

OUTLINE PROPOSAL FOR NP11 SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN POWERHOUSE CHEMICAL CLUSTER ORGANISATIONS

Background

Within the NP11 area the chemical sector has a turnover of £27 billion, employs 96,000 people directly within 728 companies and adds over £100 million GVA. The industry is represented by 3 Industry Clusters, CATCH-YCF, covering Yorkshire and the Humber, based at Stallingborough and Huddersfield, Chemicals Northwest, covering the North West, based at Daresbury and NEPIC, covering the North East, based at Wilton and Sunderland. In total membership subscription (industry, supply chain, and stakeholders) raises £750,000 pa to provide member services and direct assistance to the industry. These clusters have been in existence for over 20 years in most cases, prior to 2010 they received direct funding from the RDA's which enabled them to act as a source of expertise for RDAs and wider Government as well as promoting inward investment, growth of their region, developing local supply chains and the skills needed to drive productivity. Now with severely reduced resources the ability to undertake this work is limited, yet requests for assistance from the public and private sector continue, with members requiring services that match their immediate needs.

Proposal

This proposal is for matched funding of £750,000 pa from NP11, to carry out work directly aligned to the Governments Industrial Strategy and the Chemistry Council strategy and that outlined in the BEIS funded "Chemical and Process Sector Innovation Audit", looking at the status of the sector in the Northern Powerhouse (NP) as well as to provide direct industry knowledge to the LEP's, local authorities and wider Government. The request is for core funding rather than particular projects, this will enable the clusters to provide the following services.

- Encourage inward investment into the NP and specific LEP areas through developing an 'opportunities' map highlighting strengths and synergies and working with DIT to promote internationally.
- Recruit additional resource to provide NP11, Local Authorities and Government with specific advice and work synergistically with these organisations on studies and consultations which match industrial strategy priorities e.g. CCSU, Hydrogen economy, the Clean Growth agenda, and Supply Chain gaps and opportunities. This resource would also help engage companies in these topics.
- Drive the skills agenda within NP for the sector e.g. helping promote STEM within schools, promoting the wide range of opportunities within the sector with a particular emphasis on apprenticeships and promoting the wide range of upskilling training opportunities available within the NP
- Promote inter and intra-cluster / sector industrial symbiosis, acting as a focal point for companies
- Helping start-ups, SMEs and supply chain companies grow through networking opportunities and direct signposting to specific assistance.

We ask that NP11 look favourably on this outline proposal with a view to Clusters presenting a full case for funding at the November NP11 meeting.