

Invitation to SEEDA's Annual Open Public Meeting

23 October 2009

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) is inviting people from across the South East to its Annual Open Public Meeting on Thursday 5 November. This is an opportunity for regional businesses, residents and stakeholders to hear about SEEDA's work over the past year and to ask questions about this and its vision for the future.

The Annual Open Public Meeting will be chaired by Jim Brathwaite CBE as he steps down from his role as Chairman of SEEDA after nearly seven years. SEEDA will be reporting on steps it took in response to the recession to support businesses in the South East. For example, a rapid response fund of £15m was set up to increase business support and financial assistance, such as:

- £3m Transition Loan Funds to help businesses with cash flow
- Business Link support for 50,000 businesses, including 15,000 health checks
- Help for start-ups - 22,000 new businesses were set up in the region despite the downturn.

SEEDA's new Chairman, Rob Douglas CBE, will be introduced at the meeting. He will speak to outline SEEDA's focus, which will be increasingly on driving productivity and competitiveness to maintain the South East's competitive advantage over comparable international regions.

The Open Meeting is being held at the Mandolay Hotel, Guildford. If you would like to attend, please email openmeeting@seeda.co.uk with your name and postal address or call Corinne Jordan on 01483 470 181.

SEEDA's Chief Executive, Pam Alexander, said: "The last 12 months has required us to support South East businesses to come through the recession. This is an opportunity for us to report back and listen to the views of stakeholders in the region. We will set out our new focus on the sectors, clusters and places that will be central to creating the future growth which will secure long term global competitiveness and prosperity for the South East."

...ENDS...

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
- **For media enquiries**, please contact:
Jessica Stewart, Media Relations Manager, SEEDA
Tel: 01483 501307
Email: jessicastewart@seeda.co.uk