

Our topics in this issue :

- Unique Network launches online platform to support regional economies
- Conference proclaims leading role for Europe in Energy
- Targeted networking at brokerage event appreciated
- European Business Support Network offers self assessment for performance Improvement
- Introducing the European Business Support Network: Always a partner nearby!
- Upcoming Events

Unique network launches online platform to support regional economies

EDINBURGH- The European Business Support Network, - a European network of Regional Development Agencies, Business Development Organizations, Knowledge institutions and regional authorities,- introduce an online platform to sustain small and medium enterprise throughout Europe. The service platform is aimed at improving the performance of SMEs in large tendering procedures and has a virtual presence online at www.eubizz.net.



Jim Galloway, Head of Enterprise and Innovation of Edinburgh City, launches the Eubizz.net

The new website was launched as part of the Conference Sustainable Energy: Challenges and opportunities for the supply chain, that took place on March 20th at Edinburgh Napier University. Napier is one of the network partners collaborating on the new service platform with twenty-eight partner organizations throughout North- and Northeast Europe.

The conference provided the perfect occasion for the European Business Support Network to introduce their services. Nearly 100 representatives from international businesses, business development organizations, public authorities and knowledge institutions attended. Renowned speakers from the energy sector and

procurement management stressed the importance of Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) to enhance innovation. There was agreement that it has proven difficult for large and established companies to explore new innovative tracks, without knowing the potential of suppliers.

It is exactly this challenge that the European Business Support Network intends to confront: by providing services that help SMEs to improve their market position and visibility to larger companies. Moreover, the network helps businesses to develop the skills and competencies they

need to engage in tendering procedures that will open up the European supply market for them. The services include B2B matchmaking, tender support, brokerage events, self assessment and tailored training and coaching advice. The online services are supplemented by personal offline assistance.

The conference was concluded by a visit to the Edinburgh City Chambers, to celebrate the launch of the Eubizz.net, the online representation of the new network. Jim Galloway, Head of Enterprise and Innovation gave the welcome and launched the EBSN website. The launch was well attended with delegates networking afterwards.

Conference on sustainable energy proclaims leading role for Europe in energy sector

“Triple-helix approach key to consolidate Europe’s leading position”

On March 20th, the Interreg project North Sea Supply Connect organized a conference on Sustainable Energy, that addressed challenges and opportunities for the Supply Chain.

The conference objective was to liaise between small and medium sized enterprises and leading European energy companies on the topic of procurement and supply chain requirements. The event initiated a follow up process to provide support for SMEs and OEMs to improve trans regional innovative trade in the Energy and Maritime sectors. Almost one hundred delegates from governments, knowledge institutions and from the energy sector participated at the event hosted by Napier University in Edinburgh.

The event provided an opportunity for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), Business Development Organisations (BDOs), Provinces and Local Councils, academic and technical institutions to share knowledge and engage in brokerage and partnering to extend business opportunities in and beyond their regions.

Keynote speaker **Catrinus Jepma**, the scientific director of the Energy Delta Research Centre opened with a talk on Energy Innovations in the North Sea Region. This engaging session highlighted some of the challenges and complexities associated with future energy policy in the North Sea Region and the place of innovation. Presenting an appealing picture of Europe’s future as a global key-role player in sustainable energy, he emphasized the prerequisite of triple-helix collaboration. Jepma stressed the importance of private-public partnerships as a key-factor in order to be able to make use of Europe’s full potential as the leading world energy hub.



Professor Jepma addresses the audience

Speakers representing the industry included **John Best**, Chief Executive Officer of the East of England Energy Group, and **Björn Przygodda** who is the Chief

Procurement Officer for RWE Innergy from Germany as well as **Fiona Chan**, operations Manager for Emotion Energy, **Paul Edmunds** at Island GIS and **Ron Quinn** for Crown Estates.

Representing the European North Sea Commission, Aberdeen City Councillor **Kate Dean** contributed towards the importance of collaboration and presented some of the regional initiatives and the role of the North Sea Commission in promoting innovation in sustainable energy.



The event provided the opportunity for the introduction of the European Business Support Network. Max Hogeforster of the Hanseatic Parliament introduced the EBSN as a new virtual network for SMEs and described the various aspects of the platform and the way in which it can be used by SMEs, OEMs and BDOs to promote trans-regional European business. The presentation was followed by parallel sessions and workshops detailing aspects of the EBSN.

All presentations are available at www.eubizz.net for your information.

Björn Przygodda of RWE Innergy



Ron Quinn of Crown Estates



Cllr. Kate Dean of the European North Sea Commission



Fiona Chan of Emotion Enerav



Paul Edmunds, CEO IslandGIS



John Best, CEO East of England Energy Group



Targeted Networking at brokerage event appreciated

With the objective to add value to the Sustainable Energy Conference, Scottish Enterprise organised a brokerage event for the conference programme. Its purpose was to provide the opportunity for companies to engage in 'targeted networking'. Feedback records show that the quality of the pre-planned business meetings was regarded very high. Almost 50% of all meetings were rated as excellent with further collaboration planned.

The brokerage event took place on Wednesday 21st March and was organized by Scottish Enterprise. The combined conference and brokerage event proved to be an overall success and received positive feedback with 77% of delegates saying that they found the conference useful and appreciated the well organized brokerage event. 'This confirms our experience that Business partnering (or brokerage) events tend to work best to complement other conferences/dinners which bring sector representatives together', Jane Watters of Scottish Enterprise comments.

The brokerage event led to 26 matches in total. The event was successful as is evidenced by the feedback of the event participants:

- almost half of all meetings (45.8%) were rated as excellent with further collaboration planned.

29% were rated as interesting, with future collaboration possible

- 21% will lead to further contact

Only 4% of meetings were rated as not relevant, with no further contact planned.

A spin off activity we are following up is an offshore wind event in Bremen in June (WINDFORCE 2012). This coincides with a Scottish Government Ministerial visit which is planned (with companies), so there is the possibility of another partnering event. European Business Support Network-partner WFB has offered to assist in setting up meetings for Scottish companies taking part.



European Business Support Network offers online self assessment

Companies which are eager to take their business across borders, need to be prepared to engage in large tendering operations. In order to be ready to take the plunge, it might be wise to assess the companies chances before starting up the process. The self-assessment test on Eubizz.net helps SME's to identify areas for improvement and benchmark their qualities against the industries' standards.

The Self Assessment Tool service can be used by SMEs (and by Business Development Organisations on their behalf) for:

1. Deficit or gap analysis to improve the suppliers' position.
2. Support from their local business development organization who can contact the company to provide advice and training.
3. Regional benchmarking of their quality and business standards.

The self assessment tool assists companies in the process of identifying trans-regional tendering and partnering

opportunities. Following completion of the online questions the company is given feedback on its strengths and weaknesses with regard to a number of areas of business practice related to the European Foundation for Quality Management. The Self Assessment Tool scores companies against ten main core competence requirements such as: Business Considerations, Financial Policy, Logistics, Customer Service Management, Technical matters, Quality, IT Systems, Development and Human Resources.



*Dr. Michael Pearson of
Edinburgh Napier University*

Companies who take the test get a full understanding of their development needs and identify strengths and weaknesses. Supporting the online-tool, the partners in the European Business Support Network are available to guide businesses through the analysis of their situation and provide tailored advice on how to use the results. By executing the advice, the companies are enabled to improve their performance to the required supplier level of their target market.

The Self Assessment tool was developed using the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model and the Supply Chain 21st Century model (SC21) of the Aerospace, Defence, Security (ADS) Group. Dr. Michael Pearson from Edinburgh Napier University has refined the model for broad application by SMEs and Business Development Organisations.

Introducing The European Business Support Network Always a partner nearby!

Are you interested in becoming involved with the European Business Support Network? With ten Business Development Agencies, six chambers of commerce and Business organisations throughout northeast Europe, there is always a partner nearby who can help you to profit from the network and provide support for your business.

All partners in the network have a thorough knowledge of their regional markets and economic structure. Each and every partner is dedicated to strengthening the local business community. It is in this mutual interest that the partners share their knowledge and resources to the advantage of their local businesses. Now you can find partners within eighteen regions in twelve European countries. The progress for your company may be just a few clicks away. Check www.eubizz.net for a local partner near you!



Network Partners are:

Belgium – Syntra West Training & Education, Bruges; POM Provincial Development Agency West-Flanders, Bruges.

Denmark, South of – Business Kolding, South Denmark European Office

Estonia – EMI-ECO Centre for Development Programmes in Tallinn

Finland – Baltic Institute of Finland, Tampere and Turku Chamber of Commerce

Germany, North-west region – Ministry of Economics, Labour and Ports (SWAH); Economic Development Agency in Bremen (WFB); Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI), Hanseatic Parliament in Hamburg; Mariko GmbH; University of Applied Sciences Emden-Leer

Latvia – Latvian Chamber of Commerce; University of Latvia in Riga; Ventspils High Technology Park

Lithuania – Klaipeda Science and Technology Park; College of Social Sciences and Enterprise Lithuania in Vilnius

Netherlands, Northern region – Province of Groningen, Northern Netherlands Development Agency (NOM), Chamber of Commerce (KvK) and The Northern Netherlands Provinces (SNN)

Poland – Regional Pomeranian Chamber of Commerce in Gdansk

Sweden – Arvika Economic Center; SSPA Sweden in Gothenburg

United Kingdom – Basildon District Council, Basildon; Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, Scotland and Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, Scotland

Events Calendar

May 14-16

7th Hanseatic Conference, Hamburg

“Innovation and Regional Policy”,

Organised by the Hamburg Ministry for Economy, Transport and Innovation, Hanseatic Parliament and the Baltic Sea Academy
(upon invitation only, please contact admin@eubizz.net)

May 21-22

European Maritime Day 2012

Blue Growth: Sustainable Growth from the Oceans, Seas and Coasts

www.emd2012.se

Side event: Political Advisory Group of NSSC and Baltic Supply, with excursion to SSPA facilities

May 22-24

**SEAWORK INTERNATIONAL 2012,
SOUTHAMPTON, UK**

www.seawork.com

June 18-20

Annual Conference NSR Interreg, Bremerhaven

Joint Annual Conference of the North Sea Region

Bremerhaven, Germany

www.northsearegion.eu/ivb/events/coming

June 21

Enterprise Event / Business Awards (Basildon)

September 4-7

SMM Maritime Hamburg

SMM 2012 Shipbuilding, Machinery & Maritime Technology
Hamburg, Germany

www.smm-hamburg.de

September 12

Off Shore Wind Event, Leer.

Please check for updates on www.eubizz.net

The European Business Support Network is fostered by North Sea Supply Connect and Baltic Supply. The European Business Support Network is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund. www.eubizz.net/ admin@eubizz.net.