TCI Conference was a programme of meetings with Finnish businesses interested in expanding into the UK market and with organisations dedicated to supporting technology transfer and assisting small Finnish companies to internationalise. For instance, a meeting with Aidon Oy, an innovative and fast growing Finnish Small and Medium Enterprises specialising in the development and production of Smart Meters, proved to be particularly interesting. There is a market opportunity for Aidon in the UK at present, due to the UK Government's commitment to install smart meters in all households by 2020 as part of the transition to a low-carbon economy.
4. SEEDA was also able to reinforce its links with Vantaa Innovation Institute Ltd - an organisation set up by the city of Vantaa to support the development of the area and the growth and internationalisation of its clusters. The organisation has a highly developed programme of activities, including: internationalisation services, sector networks, cluster programmes and innovation platforms. As well as capitalising on the opportunities for best practice, SEEDA is keen to work closely with Vantaa as part of its international cluster work.

Entsorga Enteco 2009 – Essen, Germany – 27– 30 October

5. SEEDA Germany attended this International Trade Fair for Recycling Management and Environmental Technology to meet with potential inward investors. The focus of the event at which 700 companies exhibited was climate and resource protection and energy efficiency in environmental technology. SEEDA took part in 11 pre-arranged meetings with companies and there were a further 19 visits to new and existing company prospects and existing South East investors. It is hoped that at least four of the new company prospects will decide to set-up a presence in the UK in the next 18 months.

Launchpad Promotion – United States – November 8 – 13

6. SEEDA, in conjunction with Locate In Kent, held a number of programmes in Boston, Washington DC, Chicago and Colorado Springs to promote a Launchpad offer from three Kent locations. The offer consists of a rent free period to enable investing companies to understand and develop their particular markets and is aimed at three sectors: Creative (Maidstone Studios), Homeland

Security (Rochester) and general (Dartford). These programmes were attended by over 60 US and Canadian companies, and have already produced a number of potential projects. All attendees are being contacted by the relevant US based SEEDA representatives to follow up.

Research and Development Programme

National Aerospace Technology Strategy

South East Composites Blueprint

7. Six universities (University College London, Oxford, Southampton, Portsmouth, Surrey and Cranfield) and five industry primes (GKN Aerospace, GE Aviation, QinetiQ, Primus International and Compton Technology Group) have agreed to form an Alliance to strengthen collaboration and pursue joint opportunities in the sector of aerospace composites. The objective of this Alliance, known as the "CREATE 2020 Alliance" (funded and supported by SEEDA) is to develop an active cluster of academic and industrial expertise that will drive exploitation of opportunities and enable the South East to be one of the foremost regions in the world in respect of aerospace composite technologies. This objective will be achieved through working collaboratively to identify and pursue Research and Development programmes, strengthen the skills base and share research topics to achieve better alignment and exploitation.

Innovation and Creativity programme

South East Business Innovation and Growth Teams

Appointment of one new Team Leader

8. Paul Walsh has been appointed as Team Director Kent and Medway Innovation and Growth Team. Paul has been working as a business consultant and investor for the past three years with 16 months experience working with the Enterprise Hub Network at Sittingbourne Enterprise Hub.

South East Business Innovation and Growth Company wins O2 female entrepreneur of the year.

9. Lisa Warner, founder of Fink was named as the winner of the O2 X Female Entrepreneur of the Year in a prestigious annual national small business competition, the O2 X Awards. Fink™ launched its' first product, Family Edition conversation cards, in September 2008 and was previously supported by the Milton Keynes Enterprise Hub.

South East Business Innovation and Growth Company awarded £4.5m from Technology Strategy Board

10. Gordon Murray Design and Zytec Automotive announced an all-electric three-seater city car, made possible through a £4.5m investment from the Technology Strategy Board. With a total cost of £9m, the new research and development project will allow the consortium to develop four prototypes by February 2011.

Knowledge Transfer

11. SEEDA has contracted with The South East Healthcare Technologies to support the development of an International Centre of Excellence in Telecare, as part of SEEDA's Communications Science and Innovation Campus initiative. This includes 10 Innovation Vouchers which will encourage regional Telecare Businesses to interact with the Higher Education Sector.
12. The Air Traffic Management Knowledge Network will receive a further years funding from SEEDA, following a successful review to create a minimum of 15

new business collaborations with the UK knowledge base and minimum of 8 new partnerships.

SMART GROWTH

Enterprise

The Regional Customer Relationship Management and Information System (RCRMIS)

13. The first release of The Regional Customer Relationship Management and Information System took place in November. The system is now operational in Business Link Sussex and preparations are being finalised for the second phase release across the remaining Business Link Providers and Skills South East for Quarter 4. The success of this first phase will provide a significant boost to our ability to report on real time data and trends within the South East Business Link service and paves the way for further roll out across other business support systems and SEEDA.

Business Link Transition

14. Planning for the Business Link Transition has gone well with formal transition initiation kicking off in October following a period of due diligence by Serco. Serco continue to meet with partners and are working closely with the current Business Link Providers and SEEDA to plan and implement a smooth Transition.
15. Contract negotiations have gone well and should be concluded in November as planned. Recruitment of the Chief Executive and Operations Director for the new service is planned to take place in December.

Business Link Quarter 2 Performance:

16. Business Link in the South East exceeded their in-quarter targets in order to ensure that overall year-end performance is not impacted by the transition to the new provider:
 - All customers: 154,432 (target: 137,626) of which 24,084 are individuals thinking of starting a business and 130,348 are businesses.
 - Intensively assisted customers: 18,426 (target: 17,396).
 - Of the customers surveyed in Jul-Sept 09, 92% were fairly or very satisfied with their service from Business Link (up from 90% in Quarter 1).

Business Link – Skills Brokerage

17. Performance of the skills brokerage service continues to be good, particularly with companies with over 20 employees. Through working closely with local providers, the brokerage service is still able to find funded starts for Level 2 qualifications.
18. The Learning and Skills Council are in the process of determining the funding allocation for next year and the skills brokerage is working closely with them to ensure that they can provide the best service to employers in the region.

The Women's Enterprise Task Force

19. The Women's Enterprise Task Force – co-chaired by the SEEDA Chief Executive - was set up by Gordon Brown in 2006 to run for three years with the aim of helping Government increase the quantity, scalability and success of women's enterprise in the UK. The Women's Enterprise Task Force is managed by SEEDA and is now coming to a close. The highlights of the past three years include paving the way for a Business Link national data disaggregation methodology and influencing and shaping the establishment, direction and implementation of Aspire, a £12.5m women's co-investment fund to support high-growth women-owned businesses. The Task Force met with

the Prime Minister and saw important policy developments taken forward in the Government's Enterprise Strategy of March 2008.

20. The Women's Enterprise Task Force has produced its final report and recommendations, Greater Return On Women's Enterprise (GROWE). The GROWE Report was officially launched at the Task Force's final event on Women's Enterprise Day, 18 November 2009. The recommendations of the GROWE report focus around strategic ways of improving existing support structures to increase the quantity, success and sustainability of women's enterprise.

Tourism

21. Tourism South East – funded by SEEDA - has led a number of visits by overseas Olympic Committees to the region and last month Tourism South East were part of a team presenting to a senior Chinese delegation in Medway. A priority list of countries has been put together for the region to ensure a targeted approach. It ran the Disabled British Open Golf held at Old Thorns Golf Club, Liphook on 24/25 August – an event funded through SEEDA and Accentuate funding. Accentuate wish to make this a two year programme for golf thereby securing a longer term legacy for disabled athletes and the sport.
22. The Winning in Recession Campaign Evaluation Report shows a RoI of 34:1 and additional spend of over £13m. This campaign was started with SEEDA funding and has been more than matched by partners in the region.
23. The Tourism ExSEllence Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony took place at the Wentworth Club on 22 October 2009. It was the fastest ever sell out Awards event. Gyles Brandreth co-hosted the evening with John Williams and the anecdotal feedback received to date has been very positive. The winners of this event go on to the national awards to be held in Brighton in 2010.

CompeteFor

24. The CompeteFor programme is a partnership with all the Regional Development Agencies, Devolved Administrations, The Olympic Delivery Authority and The London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games. CompeteFor is the pre-qualification questionnaire system supported by the business network and supplier support, delivered by Business Link. The national Buying Engagement Team to release contracts from the tier contractors is outsourced to BIP solutions. Nationally there are 95,000 businesses registered on CompeteFor, 47% of companies have published to be ready to tender for opportunities. The South East is still the most active outside of London with 17000 registered companies and 8100 (48%) published ready to tender.
25. Overall 2200 companies in the south east have been short listed for contracts, 97 (14.7%) of all contracts have been awarded to companies in the South East through CompeteFor and some of the companies have multiple contracts that do not register on CompeteFor. Because there are different ways of winning contracts through the supply chain companies in the South East have won more than 200 contracts.

Graduate Opportunities

26. The Office for Graduate Opportunities met with SEEDA and partners to learn how the South East is supporting graduate recruitment and responding to

Government's graduate internship policy in the current economic climate. Representatives from Higher Education in the region, SEEDA, JobCentre Plus and employers gave a South East perspective on:

- graduate internships policy and delivery mechanisms
- what works well and why from graduate/employer perspective
- links with businesses and alumni.

27. This information will be used to provide examples of good practice for the Minister for Higher Education and Intellectual Property David Lammy and to improve delivery. SEEDA itself has developed a plan for implementing a structured programme of graduate internships.

European Social Fund (ESF)

28. SEEDA's Chairman Rob Douglas chaired a regional European Social Fund event organised by GOSE, the Learning and Skills Council, SEEDA and JobCentre Plus. The session reviewed the successes of the programme so far. Business Support Kent presented the SEEDA European Social Fund project EnviroSkills which provides business-led modular training in environmental technologies at NVQ levels 3 and above. The afternoon introduced the audience to the 2011-13 part of the programme and started to address the changed conditions which the programme must address, exploring areas on which European Social Fund money should be focused through the current review of the Regional European Social Fund Framework.

Employment and Skills Strategy and Delivery

29. A key milestone has been reached with the publication of the National Skills White Paper and Investment Plan, which confirm:

- a strong policy shift to funding skills which will be economically valuable for businesses and individuals; and
- new roles for RDAs to lead preparation of Regional Skills Strategies; set out regional priority statements that will be included in future national investment plans annually, and to be advocates to drive up business demand for skills.

30. The National Framework due at the end of November is expected to provide further clarification regarding roles and responsibilities.

31. The first meeting of the new South East Economic Development and Skills Board agreed priority issues which it will advise the Skills Funding Agency to give priority to when letting contracts for 2010. SEEDA will be establishing arrangements to develop the full Regional Skills Strategy, working closely with partners, over the coming months.

32. The arrangements for developing the South East's skills strategy will need to address both regional and cross-regional issues, for example in relation to sector skills needs, and SEEDA is leading RDA discussions with the SSCs on how to work together most effectively at a national as well as at regional level.

SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY

Low Carbon Programme

Low Carbon European Investment Bank Retrofit Programme

33. The South East major retrofit programme being brought together by SEEDA and involving key local authority partners passed another milestone in November with the submission to the European Investment Bank of a long list of public buildings to be retrofitted. This includes local authority buildings including schools, and one university, Winchester University. Other local partners are welcome to join.
34. SEEDA is working with London and the Greater South East to build on a framework recently launched by London to help public sector buildings cut energy use and save money off fuel bills.
35. During the next round of discussions with the European Investment Bank SEEDA will be looking for technical assistance funding to provide some additional capacity to help local authorities and other partners take forward detailed preparatory work.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

36. SEEDA has now issued a further eight contracts under the European Regional Development Fund programme worth £4.1m of ERDF. This includes a pilot project to retrofit energy efficiency measures into social housing, a project addressing sustainable transport and one to explore alternate approaches to food waste to minimise the amount sent to landfill.

Low Carbon Programme

POWER Interregional Programme

Stockholm event Empowering the Low Carbon Economy - Driving Low Carbon Economies Across Europe, 25 November 2009

37. POWER is a €5.8m inter-regional programme aimed at driving *Low Carbon Economies* partly funded through INTERREG IVC in seven European regions: Andalusia (Spain), Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Malopolska (Poland), Noord-Brabant (The Netherlands), South East England (England), Stockholm (Sweden), and Tallinn (Estonia).
38. SEEDA Board Member, Alex Pratt, attended this POWER Conference provided a platform for the exchange of good practices and ideas for future actions amongst all participants. The event was broadcasted live on the POWER website www.powerprogramme.eu.

PEOPLE Programme

PEOPLE steering committee, Madrid, 16/17 November 2009

39. PEOPLE is a €4m inter-regional programme aimed at exploring new forms of employment, improving well-being and cohesion in the frame of the demographic and societal changes. The programme is partly funded through INTERREG IVC and involved seven participating European Regions: Andalusia (Spain) leading the programme, South East England, Venezia (Italy), Noord-

Brabant (the Netherlands), Malopolska (Poland), Stockholm (Sweden) and Timis (Romania).

40. The PEOPLE partner regions have assessed the thirteen applications received under the first and only call under the PEOPLE Interregional Programme. A decision was taken on 17 November 2009 at the International PEOPLE steering committee in Madrid to award funding to seven sub projects subject to conditions. The lead partners will be invited to respond to the conditions and contracts should be awarded in the New Year.

ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Development Fund Programme

Rochester Riverside

41. SEEDA and Medway Council have signed on exclusivity agreement with Crest Nicholson for the first place of 200 houses on Rochester Riverside.

East Cowes, Isle of Wight

42. Contractors, Clancy Docwra, have completed Phase 1 infrastructure works.
43. Waitrose secured planning consent from Isle of Wight Council in July 2009. Work will start on site early 2010.
44. Heads of Terms have been agreed with in respect of the medical centre. A planning application was submitted to the Isle of Wight Council in November 2009.

Cowes Outer Harbour, Isle of Wight

45. The planning application and the marine consents were submitted to the relevant authorities in July 2009.
46. An Official Journal of the European Union procurement process has commenced to select a marina developer.

Woolston, Southampton

47. Commercial negotiations with both Crest Nicholson Regeneration (CNR) and Palmer Johnson continue to progress.
48. The remediation of the site has been completed by Contractors BAM Nuttall. The validation report was issued at the end of October 2009.

Daedalus, Lee-on-The-Solent

49. The Project Team continues to progress with the drafting of two Supplementary Planning Documents. These will set out the planning policy for the site and form the basis on which future planning applications are determined.

West Medina Mills and Stag Lane, Isle of Wight

50. The reconstruction of Stag Lane commenced in late 2009.
51. Vestas commenced the second pre-construction phase of works on-site involving the construction of the new river wall and re-profiling of the site
52. The Development Agreement will be completed in early December 2009.

Hythe Marine Park

53. New Forest District Council approved 2 of the 3 planning applications for the next phase of development. Following discussions with the Council a new detailed application will be submitted to address planning issues raised re noise.

Canterbury Innovation Centre

54. The Innovation Centre funded by SEEDA through the East Kent Spatial Development Company and involving University of Kent and Canterbury City Council is now open. Keys were handed over at an event on 25 November 2009.

Shoreham Harbour

55. SEEDA has led and influenced the direction of the project over the last three years, working closely with Local Authority partners, Government Office for the South East, Shoreham Port and other Government Agencies including the Environment and Highways Agency. SEEDA has helped to secure significant funding to deliver the project with a view to creating a planning framework in the form of a Joint Area Action Plan by spring 2012. The Plan will help to deliver sustainable economic growth in a series of new urban quarters, suitable for expanding businesses, new job creation and investment.
56. Shoreham Harbour has now been awarded full Growth Point status following the completion of a Memorandum of Understanding signed by all parties which addresses the flood and coastal risk issues. Funding of £2.5m between 2009 and 2011 has been awarded. In addition £5m has been allocated under the Community Infrastructure Fund (the only one in the South East) to facilitate the first physical works to deliver a rapid transit system for the project.

STRATEGIC INFLUENCE

Living RES Process Programme

Area Teams

Sussex

Gatwick Diamond

57. The Gatwick Diamond is a business-led public private partnership. SEEDA, through the Area Teams, are well represented across the governance arrangements and partners have developed a detailed business plan which will support the delivery of the ambitious Gatwick Diamond Future Plan
58. SEEDA's new chairperson and other senior executives from SEEDA and BAA Gatwick met in November to continue to enhance our strategic relationship. The meeting considered the impact of the sale of Gatwick Airport and its continued role in economic development opportunities across the South East, including the Gatwick Diamond.
- Innovation and Growth Teams*

59. SEEDA, through the Area Teams continues to work closely with both Boards of Directors of the Gatwick Diamond & West Sussex and the Brighton & Hove & East Sussex Innovation Growth Teams to facilitate their launch on 1 January 2010.
60. On 30 November the Gatwick Diamond & West Sussex Innovation and Growth Team will host an event, organised with the support of the Area Team, to inform potential client referrers of how to work with the innovation and growth team to maximize support for companies with high growth potential.

HE Centre Crawley

61. The Statement of Intent submitted to support the creation of a University Centre in Crawley was one of the top 6 submissions short listed by Higher Education Funding Council of England. The partnership is led by the University of Brighton and supported by SEEDA, Crawley Borough Council, West Sussex County Council and Central Sussex College. Unfortunately, Higher Education Funding Council of England are not able to commit any funding during this CSR period however the partners are continuing to work together to develop a joint proposition of higher education in the Gatwick Diamond area.

University of Chichester

62. The Bognor Regis Campus expansion is progressing with its plans to develop stronger business collaborations and provide supported facilities for business start ups. SEEDA's £2m investment will contribute to a £30 million project that has leveraged in a £6m contribution from Higher Education Funding Council for England.
63. New posts have been created at the University to increase their business development services, which includes GraduateOn, a project to encourage local employers to recruit graduates through a placement scheme.

SEEDA's response to large scale redundancies

64. The Sussex Area Team is facilitating co-ordinated responses to large scale redundancies in the subregion through leading partner taskforces. The Area Team, together with the Investment Development Manager is currently coordinating support to Parker Pens, Newhaven and Lloyds Banking Group operations in Brighton and Hove. These partner taskforces ensure that businesses have a single point of contact and that appropriate services are delivered to support the company and its employees.

Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Area Team

HBOS/The Lloyds Group Job Loses - Buckinghamshire

65. On 23rd November Lloyds announced changes to their operations in Aylesbury:
- The Lloyds Group having reviewed their operations in Aylesbury has decided to relocate their pensions and investments operations from Aylesbury to Edinburgh and Bristol resulting in a loss of 570 jobs over the course of 2010/11. The Lloyds Group has stated that overall they expect 250 pensions and investment jobs to remain in Aylesbury
 - An Equitable Life contract, managed in part of the Aylesbury office, has been awarded to a new provider resulting in 340 jobs transferring to them. The intention is that a further 100 jobs will be retained in Aylesbury.
66. This is a significant blow for the town which is part of the Milton Keynes South Midlands growth area (mksm) and has challenging growth targets. SEEDA has already brought together a Taskforce to work closely with the Lloyds Group and local partners to support the local staff. The taskforce will develop a

comprehensive employee support package with Lloyds and develop support sessions in 2010 to help people find new employment.

Economic Development Implementation Plan

67. The Milton Keynes South Midlands Economic Development Implementation Plan, led by SEEDA, East Midlands Development Agency and East England Development Agency, has now been agreed both by the Local Authority Leaders Group and The Milton Keynes South Midlands Inter Regional Board. Work is now progressing to turn the plan into tangible, costed actions.

Local Area Proposition - Oxfordshire

68. On 13 October 2009 the final draft Oxfordshire Local Area Proposition was presented by SEEDA's Oxfordshire Area Manager to the Promoting Oxfordshire Task Group and following minor amendments, it is now being finalised. SEEDA produced the LAP as a tool to be used by the Agency's overseas representatives to develop new business leads into the county, driving local ownership of the work as part of a wider Oxfordshire inward investment programme. This collaborative work should now help the county increase its proportion of inward investment leads and wins.

69. On 26 November BAE Systems announced 642 potential job losses on which it will begin consultation during 2010/11. The jobs are across eight UK sites, and include management, engineering, manufacturing and administrative roles.

70. This announcement follows a detailed review of the current and future workload requirements for its 3719-strong Integrated System Technologies (Insyte) business. The potential impact of the job losses in the South East is as follows:

- Isle of Wight - 125 out of 385
- Portsmouth - 220 out of 1,109
- Frimley, Surrey - 99 out of 547
- Total - 444

71. In addition, there are 22 job losses in New Malden out of 291, which although in the London Borough of Kingston may involve South East residents.

72. This announcement follows a separate decision in September 2009 to shed 111 jobs in another part of the company's business based at Farnborough.

73. SEEDA will co-ordinate a taskforce approach, as it has done previously with Ford, Vestas, and more recently Lloyd's Group, to provide support to the company and its employees during and following the consultation period, to minimize the impact.

Surrey and Berkshire Area Team

Economic Downturn

74. Reading was cited as an area of economic resilience and Surrey did not see the impact in unemployment and business closures faced by others although there appears to have been a delayed impact. Surrey's unemployment has risen in the past months and is now double that of this time last year and major companies are making workforce reduction announcements including:

- The Atomic Weapons Establishment in Newbury has announced 600 redundancies phased over the next two years. SEEDA has approached the company and alerted it to its Continuing Employment Support Service and is discussing a possible Task Force approach as previously for Ford in Southampton and BMW in Oxford
- BAE Systems Weybridge, is to cut almost a third of its workforce. It has 60 employees based at the Brooklands Business Park. In total 16 jobs will go by the end of the year.

- Fujitsu across the world is looking to cut its workforce by 10 per cent. It has 1,200 staff in Bracknell, as well as 17 in Winnersh. The exact location of these cuts are unknown.
- Pfizer Slough, announced that it was restructuring its operations and reducing staff by 15 per cent

Capacity Building / Sub Regional Partnerships

75. SEEDA has chaired two meetings of the Thames Valley Economic Partnership and Berkshire Economic Strategy Board merger working group and provided staff time to write a business plan for the merged single organisation. The merger is anticipated in early 2010.
76. Berkshire Sub Regional Partnership is currently reviewing its economic strategy for Berkshire and SEEDA has provided information and advice to help them develop a scoping document for the work so that it will align with the new focus of SEEDA.
77. SEEDA has also taken over interim chairing of the Global Competitiveness Working Group of the Berkshire Sub Regional Partnership to help align its work with SEEDA's new focused priorities. SEEDA is providing staff support in running two work shops that will achieve partnership working around the development of a new inward investment strategy for the Thames Valley which will be used by the sector teams in SEEDA.

Airtrack

78. Spelthorne Borough Council councillors recently agreed a set of objections to the Airtrack rail link scheme to Heathrow that goes through Staines Town Centre and is currently subject to an application under the Transport and Works Act. Among the key issues was the impact on local communities due to increased down time of the level crossings on the A30 near Sunningdale. SEEDA was interviewed on the local radio and was able to put forward the compelling case for Airtrack, to encourage the local partners to keep working together and with BAA as they have done so far to find a solution and to bear in mind the wider objectives of Airtrack and the key benefits it will bring in terms of economic development and reduction in CO2 emissions as people move from car to rail in accessing Heathrow by the scheme.

Thames Valley University

79. SEEDA has been working with Slough Borough Council and the Learning and Skills Council and the Higher Education Funding Council to better understand the implications of Thames Valley University withdrawing its current Higher Education provision in Slough. Demand for higher level continuing professional development as well as for graduate entry is high in Slough and this withdrawal will leave a big gap in the critical business (skills) infrastructure in the town if not addressed. SEEDA recently persuaded Berkshire Economic Strategy Board to add its voice to finding a solution to the situation in Slough. SEEDA is also advising Slough BC on a 'route map' for new provision and options to fill the gap using its past successes in achieving new Higher Education provision in Milton Keynes, Hastings and Basingstoke and Bognor from which to draw ideas and good practice.
80. The Better Regulation Executive's visit to Thames Valley included a business dinner in Reading with local small and medium size enterprises to discuss the impact of regulation on their competitiveness. SEEDA facilitated the dinner at which nearly thirty businesses were able to highlight various regulation challenges and suggest how these could be changed to assist business and how the BRE could work with businesses in the future.