

# synergy

## growing ideas

Support scheme gives chemicals R&D a boost

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## a force for the future

Yorkshire Chemical Focus gives the region a long-term competitive edge

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The Region's Development Agency

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## new R&D support scheme helps ideas to grow

Help is at hand for hundreds of chemicals companies in the region hoping to access billions of pounds of European Union research funding.

Yorkshire Forward has launched a service to ensure Yorkshire and Humber businesses make the most of the EU's research and development budget, worth £34 billion (\$50 billion) over the next seven years.

The new European R&D Support Programme will help steer firms and academic institutions through the application process for the European Framework Programme (FP7) launched in January.

It will be run by a partnership between Newcastle-based business services company RTC North and Cambridge technology management firm, Sagentia.

Primary contact for the programme Ian Henderson says the opportunities

for chemicals companies are huge as they span so many of the European Commission's targeted divisions, including health, energy, food agriculture and the environment.

Based at the Round Foundry Media Centre in Leeds, Mr Henderson says: "Not only is this worth taking part in, in terms of the direct financial contribution, but also the associated benefits include increased profile, involvement in emerging technologies, access to new suppliers and market opportunities across Europe."

The European R&D Support Programme offers eight services: a helpline for basic information on FP7 and a website which includes details of regional events, FP7 news and useful links. It offers diagnostic visits to discuss project suitability, and runs workshops providing practical advice.

A toolkit offers guides to participation and e-bulletins highlight upcoming deadlines, partnering opportunities and newsworthy items.

The programme also carries out Partner Searches to encourage collaboration within Yorkshire and beyond. Finally, the Proposal Support Service provides a one-to-one guide to preparing FP7 proposal documents, including an independent evaluation prior to submission.

For more information on the European R&D Support Programme, visit [www.euroresearchsupport.co.uk](http://www.euroresearchsupport.co.uk) or ring the helpline on 0845 630 8003 or email at [ian.henderson@rtcnorth.co.uk](mailto:ian.henderson@rtcnorth.co.uk)

"The opportunities for chemicals companies are huge, spanning divisions including health, energy, food agriculture and the environment"



## dipping into the support network

**Research and development is fundamental to staying ahead of the competition – but it can be expensive.**

There are, however, millions of pounds available to Yorkshire and Humber chemical companies which could make all the difference to getting that groundbreaking technology developed to its full potential.

One company in Yorkshire – dye formulation firm Rialco – has no doubt how important its R&D support has been.

The three-year-old Bradford firm was awarded £20,000 by Yorkshire Forward in December to develop a dye formulation for use with the latest generation of non chrome-based wood preservatives for pressure treatments of wood.

EU legislation banning the use of chrome-based wood preservatives created a market need for a dye to suit the new types of preservative.

Rialco technical director Dr David Williams, who spent seven years in dyes research at chemical giant ICI, said the company identified the requirement for a new formulation early on but was unable to devote sufficient resource to develop it.

He said: "Although there was a desire to do the research, it was difficult to fit it in among all the other activities which required close attention. We were unable to focus in any meaningful way."

The funding from Yorkshire Forward has meant that Rialco has been able to take on a full-time laboratory technician to work on the project under Dr Williams' guidance.

The company now expects to be ready to take the new dye formulation to market within 12 months, well ahead of targets prior to the grant award.

"If we can develop a product which is technically superior to what's out there now, we are bound to pick up a strong share of the market. The grant has made all the difference."

And there's even better news for the region's company accountants, because hundreds of firms who have carried R&D projects over the past six years could be eligible for tax savings worth thousands.

The main criteria is that the R&D work can be shown to be bringing about an overall advance in a field of science or technology, regardless of whether a product makes it to market or not.

Large firms qualify for 25 per cent additional deduction on expenditure and SMEs qualify for 50 per cent. So, for £1 million spent by a large company paying 30 per cent tax, there would be a tax bill reduction of £75,000. And £1 million spent by an SME at the same corporation tax rate would earn them a saving of £150,000.

But changing Department of Trade and Industry rules mean they have to act now as from April 2008, companies will only be able to claim tax back on R&D expenditure over the last two years.

For more information on the grant for research and development visit [www.yorkshire-forward.com](http://www.yorkshire-forward.com) and look under What we do > Business > Science, Technology & Innovation

Yorkshire Chemical Focus has been granted £1 million over three years by Yorkshire Forward to further champion the industry in the region. *synergy* reports

# a blend of bright ideas



Simon Hill, Jane Mockford and Rhys Marks

**Yorkshire Chemical Focus (YCF) was formed in 2005 with £500,000 funding from Yorkshire Forward and the European Union to ensure Yorkshire's chemical companies sharpened and maintained their competitive edge on a worldwide platform.**

Two years on, the Huddersfield-based organisation has built a strong reputation for making things happen and commands the respect of the chemical firms it was created to work for.

In February this year, the regional development agency acknowledged YCF's achievements by pledging £1 million over the next three years to help take its work further. The organisation's aim is to be fully self-sustaining by 2009, a target it met by a fifth in its first year.

YCF's chief executive since formation, Dr Jane Mockford, spelled out what the funding meant for the region: "We are delighted that Yorkshire Forward is providing the funding to help us carry on supporting our chemical industry."

"Our drive over the next three years is to help the companies in our region become more competitive, up-skill the workforce, and attract and retain inward investment."

Dr Mockford said the forthcoming changes to European legislation on the use of chemicals, REACH, had been flagged up as a major priority by members, of which there are now 72. In addition to keeping them informed of the latest developments and advice, YCF will be setting up networking groups to allow people to share experiences and offer advice to one another.

"At our recent AGM, a lot of very interesting ideas came out and we're still looking into the feasibility of them all. Many of them centre on networking and joint purchasing, as well as information sessions and seminars."

She said that ways of boosting innovation among chemical companies were being examined and that the image of the sector also needed close attention.

"If we are to attract the best brains of the next generation into this industry, the image needs improving," she said.

Information and discussion forums are also to be set up in the member areas of YCF's website – which are likely to play a key part in passing on practical solutions to problems raised.

Much of the work to be carried out by YCF in the next three years will build on what the organisation is already doing.

In 2005, the YCF Buying Group was formed to reduce member companies' procurement costs. The Huddersfield site of dye manufacturer, Keystone Europe, is one member of the group to have benefited.

Managing director Sean Bostock said: "Our involvement in the Buying Group set up by YCF has resulted in cost savings to my raw materials and a better competitive edge to my business. That can only be good for me and for the region, through the employment of local people."

Mr Bostock added that the networking opportunities set up by industry champion YCF had been "invaluable" and that the support so far on REACH implementation was very good.

"YCF has helped businesses to grasp new rules, regulations and initiatives that otherwise may have passed us by, losing us the opportunities to compete."

His praise was echoed by another member, pharmaceutical manufacturer NPIL Pharmaceuticals (UK).

"YCF has targeted real issues, helping to underpin competitiveness," said operations director David Prior, highlighting work on REACH, the energy markets and skills development as particularly useful.

Among YCF's achievements is the creation of the Yorkshire ChemSkills network, which has enabled chemical companies to pool resources to offer better training opportunities to their employees.

It also hosted the West Yorkshire 'Children Challenging Industry' initiative, to teach new generations about the value of the industry and has been involved in the development of an Accredited Postgraduate Certificate for those needing to manage REACH.

It has promoted Yorkshire's chemical industry on the national stage through the Chemical Industries Association (CIA) and Department for Trade and Industry, as well as holding ten YCF seminar events, attracting 404 delegates.

To keep abreast of members' concerns, it has held two major consultations and as a result, entered into a number of partnerships with relevant bodies to provide free or reduced cost of membership.

Dr Mockford said: "We can help the agencies and organisations that support business in the region to access our industry and our remit going forward is to continue to facilitate this coordinated approach."

YCF's paid membership represents nearly a quarter of the region's 450 chemical companies, which are responsible for producing a tenth of the UK's chemical industry output. Eighty per cent are small to medium-sized companies, spanning a range of chemical sectors.

Announcing the £1 million commitment to 80 members and guests at the YCF's first Annual General Meeting on 28 February, executive director of business at Yorkshire Forward, Simon Hill, said: "The role of Yorkshire Chemical Focus is to make sure the business support provided by Yorkshire Forward is being utilised by companies in the chemical industry to ensure they can be fully competitive."

"Our aim is to ensure the Yorkshire economy grows at a faster rate than that of other regions in the UK and also to set our sights higher and look at international competition, particularly how we will compete with the emerging tiger economies."

**"YCF has helped businesses to grasp new rules, regulations and initiatives that otherwise may have passed us by, losing us the opportunities to compete"**



The Children Challenging Industry initiative

## skills on your doorstep

**Grants of up to £2,000 are available to chemical companies looking to improve their leadership skills.**

The Yorkshire and Humber Leadership and Management Brokerage is just one of the services funded by the Learning and Skills Council to help upskill the industry from shopfloor to boardroom.

An initial £500 worth of management training is available to the head of a company through on-line, telephone or face-to-face tuition, followed by the opportunity to improve senior management team skills with a further £1,500 grant.

The service forms part of the Government's Train2Gain project and fits within Yorkshire Forward's framework of business support.

And support for businesses looking to improve their skills across the board has been enhanced with the expansion of the brokerage service that now includes a specialist broker to advise chemicals companies on the best route to training and how to access funding.

Provided by long-established manufacturing organisation, the Textile Training Group (TTG,) the service will aim to support 1,000 companies in the region and 200 of those will be from the chemicals sector.

The move will help address skills requirements from the regional industry. The Yorkshire Forward and Confederation of British Industry's report into regional economic trends in November 2006 found that 48 per cent of businesses in chemicals and bioscience felt a high level of workforce skills was a key factor in their organisation's competitiveness. A fifth said that they needed to improve management, after four other skills: marketing (37 per cent), selling (32 per cent), customer care (22 per cent) and manual skills (21 per cent).



**For information on leadership training, call Simon Andrews, Exemplas, on 07739 647388 or email [simona@exemplas.com](mailto:simona@exemplas.com). For all other training, call Bill Macbeth on 01484 346500.**

## REACH ready, steady, go!

The University of Hull has launched Europe's first post-graduate course designed to prepare companies for the forthcoming REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation of Chemicals) legislation.

Backed by Yorkshire Forward, the course is being run by the university's Faculty of Science and the Environmental Technologies Centre of Industrial Collaboration (ETCIC). It is aimed at making sure individuals who will take responsibility for ensuring compliance are REACH ready.

The course will begin on 4 June this year, shortly after the introduction of the wide-ranging set of new rules, which apply throughout Europe. It consists of four one-week modules, covering Regulatory and Project Management, Testing and Data Analysis for Hazard Assessment, Exposure and Environmental Risk Assessment and Legal, Commercial and Socio-Economic Elements of REACH.

It also features an industrial placement, which may be carried out in the delegate's workplace.

Delegates can attend the full course or individual modules or days. A Postgraduate Certificate in REACH Management

will be given to those completing the full course.

Dr David Calvert, of ETCIC, says: "REACH will affect almost every manufacturing and chemical process and is probably the most wide-ranging legislation ever to come into force affecting the management of chemicals.

"Organisations that don't comply with REACH simply won't be able to function within the supply chain because REACH requires organisations to work together to ensure safe chemical handling."

Course costs per delegate range from £300 for one day to £4,000 for the full course, exclusive of VAT.

Those interested in enrolling on the course should email [reach@hull.ac.uk](mailto:reach@hull.ac.uk) or call 01482 466940.

### Blog it!

The university has also launched The REACH Blog for those interested in keeping abreast of developments with the legislation. Anyone interested in subscribing should visit [www.thereachblog.com](http://www.thereachblog.com) and choose the 'Free subscribe' option.



## sweet smell of success for personal care industry

**The region's thriving personal care industry has been given another uplift by manufacturer Unilever, which is to expand its international technology hub in Leeds.**

The company has chosen to house a 'global category technology centre' for deodorants at its Seacroft site, the biggest deodorant manufacturing plant in the world.

The expansion, which will lead to 28 new jobs, is one of a handful of key global and regional personal care hubs located in the UK, China, the US and India.

It will build on Seacroft's already renowned research and development facilities, situated next to its manufacturing plant.

Unilever spokesman, Trevor Gorin, said the news underscored the importance of the West Yorkshire site as a strategic base, central to the global giant's future.

He said: "Deodorants is a star performer in our Home and Personal Care category and represents a blueprint for how we want to develop our business.

"That has all been helped by the innovation, research and development driven out of Seacroft. It offers an outstanding science and technology environment with a first class supporting infrastructure."

The news follows the recent announcement by Reckitt Benckiser that it would be recruiting at its research and development facility at Hull after purchasing Boots Healthcare International.

**"Deodorants is a star performer in our Home and Personal Care category and represents a blueprint for how we want to develop our business"**

For the last eight months, Yorkshire Forward has been working to build on the region's personal care sector value by putting its 69 companies and organisations, including academic institutions, in touch with each other.

The Partnership Programme has so far helped 15 personal care companies, large and small, advance their work through collaboration, liaison and networking with other regional players.



## the future of the RSC

The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) is working hard to engage all sectors of the 'Chemistry Using' industries in the UK and abroad. With a significant number of their members outside academia, the industry team based at Burlington House, London, is working hard to create an exciting and focused programme to ensure industries needs are met.

They are currently leading the development of a portfolio of high quality technical, personal and managerial training courses, to enable those working or planning a career in industry to have the tools to unlock their potential. They are involved in all aspects of science policy affecting those in the chemistry-using industries and continue to collaborate on joint projects with organisations such as Yorkshire Forward and its regional chemical initiatives. The team is responsible for the organisation of the popular awards for

innovation which all carry a cash prize and work on educational activities to support future generations.

They also recognise the importance of supporting the UK chemical science small business sector and hold regional networking events that regularly attract over 100 people from the local scientific and business community. A web portal, dedicated to the sector, has been developed featuring, amongst other things, entrepreneur profiles, UK company maps and SME of the Month, [www.rsc.org/sme](http://www.rsc.org/sme). With continued interest and support from the chemistry-using industry the RSC will extend its portfolio in 2007 to help spur UK innovation and enterprise.

**For further information please contact Alison Braybrook +44 (0)20 74403320 email [industry@rsc.org](mailto:industry@rsc.org)**



## events diary

### JOINT CIA/YCF CONFERENCE: BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

**Wednesday 30 May 2007, 10:00-16:15**  
**Briar Court Hotel, Huddersfield**

Is your business secure? Do you have contingency plans in place against a 'flu pandemic, flooding, terrorist threat or major unplanned incident?

This one day national conference will highlight the potential pitfalls and what can be planned for – what you should be prepared for in your business.

YCF members can register for the same discounted rate as CIA members of £149 + VAT.

Full details of the programme and how to register can be found at Business Continuity Planning Conference. Contact [eventsteam@cia.org.uk](mailto:eventsteam@cia.org.uk) or call 0207 963 6790 to find out more.

### RSC UNDERSTANDING CREATIVITY

**Tuesday 5 June 2007**  
**Burlington House, Piccadilly,**  
**London W1J 0BA**

Are you trying to be creative yet feel stuck in a rut?

What do you do when you run out of ideas and the problem is still unsolved?

If you've experienced the frustration of being told to 'think outside the box', without being shown how to, then this course is

definitely for you. Members of YCF can register for this course at the RSC Member rate.

For more information contact: Xameerah Malik 0207 440 3397, [training@rsc.org](mailto:training@rsc.org)

Or for an application form and/or the Programme visit

[www.rsc.org/training4industry](http://www.rsc.org/training4industry)

### NANOTECHNOLOGY 4 CHEMISTS

**5-7 June 2007**  
**Novotel Hotel, Sheffield**

This course gives an introduction to the basic concepts that underlie nanotechnology. It explains how nanomaterials are made and characterised, and gives pointers to ways in which these properties will be exploited in the future to make new high added-value products.

For more information or to book online visit [www.rsc.org/nanotech](http://www.rsc.org/nanotech)

### CIA AWARDS

**Thursday 5 July 2007**  
**National Railway Museum, York**

The Chemical Industry Awards are the premier accolades for the UK chemical industry. They are designed to offer a unique opportunity to promote and showcase excellent performance at company, site or individual level.

For more information and full details of

the categories, judging criteria and booking forms please contact;

Fiona Byrne, CIA Events, 7 Dingle Bank, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 1FS  
Email: [awards@cia.org.uk](mailto:awards@cia.org.uk)  
Tel: 01270 750 070

### YSTN – TAKING INNOVATION TO MARKET

**23 May 2007**  
**The Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate**

Co-Hosted with the DTI Viking Fund.

Speakers: Doug Richards, Former *Dragons'* *Den* and Founder/Chairman of Library House; Carolyn Parkinson, CEO of Paraytec Ltd; Simon Hill, executive director business development at Yorkshire Forward

Doug will be revealing the secrets of taking innovation successfully to market to YSTN members.

The YSTN events are free to attend but strictly by RSVP invitation.

## useful contacts

### YORKSHIRE FORWARD CHEMICAL CLUSTER

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