



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	QUESTOR Centre Management
<b>Date:</b>	16 March 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members agreed at the Development Committee on 13 October 2010 to Council renewing its membership of the QUESTOR Industry/University Co-operative Research Centre (I/UCRC) for a further year.
1.2	<p>In conjunction with QUESTOR, the following objectives for Council's membership for this year have been set:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Champion one project at the Industrial Advisory Board (IAB);</li><li>– Engage 5 first time environmental innovators through assistance to secure funding for innovation and Research &amp; Development (R&amp;D);</li><li>– Continue discussions with the QUESTOR Team for the development of the Competence Centre for Renewable Energies;</li><li>– Conduct a Research &amp; Development needs analysis of the local environmental business sector; and</li><li>– Convene and run one R&amp;D Funding Seminar for the environmental business sector.</li></ul>

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	Initial progress has been made against a number of these areas:
2.2	2 projects have been championed at the Industrial Advisory Board meeting in November 2010, one of which has been approved for funding going forward. The successful project entitled New Solutions for Second Generation Biofuel Production will attract funding of

	<p>over £80,000 over a three year period and will seek to assist in the development of second generation energy sources from a current significant waste source. The market for these second generation energy solutions is currently valued at \$76bn per annum with growth projections to \$247bn per annum by 2020. It is anticipated that significant commercialisation opportunities for local businesses will arise from this research.</p>
2.3	<p>Preliminary discussions have been initiated with two environmental technology businesses who have expressed interest in securing support for their R&amp;D. The work of these companies covers renewable energy applications including the development of marine energy and the development of Biomass energy systems for supply to the Building Services industry. We are working with these businesses to scope their project summaries and to identify their R&amp;D requirements prior to this being submitted through to QUESTOR. Further support for these businesses including under the Connected 2 Programme and the Innovation Vouchers scheme are being explored.</p>
2.4	<p>A further two businesses who are involved in the development of a wide range of solar and wind energy and bio-mass and bio-oil applications for both commercial and domestic markets have been approached in order to identify their research needs in order to match them with QUESTOR research.</p>
2.5	<p>QUESTOR will also be leading a trade mission to Duisburg, Germany, in May 2011 and we are currently exploring the potential for a number of Belfast based SMEs to participate on this trade mission.</p>
2.6	<p>The proposed Research and Development Funding Seminar has been scheduled as a breakfast seminar for Wednesday 25 May and we are working to secure guest speakers from funding agencies such as Invest Northern Ireland and the Universities. This event will link in with the R&amp;D needs analysis of the sector and the event will be utilised to garner the views of the delegates on their R&amp;D needs as well as disseminating information on prospective R&amp;D funding opportunities.</p>
2.7	<p>QUESTOR has been making progress on developments for the establishment of a Competence Centre for Sustainable Energy. The £10million project has secured £5million of funding from Invest Northern Ireland and the Centre's principal aim will be to align the existing renewable energy expertise within the Northern Ireland research community with the R&amp;D needs of industry focused on developing new technologies for commercialisation and transfer to industry. The Centre will be a collaborative entity led by industrial partners and resourced by a highly qualified research team who will be empowered to undertake market focused strategic R&amp;D for the benefit of industry.</p>
2.8	<p>The Centre will focus on the following 4 key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Energy from biomass;</li> <li>- Turbine Development &amp; Manufacture;</li> <li>- Integration and storage of renewable energy; and</li> <li>- Energy Efficiency.</li> </ul>
2.9	<p>The next stage in the development of the Centre is the recruitment of a Manager in order to take the work forward which will be undertaken over the coming months.</p>

<b>3</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
3.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations Considerations to this report.

<b>4</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
4.1	It is recommended that Members note the contents of the report.

<b>5</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
A further update will be provided to the October 2011 meeting of the Development Committee.	
Timeline: October 2011	Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

<b>6</b>	<b>Abbreviations</b>
I/UCRC – Industry University Co-operative Research Centre	
SME – Small to Medium Sized Enterprise	
QUB – Queens University Belfast	
IAB – Industrial Advisory Board	
R&D – Research and Development	