

Background Information

RE:think Energy

Overview:

The purpose of RE:think Energy is to catalyse economic development and to improve the quality of life for those that live and work in the rural west of the West Midlands.

RE:think Energy is a capital grant scheme available to SMEs in the Rural Regeneration Zone (RRZ) areas of Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire for the installation of renewable energy technologies and supporting infrastructure. This scheme provides a unique opportunity to access the economic and environmental benefits of renewable energy technologies.

The challenge presented by climate change provides an economic opportunity to the region which is not currently being fully embraced. The RE:think Energy scheme provides very practical support to international, national, regional and local objectives to reduce carbon emissions and increase security of energy supply.

The RE:think Energy scheme, especially when combined with other emerging environmental technologies, has the potential to provide many benefits to SMEs:

- Improved resource efficiency, saving significant amounts of money - made ever more economically potent with steeply rising fossil energy prices
- Assistance in taking advantage of renewable technologies resulting in reduced costs and more sustainable methods of energy consumption
- New and potentially on-going income streams for rural practitioners
- A demonstration of how businesses can play their part in reducing carbon emissions and benefit from the resulting PR opportunities
- Support for competitiveness - especially where renewable energy investment can be linked to significant energy users or bio waste producers
- A business opportunity through the manufacture, supply, installation and maintenance of equipment and services
- A support mechanism for developing new and existing environmental businesses

The zone includes the following main market towns as well as the rural hinterland and smaller settlements:

- Oswestry
- Bishops Castle
- Leominster
- Ross-on-Wye
- Bridgnorth
- Ludlow
- Ledbury

Renewable Energy Technologies supported, if appropriate criteria are satisfied, include:

- Biomass heat only and CHP systems
- Anaerobic digestion
- Photovoltaic
- Solar thermal
- Wind turbines
- Micro-hydro
- Ground source heat pumps
- Air source heat pumps

The scheme only funds items that are specific to sustainable energy practises.



Scheme Objectives:

The RE:think scheme offers the following benefits to the West Midlands region, in addition to the benefits offered to the recipient SMEs:

- Significant contribution towards the West Midlands renewable energy targets
- Significant capital investment in rural or semi-rural areas that will act as a focus for other regeneration activities
- Provide exemplar projects capable of rapid roll out to wider West Midlands businesses
- Influencing and educating other businesses by demonstrating the effect that focusing on low carbon activities has
- Creation of new jobs in areas such as insulating buildings, manufacturing and installing renewable energy systems, or growing energy crops
- Retention of income within the community which would otherwise have been spent on non local energy sources
- Improvement in wellbeing and health of employees as a result of businesses offering warmer places of work that are significantly cheaper to keep warm
- Empowerment of local businesses by placing them at the centre of decisions about their future energy supply

This scheme is being funded by Advantage West Midlands and delivered by Shropshire County Council in partnership with the Marches Energy Agency (For background information on MEA see www.mea.org.uk).



Funded by

