

**SOUTH WEST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
E&I FORESIGHT ADVISORY GROUP  
15 July 2004, Sterling House, 2 pm**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

Roger Ashby	Hunter Fleming
Alex Inman	Tamar Consulting
Peter Methven	Latitude 52
Charles Wace	Two Four Productions Ltd
Tim Bagshaw	SWRDA Head of Sector Development
Nick Buckland	SWRDA Board Member & Chair
James Harris	SWRDA Head of Skills
Lorelei Hunt	SWRDA Innovation Manager
Linda Skinner	SWRDA Industry & Science Project (Seconded)
Fabian King	SWRDA Head of Regional ICT
Bill Price	SWRDA Head of Competitiveness
Colin Cornish	SWRDA Head of Project Development
Emma Paget	SWRDA C&PA Adviser (Secretariat)

**Apologies:**

Nigel Jump	SWRDA Economist
Bill Price	SWRDA Head of Competitiveness
Mike Leece	SWRDA Board Member
Joe McGeehan	Toshiba Research Europe Ltd

**1. INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES & MATTERS ARISING**

Introductions and apologies were made.

**Matters arising from Minutes of 04 March 2004:**

- Peter Methven confirmed that he was not associated with Devonport Yachts and asked that the previous meeting minutes be amended to reflect his present organisation, Latitude 52.
- Nick Buckland confirmed that a new Director of Enterprise and Innovation had been appointed. Stephen Peacock would be joining the RDA at the end of August.
- Tim Bagshaw confirmed that he was in the process of recruiting members from the aerospace and South West Food and Drink sectors to sit on the group. He also confirmed that the SWRDA are looking at many areas where they can encourage cross-sector working such as links between Food and Drink and Tourism or Environmental Technology and Centres of Excellence with various sector groups.
- Nick Buckland explained that the group was still at an experimental stage of development and not yet a formal Board Advisory Group, although it could become one in the future. He asked the group for their agreement on a draft Terms of Reference.

**Action: Emma Paget to circulate draft terms of reference to the group with the meeting minutes.**

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SWRDA REVIEW OF SECTORS**

Tim Bagshaw confirmed that the RDA had commissioned consultants to review the agency's approach to the eight priority sectors identified within the regional economic strategy and to make recommendations on where to focus their efforts in the future. The work concluded last month and the agency was now working on a sector programme across the region. Tim Bagshaw confirmed that the report had shown elements of the programme that had worked well. SWRDA had seen good intervention in Aerospace, Marine and in the various skills projects that run in a number of the sectors.

The aim of the work is to better focus the eight priority sectors and better define what the RDA is wanting from them, taking into account what is happening both nationally and internationally. The RDA would be looking at the best approach for each sector as a common approach had not worked.

Tim Bagshaw confirmed that he would be in a better position to report the findings of the report at the next meeting in September and that it would be useful to have the groups' feedback on the outcomes before engaging with the wider sector groups.

### **Discussion:**

Peter Methven said that he felt disappointed in the way the RDA had gone about looking after the Marine Sector. He felt there was a high level of bureaucracy and that funding was not forthcoming for programmes which were being held up. Marine South West felt that it had moved quickly initially, but work had not progressed due to the complex working of the RDA. Tim Bagshaw agreed to discuss Peter's concerns in more detail following the main meeting.

## **3. REGIONAL SCIENCE & INDUSTRY COUNCILS**

Lorelei Hunt and Linda Skinner presented to the group on Regional Science and Industry Councils. Lorelei provided hand outs for the group which included information on Business Support Products and Innovation Reviews.

The councils were being formed to assist Enterprise and Innovation in the regions. Funding Streams would be simplified and the councils would collaborate with the DTI on the application of R&D grants. National sources of funding were going to be important for regional projects. Priorities would be driven by the DTI and the Board would act on their advice on government support for business related R&D. Innovation growth teams and DTI sponsorship teams had a determination to drive this work forward.

A National Science and Technology Strategy would give guidance, taking a medium to long term approach, but it would not be available for some time.

The first Regional Science and Industry Council started in the North West and North East. The council brought together Science and Technology with the industrial base and worked with universities to better exploit knowledge and make links.

The South West has the potential to become world class in this field. The 'Shadow Council' for the South West will use the knowledge base across industry and the public sector and support the work of developing agencies, helping to raise the performance of the regions' businesses. The council will have a long term focus and look to encourage cross-sectoral links, helping to develop the Regional Economic Strategy and give guidance on where the RDA should focus its work.

**Discussion:**

Roger Ashby talked about the importance of interfacing with universities and helping to generate spin-out opportunities and national centres of excellence. Universities are measured on how many 'spin-outs' they produce.

Charles Wace said that the RDA needed to be clearer in the messages it gives out about Science and Industry Councils as the title is not clear (for example: the food sector might not realise that they would fall under the theme of 'Science'). It would be important for the council to make connections with the business community.

Fabian King agreed that a consistent message was needed and that communication of the new council should not confuse business. He highlighted that the RDA has a marketing model which could be used (the Broadbandshow gives interactive media examples).

Alex Inman felt that embryonic sectors such as Environmental Technologies had a lot more to learn from other sectors and that there should be joined up thinking on best practice and marketing across the sectors. Improving skills and knowledge from business to business would help create strategic alliances and help organisations to work out of their silos. Businesses need to realise that they do not always need to do everything themselves and that 'doing deals' with other organisations can make better sense.

Nick Buckland highlighted the benefits of the 'Beacon Programme' which takes examples of best practice from good companies and shares it with other organisations.

**4. NEXT MEETING – AGENDA AND DATE**

The group agreed to meet again on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004 at 3 pm.