



International Exhibitions

Proposal to RGF Programme Board for contributions for North Bank Relevant Activity

This note is in response to the Programme Management Board's request for further information regarding international exhibitions, why they have been identified and on what basis contributions from RGF are sought.

The Humber LEP is working with partners, including Hull City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and the private sector, to promote the area for inward investment linked to renewable energy and support local companies to access opportunities to promote themselves for supply chain and service work in this sector.

A major part of the planned activity is attendance at exhibitions. The LEP and partners have welcomed the support the RGF Programme Board gave to its proposed programme of UK exhibitions, which will enable the Humber and local companies to be represented professionally and in a way which enhances the area's reputation as a centre for renewable energy.

The LEP's Marketing Task & Finish Group is now asking the Programme Board to consider supporting a smaller-scale Humber presence at two key European exhibitions.

Across the world there are dozens of large renewables exhibitions that could be attended if resources were available. The Task & Finish Group looked at about ten of these and ruled most out on the basis of cost or relevance to the Humber's target market. The LEP has also been approached directly about attending exhibitions in France, Turkey, Vietnam, USA and China, but does not recommend taking these up.

The two the Task & Finish Group does recommend - European Wind Energy Association 4 – 7 February 2013 (Vienna) and EWEA Offshore 19 – 21 November 2013 (Frankfurt) were judged to be the most significant in the European calendar, in terms of size and audience. They have previously been attended by some partners (including from the North Bank) as delegates, so have been validated as being worthwhile. Over 10,600 attendees and 500 exhibitors were present at EWEA 2012. For EWEA 2013, three Humber companies (two from the North Bank) have expressed an interest in sharing stand space already after an informal approach.

The Task & Finish Group proposes attending these two exhibitions on a smaller scale than the UK exhibitions so as to keep costs as a minimum. Experience from attending EWEA as a delegate and fringe event speaker in 2012 showed that the UK offer, except for Scotland, lacked impact due to a lack of exhibition presence, and this has been commented on to partners by industry contacts. Scotland and other North Sea competitor countries were there in force, and contact with competing England locations through the CORE group has established that most intend to take exhibition space this time.

The European exhibitions are significantly larger and busier, so offer access to a wider market that does not participate in the UK events. Not attending these exhibitions would miss an opportunity for the Humber to target supply chains existing in other parts of Europe to invest here, and for local companies to seek to enter those supply chains.

The Task & Finish Group also feels that a sustained presence at the largest events, where the Humber's competition is present, is important for maintaining the momentum that is being built up by attending UK exhibitions. Given the growing reputation of the Humber and strong feedback from its first joint renewables marketing initiatives, it is felt that its presence would be missed, particularly as competing locations will be attending. This could risk the Humber's excellent offer being wrongly discounted as viable by attendees.

The Task & Finish Group proposes making funding available on the same basis as for UK exhibitions, i.e. up to 50% contribution towards stand costs for eligible North Bank companies and full coverage of the North Bank local authorities' contribution towards the stand. Non-eligible North Bank companies, South Bank/Scarborough companies and other local authorities would not receive support, and all other expenses (e.g. travel, subsistence and hotels) would be paid for by attendees.

The exact costs will depend on the space taken and the number of companies attending, but assuming 5 companies plus 5 local authorities and the LEP, the per-company cost would be in the region of £2,000, with up to 50% coming from RGF for eligible companies. The maximum RGF contribution per event is therefore estimated at circa £12,000-£15,000, depending on the number of eligible companies attending.

RK, Humber LEP
16 October 2012