PROJECT UPDATE

European Structural & Investment Funding News Issue Six / Summer 2017











Business Support Zone Success at event

BUSINESSES HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to find out more about EU-funded support on offer at The Business Event 2017, held in Telford and Hereford.

A dedicated Business Support Zone was set up at each event organised by The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and Marches Growth Hub, working with business networks across the region.

LEP Chairman Graham Wynn said: "Our businesses are being supported through The Marches Growth Hub, which offers a central point of help, advice and information. It also promotes European funded business support projects to our SMEs – with 12 programmes launched since last year and more due to go live in the next few months."

Business advisors for key support programmes including the Marches Business Investment Grant, Business Growth Programme and Building Business Confidence held 1-2-1 appointments with delegates as well as clinics and workshops for both start-up and established businesses wanting to know more about what was on offer.

The first leg of The Business Event 2017 was held on May 11 at the Telford International Centre, and the second at Hereford Racecourse on June 13, both also featuring guest speakers sharing their secrets of business success.

LEP Director Gill Hamer said the events were also a chance for businesses to meet with specialist advisors to discuss support available, including new grant funding schemes.

"We were delighted to see so many businesses taking advantage not only of the chance to expand their network with the breakfast event, but also the numbers seeking advice from our business advisors in the Business Support Zone."

The Marches LEP also launched its Annual Report at The Business Event 2017, which features case studies of businesses which have been supported by EU-funded projects. The report is available to download at www.marcheslep.org.uk

MORE THAN £26.8
MILLION of EU funding
has already been committed
to projects which will
support business growth
in the Marches.

In the 2014-2020 European Regional Development Fund Programme (ERDF), the Marches (Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin) has an ERDF allocation of £50.3m across five different priorities. To

12 business support projects live in the Marches

date, 53% is allocated with 12 projects now live. Details of the latest two projects to launch are below, and a full list of all the programmes available to you across the Marches can be found at the Marches Growth Hub:

(link here).

The Smart Concept Fund

- Delivered by University of Wolverhampton
- A grant scheme offering up to 60% of approved project cost (Maximum value of grant £30,000) towards demonstrating 'Proof of Concept' and bringing a product or technology innovation closer to market
- Email: SmartConceptFund@wlv.ac.uk
- Call: 01902 323911
- Web link here



Building Business Confidence ~ Start2Great & Smarter Growth

- Delivered by Good2Great via Telford & Wrekin Council
- Fully funded direct support through workshops, tool-kits, assessments and one-to-one meetings.
- Email: info@good-2-great.co.uk
- Call: 01746 330730
- BUILDING
 BUSINESS
 CONFIDENCE

• Web links <u>here</u> & <u>here</u>

• Funding is subject to availability and eligibility criteria, details of which can be found by visiting here

GIVING BUSINESS THE TOOLS TO GROW

THE BUILDING BUSINESS Confidence Across the Marches project is designed to give businesses the tools they need to flourish and grow across Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

The scheme is open to eligible small-to-medium sized businesses working in a variety of sectors in the county as well as aspiring entrepreneurs and individuals who are looking to start their own business.

Business owners will be able to access a series of workshops and individual coaching sessions to help them realise the full potential of their business so they can grow and create jobs. Aspiring entrepreneurs will be able to access workshops and coaching sessions to equip them with the



accelerate the upward cycle of success...

knowledge and skills to take their first steps towards starting their own business.

The project is being delivered by experienced business specialists, Good2Great, based in Shropshire, who have been working with businesses in the region for the past decade. Johnny Themans, director of

Good2Great, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for business owners.

"The project is all about helping people understand how to develop their commercial potential, grow sales and develop the profitability of their business.

"In turn, their business will then be able to employ more people and enrich the local economy, helping to accelerate the upward cycle of success here in the Marches."

The project is open to businesses in the following sectors: Food and drink, agri-technology, defence and security, advanced manufacturing, automotive manufacturing, visitor economy and environmental technologies services.

Mark Tomblin, Project Co-ordinator at Telford & Wrekin Council, said the funding would be a big boost across the Marches area.



THE Marches, working with UK government departments, is inviting applications from projects that can meet local growth priorities.

Calls are currently open for Research & Innovation and SME Competiveness projects seeking ERDF funding in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin as well as for Marcheswide projects which fall under the Low Carbon priority area.

The review point for the calls is July 30, with the final deadline on October 31 2017. ERDF is a strategic fund and only public bodies or similar organisations can apply directly.

Also open for applications are Rural Development Programme for England calls around food processing and tourism. These are managed by DEFRA and are open to qualifying businesses and other organisations to apply directly.

The UK government website contains all of the information about the opportunities that are available. Go to this link and search 'Marches' to find out how you can apply.



Please contact
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in the local Technical
Assistance team if you
would like to discuss
anything in more detail
or want advice on
completing funding
applications.

BUSINESSES IN HEREFORDSHIRE and the Telford & Wrekin area are being invited to apply for grants of up to £20,000 to help cut their energy costs and cut carbon emissions.

The new EU funded Business Energy Efficiency Programme (BEEP) is offering free energy assessments and grants to small and medium sized enterprises.

Assessments are open to SMEs who want to use their energy more efficiently, reduce costs and improve their environmental credentials.

The process involves two days of support worth up to £1,000 to assess a business's equipment, premises, processes and performance, to target opportunities for improvements in energy usage.

Assessors will then produce a report containing recommended actions, which can be used to support grant applications for projects worth up to £50,000. Grants can be

£20,000 on offer to cut energy costs

awarded for up to 40 per cent of a project with businesses contributing 60 per cent.

Activity that could be supported by grant funding includes improving lighting, insulation, or energy management along with heating and boilers, double or triple glazing or energy efficiency equipment that leads to process improvements.

HOW TO APPLY

Businesses must employ under 250 people and have a turnover of under 50million Euros or a balance sheet of less than 43million Euros. There are some industries such as primary agriculture and retail that are not eligible.

For more information, contact The Marches Growth Hub on 0345 6000 727 or enquiries@marchesgrowthhub.co.uk

HEREFORD BASED HALCO EUROPE LTD,

which manufactures a wide range of adhesive tape and textile fasteners applied for a free energy efficiency assessment (worth 12 hours of support) to help measure current energy usage and identify opportunities for improvements.

The energy efficiency report identified that the firm could save around £4,000 and eight tonnes of greenhouse gases per year by replacing their old metal halide and T8 lighting with modern LED lighting.

Halco Europe Ltd was awarded a grant of 40% of the total costs (£3,185) to make the improvements. It will continue to accrue annual savings in the firm's energy usage as well as providing a brighter working environment for its staff.

CASE STUDY

Brighter outlook for Halco









Business Energy Efficiency Programme

Electrical motor firm set to double

A SHROPSHIRE COMPANY that is the world leader in software used to design electric motors used in cars, trains and aeroplanes is moving to bigger premises as part of a plan to double its workforce to more than 30 people in the next three years.

Motor Design's Motor-CAD software is used by Formula One teams, most of the world's biggest car makers and aerospace giants, such as Rolls-Royce, to keep pushing the boundaries of performance and efficiency in the continued development of electric motors.

The Ellesmere-based company, which has been supported by the Manufacturing Growth Programme (MGP), currently employs 15 people but is having to gear up to meet demand and the first stage will be to move to new bigger premises within the next six months.

Managing Director Dr Dave Staton says that the business has gone about assembling a team of experts in the field of electric motor design and has been hugely successful as a result – and it is working with the MGP to develop a management infrastructure to take it to the next level.

"We are very proud that a company in Shropshire has become a world leader in developing advanced software and tools for designing electrical machines," said Dr Staton.

"We are running out of space in our current premises, and we need to move to new bigger premises. This goes hand-in-hand with developing a better management infrastructure to enable us to keep growing.

"The Manufacturing Growth Programme has been fantastic for accessing funding, which has allowed us to work with experts in business management. This has enabled us to put a series of measures in place that

support the growth and sustainability of our company."

MGP Manufacturing Growth Manager Catherine Bray said that Motor Design is a classic example of a business with fantastic engineering talent that has developed a world-class software package – and it now needs all the other things in place

to double its workforce in the next three years.

She said: "Dave and the other directors have been a pleasure to work with because they recognise the gaps in their business' capabilities. Rather than trying to do it themselves they've asked for help so that they can continue growing and leading the world in software that supports the development of electric motors in the automotive, rail and aerospace industries."

This is being achieved through a 19-strong network of experienced





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BASED IN HIGHLEY in rural Shropshire, Genvolt, designs and manufactures high voltage power supplies. It currently employs 19 members of staff and in addition to selling to the UK market, Genvolt exports its products all over the world, including India, China, the States and Europe.

Following a successful application, Genvolt was awarded grant funding recently via the Business Growth Programme. Part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and managed by Birmingham City Council, the programme is designed to strengthen supply chains, stimulate innovation and grow existing small to medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) across the Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and The Marches Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

Genvolt became aware of the opportunity for funding through the Marches Growth Hub Shropshire. Business Development Manager, Delia Yapp, within the Economic Growth Team at Shropshire Council, assisted Genvolt throughout the process.

For the first part of their project, the company were looking to install mezzanine flooring to provide more space for their operations.

Managing Director, Stuart Morgan explains, "Our business is growing rapidly and we were outgrowing our current premises. We wanted to stay in Highley and needed to retain the fantastic staff and skills base that we have locally. This grant has enabled us to expand our

CASE STUDY

Genvolt growth made possible

current workspace, take on more staff and meet the growing demand for our products."

The second part of their project involved the update of Genvolt's IT systems and an investment in capital equipment, again helping the company to bid for contracts and fulfil demand. Stuart adds "Overall the investment has enabled us to sustain our intended growth and allowed us further business

development and sales generation."

Wendy Cox, Office Manager for Genvolt commented that the application process for the Business Growth Fund programme was very straightforward and well supported by the grant scheme team: "It was refreshing to have such a simple process and we were able to complete the application paperwork in just a short space of time."

Below: The new mezzanine floor and Stuart Morgan, of Genvolt







BUSINESSES IN SOUTH Shropshire are being supported to develop new visitor experiences through an EU-funded project to boost the rural economy.

The Shropshire Hills and Ludlow Tourism Cooperation Project is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

The project is being delivered in its first year by Gravity Consulting Ltd and opened in January under the oversight of Shropshire Council, on behalf of Shropshire Hills and Ludlow Destination Management Partnership.

The project aims to work directly with 60 tourism businesses in the Shropshire Hills and Ludlow area and to promote them and the area to new visitors.

Tourism marketing specialist Gravity, based in Durham, was engaged to work with businesses to develop and promote five new visitor experiences, themed as – for example – food and drink trails, outdoor experiences or arts and craft activities.

The project aims to bring together all the elements of the "themed" visitor experiences and promote them online as "packages", or products, to visitors, each such product having sustainability at its heart, and promoting local businesses, products and services in innovative ways.

There is no direct cost to the businesses selected to take part and, by the end of May, the Gravity team of Stan Abbott and Linda Tuttiett had engaged with more than 100 businesses in the area, either in telephone interviews or face-to-face visits.

Following this process, the Gravity team is currently finalising the 60 businesses that will go forward to the next stage of the project and has been collecting and compiling baseline data against which the project's performance in subsequent project years can be measured. Consumer research to help inform the product development was carried out in Manchester, alongside an audit of the host website for the products, www.visitshropshirehills.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ERDF BEST PRACTICE WORKSHOP – PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION 28th June 2017,

Ludlow Town Football Club

This half-day workshop developed by the Marches LEP Technical Assistance team and support officers provides an overview and best practice of planning and developing an application for the European Regional Development Fund.

This session will be delivered by experienced applicants and will provide an opportunity to share best practice and experiences with others. Refreshments and lunch provided to participants

The workshop will cover:

- Project development best practice
- Key characteristics of a successful application
- The key appraisal points of an ERDF application form
- Getting ready to run an ERDF project

By the end of the workshop you will be able to:

- Prepare a project proposal
- Understand what is required for a successful outline application
- Be prepared for what is expected at the full application stage
- Understand the basics of what is required to deliver an ERDF project if successful

Register your place on the workshop through the Eventbrite link <u>here</u>.

MEET THE FUNDER EVENT 26th June 2017, Marches Growth Hub, Telford

Are you a Telford based business wanting to expand and create jobs? Is financing your business growth a barrier?

If so, there are a range of grant opportunities available to help you!

Join us at our 'Meet the Funder' event on Monday June 26th at the Marches Growth Hub, Telford and find out what you need to know.

Book 1 to 1 slots with the funders of your choice to discuss your specific expansion project.

Grants available from £4,500 - £167.000

The grant programmes are part funded by the European Union. To be eligible to apply you must be a small to medium sized enterprise and your customers must primarily be other businesses.

Funders on the day include:

- Business Growth Programme
- Marches Building Investment Grant
- Business Energy Efficiency Programme
- Marches Broadband Grant Scheme

Please register your interest via the link <u>here</u>.

A Business Advisor will then be in touch to arrange a time for your appointment.

