



IMPACT

Driving innovation,
productivity-led growth and
business competitiveness through
the European Regional
Development
Fund



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

SEMLEP

South East Midlands
Local Enterprise Partnership

Take a look at the impact of the European Regional Development Fund in growing business across the South East Midlands...

All projects included in this document are part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), 2014-2020 European Structural Investment Funds Growth Programme in England.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (and in London the Greater London Authority) is the Managing Authority for the European Regional Development Fund Programme.

Established by the European Union, ERDF funds activity to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs, increase research and innovation, improve access to, use and quality of information, communication and technology and, support the shift towards a low carbon economy. For more information visit: <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-programme>.

SEMLEP's role is to take a strategic view on how best to prioritise ERDF funding to deliver growth and jobs in the South East Midlands area. We also provide technical assistance, funded through ERDF, to support projects that wish to apply for funding through the Growth Programme.

The European Regional Development Fund strengthens sustainable and inclusive growth by stimulating research and innovation and collaboration, productivity and business competitiveness.

This document features ten ERDF-funded projects operating in the South East Midlands LEP area, and highlights the value that this investment has brought to local SME businesses and communities, as told by the businesses themselves.

Take a look...

- Advanced Clinical Technology Innovation Support (ACTIS)
- City Labs
- Food Enterprise Advisory Support Team (FEAST)
- ICT Escalator
- Innovate Northamptonshire
- Innovation Bridge
- Manufacturing Growth Programme (MGP)
- Ready2Grow
- South East Midlands Start-up Programme (SEMSUP)
- Velocity Growth Hub Project

For a full list of projects part-funded by ERDF, visit the SEMLEP website.

ACTIS – Advanced Clinical Technology Innovation Support

This project focuses on improving the economic performance of the life sciences sector and engendering a culture of innovation within the clinical technologies. The project delivers high quality innovation support to businesses in, or transitioning into, the clinical technologies and life sciences sector. They achieve this through a mixture of advice and support, signposting and grant funding. This enables local SMEs to access high value, cutting edge expertise from local research entities (university and NHS Trusts), from other sectors, as well as from specialist sector specific services.

This project is supported by special interest group events to create an environment for innovation, enable the exchange of ideas, and stimulate the engagement of SMEs in smart specialisation. The project provides innovation support grants and specialist networking grants.

ACTIS is led by Medilink East Midlands in partnership with Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the Open University.

<https://www.medilinkem.com/projects/actis-south-east-midlands/>

ACTIS is part-funded by European Regional Development Fund

Optima-life: health and wellbeing data metrics app

Optima-life's mission is to use technology to understand the factors called 'Key Human Performance Indicators' (KHPIs). They wanted to create a new app for the workplace health and wellbeing sector, which would provide a sustained and supported approach to health monitoring, and physical and mental health and wellbeing.

To progress their product idea they needed specialist development support to design a user-friendly interface and monitoring dashboard that was secure, met data protection requirements, and capable of being used across multiple platforms.

Managing Director, Simon Shepard approached ACTIS and was awarded a grant to produce a fully-working beta version of the app. It's expected that this app will be 'first to market'.

Medpage: MemRabel

Medpage's innovative MemRabel dementia care aid has proven successful in supporting older people or people with dementia manage in their daily lives. Their new product will provide a wider array of memory aids and safety warnings, offering a more complete care package. Through ACTIS, Medpage was awarded an innovation grant to enable the project to go-ahead.

This product will help to reduce costs for care providers and authorities using assistive technologies to help people live more independently for longer.

CityLabs

CityLabs is a place for SMEs to work with academic and industry leaders to develop concepts into prototypes for new products and services in the digital economy.

Particularly focused on data driven and Internet of Things (IoT) developments, the CityLabs team support SMEs with a programme of Urban Business Lab and Tech Design & Prototype Evaluation for developing concepts. Through this project, SMEs can also access the MK Data Hub, an award winning technical, data infrastructure of the MK:Smart project, which supports the collection, integration and use of large amounts of data from many resources relevant to city systems.

www.citylabs.org.uk
enquiries@citylabs.org.uk

CityLabs is part-funded by European Regional Development Fund

Living Well at Home

Emma Luddington founded Living Well at Home as a dedicated property adaptation advice service. Unique in the UK, the team of expert assessors give fast, practical and tailored advice so people don't have to go on waiting lists, navigate complicated public services or do hours of research for generic solutions related to simplifying care in the home.

Emma worked with the CityLABS team to develop understanding and prototype practical solutions for data acquisition, curation and visualisation to reduce the time taken in client surveys and improve quality of results. They are also collaborating in a research development programme to investigate the possibility of crisis prediction in later life at home.



The support from the Open University's CityLabs team has been invaluable to us. As an innovative business creating a new market, we knew what we wanted to achieve but weren't sure how and what technology could help us to reach our goals. The CityLabs team used their expertise to help us find the correct IT infrastructure to streamline our data gathering and processing methodologies so that we can scale the business more effectively. We now feel confident that we can grow our business whilst continuing to offer the same quality and consistency of service to a larger customer base.

Emma Luddington, RIBA Chartered Architect and Managing Director,
Living Well at Home

Food Enterprise Advisory Support Team (FEAST)

The FEAST project offers a range of business support services including grant funding, business mentoring, industry events, technical support and technical apprentices.

The grant scheme offers eligible businesses financial support to assist with the purchase of manufacturing equipment, encouraging business growth and job creation.

Eligible businesses are also able to access up to twelve hours of funded support, either in business mentoring, or food technical which includes assistance in areas such as nutritional, factory layout, process efficiency, product development, shelf life extension, food standards and accreditation support.

FEAST is delivered by The Mallows Company, in partnership with Moulton College, Central Bedfordshire Council and the University of Northampton.

enquiries@foodanddrinkforum.co.uk

FEAST is part-funded by European Regional Development Fund

Hamm Tun Fine Foods

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I've recently changed my recipes so that my entire range is suitable for vegetarians, so I'm expecting demand to only increase further as it has done consistently since I launched the company three years ago.

Gary Bradshaw, Owner

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This could not have come at a better time. Better still, I was helped every step of the way through the application process so it really couldn't have been simpler.



ICT Escalator

ICT Escalator delivers specialist support to develop SME digital capability to get maximum benefit from the internet and solve business problems of capability and security. It helps digital and non-digital SMEs by providing expert academics and grant funding to help create innovative digital applications or improve marketing.

<http://www.ictescalator.co.uk/>

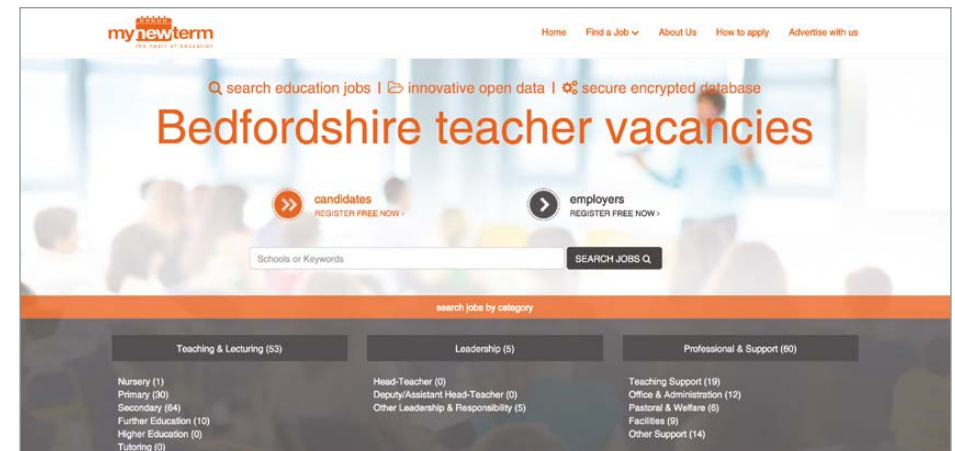
ICT Escalator is part-funded by European Regional Development Fund



Eduvocation

Eduvocation had an idea that would improve employment rates and reduce recruiting costs for the education sector. Through ICT Escalator, the University of Bedfordshire helped Eduvocation to develop an innovative regional online platform, www.mynewterm.com.

MyNewTerm goes nationwide in Autumn 2018.



“ICT Escalator enabled us to receive bespoke support from leading academics in our area of specialism and provided the opportunity to refine the service we provide.

We attribute a huge part of our growth as a direct result of the support provided through ICT Escalator and we are projecting sustained growth in the academic year 2018/19 as we expand our service to new areas.

Wayne Cartmel, Managing Director



Innovate Northamptonshire

The Innovate Northamptonshire project aims to promote research and innovation within the small and medium sized enterprises across Northamptonshire.

The project offers:

A series of four half-day workshops designed to address the key building blocks of innovation, with ongoing adviser support for the duration of the project, specifically to assist the development of an innovation plan. This creates a package of support for each business including grant or voucher funding to enable expert collaboration.

The project is led by The University of Northampton, delivered through the Northamptonshire Growth Hub – a SEMLEP Growth Hub.

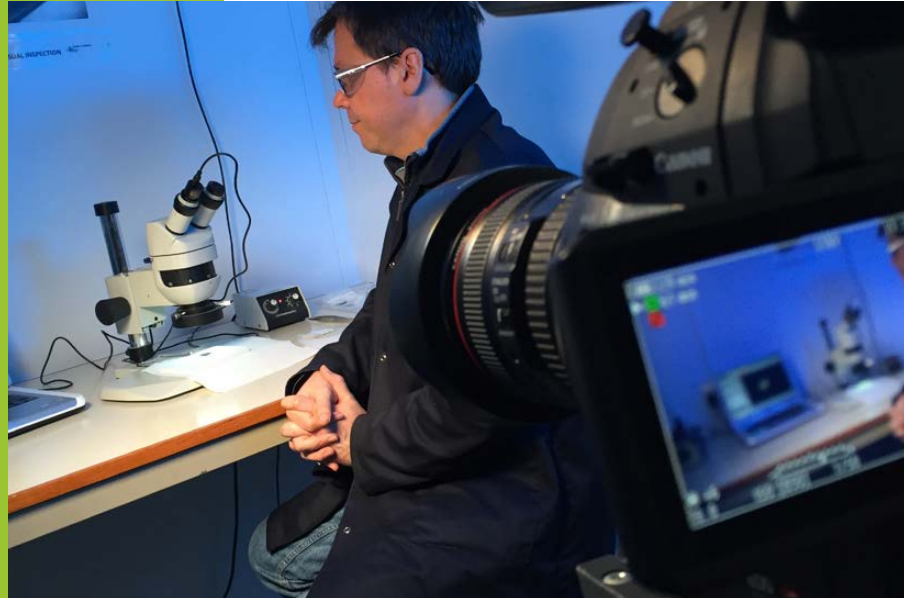
www.northamptonshiregrowthhub.co.uk/support/innovate-northamptonshire/

Follow @NorthantsGH on twitter.

Innovate Northamptonshire is part-funded by European Regional Development Fund

Diamond Hard Surfaces Ltd

Diamond Hard Surfaces Ltd is a materials technology company and solution provider to high endurance applications of a patented amorphous diamond material: 'Adamant – Adm tm' which gives extended life in high temperature, chemically aggressive and other harsh environments.



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The grant funding will enable us to undertake a vital piece of research which will drive the company towards a more automated and efficient manufacturing route and subsequently support the scalability of the business.

Chris Walker, CEO of Diamond Hard Surfaces

The company serves customers in high performance sectors such as oil and gas, motorsport, aerospace and electronics.

The company worked with Growth Hub innovation adviser, Aurel Nastase, to develop an action plan exploring growth opportunities through research and innovation. They were approved an Innovate Northamptonshire grant of £4,000 which will enable them to undertake research into a robust IT infrastructure that will link to a laser or waterjet cutting machine in house to produce their fixturing components.



“

The Innovation Bridge process has taken us on a very constructive journey.

Think of your very best dream for your business and what it could look like. And then take that to Innovation Bridge.

Very empowering, very positive.

Julia Hewerdine, Partner

Innovation Bridge provides a first connection and taster between SMEs and universities to develop innovative business ideas and to facilitate longer-term knowledge exchange.

A company's innovation requirements are diagnosed followed by research time with an academic to develop an action plan to achieve business growth. Innovation grants awarded can be used to part-fund implementation of the action plan, through engagement with the knowledge base, specialist consultancy or purchasing capital equipment.

The project reaches out to a wider geographic area and provides a stronger offer for the business community with the three universities providing different areas of expertise depending on the needs of the client.

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) deliver the project, with three university partners:

University of Bedfordshire, University of Suffolk, Anglia Ruskin University.

The project works with Local Enterprise Partnerships and their business Growth Hubs across the South East Midlands, Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough and New Anglia LEP areas.

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/innovationbridge

Innovation Bridge is part-funded by European Regional Development Fund



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We couldn't ask for more!

Biggleswade-based Dyslexia Matters is a specialist teacher-training company with a mission to improve support available in mainstream schools for learners with dyslexia.

To grow the business, business partners Julia Hewerdine and Liz Blackburn wanted to add short courses to their range. They were introduced to a business adviser who talked through their ideas and helped them to develop a detailed project plan.

In a powerful demonstration of Innovation Bridge's ability to enable businesses to mine the expertise in the region's universities, Julia and Liz were introduced to Professor Janice Wearmouth, Professor of Education at the University of Bedfordshire, one of the country's leading authorities on special needs education.

An Innovation Bridge grant has supported them to finalise their courses and launch them at the 2017 TES SEN Show, London.

Manufacturing Growth Programme

MGP provides support to manufacturing SMEs aspiring to grow.

The programme is delivered by Economic Growth Solutions and will support around 400 businesses across the SEMLEP area. Specialist Manufacturing Growth Managers are in place to offer businesses the opportunity to access grant funding of up to 35% towards the cost of eligible projects – minimum £1000 contribution.

Support can be given to businesses involved in the design of manufactured products, right through to those carrying out manufacturing, production or assembly in-house. Sectors supported range from traditional manufacturing bases to hi-tech niches, and as diverse as food, furniture & fusion.

Benefits for SME manufacturers:

- Advice and support to help identify improvement opportunities
- Compiling a Strategic Business Review
- Creation of a growth plan with clear aims
- Identify **the** best external experts to work with
- Grant funding to cover up to 35% of the value to access coaching or consultancy support.

www.manufacturinggrowthprogramme.co.uk

Follow @mfggrowthp on twitter.

*MGP is part-funded by
European Regional
Development Fund*

Fast Turbo Limited

The Corby-based company has grown quickly to become one of the UK's leading reconditioners of turbochargers for cars, commercial vehicles and racing cars. Through MGP, an expert in manufacturing strategy worked alongside the management team to create a five-year pathway for the business.

“

We have very efficient in-house manufacturing processes, so we know that we are able to recondition turbochargers and other parts to a very high standard. Our sales and reputation reflect that.

However, we recognised that we needed expert help in other areas if we were going to continue to achieve the level of growth we had set ourselves.

MGP has been very supportive and given us access to a specialist who has worked with us to identify the skills and weaknesses of the business and has identified a process of prioritisation that will help the company to focus on key areas. As a result, we are in the driving seat in taking our business forward.

Managing Director, Slawomir Soja

Ready2Grow

Ready2Grow helps business in Northamptonshire achieve their potential, whether they are starting up or planning for growth.

Support given to SMEs ranges from workshops and networking sessions to grant funding and one-to-one advisory sessions, depending on their individual requirements.

Northamptonshire SMEs with investment-ready projects have the opportunity to access revenue and capital grants.

The revenue grants are from £2,000 to £10,000 and cover the procurement of consultancy services. The capital grants are from £5,000 to £20,000 and can be used for the renovation, conversion or refurbishment of commercial premises for business expansion and the procurement of new assets.

The project is led by The University of Northampton, and delivered through the Northamptonshire Growth Hub - a SEMLEP Growth Hub, working in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council.

www.northamptonshiregrowthhub.co.uk/support/ready2grow/
Follow @NorthantsGH on twitter.

*Ready2Grow is part-funded by
European Regional Development Fund*

Bambino Mio

Founded and run by Guy and Jo Schanschieff, Bambino Mio has expanded its sales globally and approached the Growth Hub to support their development. Working with the Ready2Grow team the company secured a £50,000 grant to help finance the expansion of office space. It will also lead to the creation of more than 10 new jobs and help to secure the long-term future of the existing workforce.



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In the past couple of years we've seen huge growth in sales overseas which has helped our overall turnover enormously.

The support has enabled access to funding which will be put towards projects that will ensure the company maximises growth potential as quickly as possible.

The Ready2Grow team talked us through all of the funding options available, and were a fantastic sounding board for our strategy and vision.

South East Midlands Start-Up Programme (SEMSUP)

SEMSUP provides local budding entrepreneurs with specialist support to help them set up their new business ventures. It provides a package of at least 12 hours free business support comprising a selection of one-to-one advice sessions, webinars, workshops, specialist social enterprise information and support, as well as access to small business start-up grants or business incubation workspaces.

The programme is managed by Wenta, working in collaboration with the University of Northampton and the University of Bedfordshire.

Wenta is a social enterprise with over 35 year's experience helping people to start up and grow their business through a range of free support and services including expert advice, training and events.

<https://www.wenta.co.uk/semstartup>

SEMSUP is part-funded by European Regional Development Fund

Meena's business: event organising and management



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I appreciate the one-to-one support I'm receiving from Wenta Advisor Paul Lee. He's making me see myself in a different light and giving me a bit of a boost of confidence.

When Meena first came to SEMSUP, she was unsure about next steps for her business. Through encouragement, discussion and support, Meena's confidence in her own ability grew. Business adviser Paul helped her to write a robust business plan. Her application for a business start-up grant of £1000 was successful and will help grow her event organisation and management company.

Richard and Anna's business: Offshore Drones

The business mentor, Raj was really easy going, a large fount of knowledge and is always ready to go that extra mile to help.

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Richard and Anna wanted to develop a business plan to start their offshore drone business, target the right audience and develop a long-term strategy to develop the business. They built their business plan and developed the skills to create their financial forecasting model.

Velocity ERDF Project

The Velocity ERDF project supports SMEs to grow.

The project offers businesses over 12 hours of free business support comprising advice, workshops and capital and revenue grants.

Accredited business advisers provide one-to-one advice, working directly with business owners to help identify growth opportunities, overcome obstacles, develop achievable action plans and, to help track results against objectives and key milestones.

The programme of business workshops, equips business owners and their staff with new skills, knowledge and tools to take back and implement in their businesses. Topics include, marketing, finance and modelling success.

The Velocity project is delivered by Velocity Growth Hub, a SEMLEP Growth Hub.

www.velocitygrowthhub.com
enquiries@velocitygrowthhub.com

Velocity Growth Hub is part-funded by European Regional Development Fund



“

The support from the Growth Hub, and the Masterclass was fantastic. It gave me time to go back to the basics and set strategies for the future.

The workshops are perfect for all management tiers and will inspire 'light bulb moments' for businesses.

Craig Barber, Director



Craig worked with business adviser Jacqueline Day in one-to-one sessions and joined the Velocity project's Modelling Success for your Business Masterclass.

Since receiving support through Velocity's ERDF project, Craig has created an online directory for his magazines and has adopted more effective management processes for his business. Focussed Publications plan to launch three new magazines and expand their team.



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