

BWEA Skills Accord Progress Update for Signatories October 2009 - February 2010¹

As part of the commitments made at the wind and marine energy industry Skills Summit that you attended last year, BWEA pledged to inform all signatories of what progress is being made.

This is the first of these updates relating to:

- i) The Renewable Energy Apprenticeships Programme Skills Accord
- ii) The Renewable Energy Careers and STEM Outreach Skills Accord

The Skills Summit's accomplishment was registered in the immediate aftermath of the event. The National Skills Strategy for England² released in November 2009 noted the collective action that employers in our sector are taking, as a prime example of businesses working together to address their shared skills needs. The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills Whitepaper depicts the Skills Summit and Accords as a best practice case study. 2010 marks the real start of implementation drive for delivering on the commitments that you have made as signatories. The following paragraphs give an overview of what has been achieved to date.

- **Progress: Renewable Energy Apprenticeships Programme (REAP) Skills Accord**

Significant progress has been made on the development of the wind turbine service technician apprenticeship qualification. The **National Occupational Standards** developed through REAP **provide a UK- wind industry wide benchmark for core competency areas all wind service technicians must have expertise in**. Over the past two months there has been a transition in lead responsibility - from **EU Skills** being central in developing the National Occupational Standards; to **City & Guilds**, the awarding body taking the next steps to develop the detailed content of the wind service technician competency requirements. Following **two technical workshops**, the Level 2 (not authorised) and Level 3 (authorised technician) qualifications structures have been revised and finalised. The workshops brought together service technicians from 9 member companies, assuring that the consultation has remained inclusive of broad industry perspectives.

¹ October 21st 2009 – February 5th 2010

² (DBIS, Skills for Growth, November 2009)

In addition, **REAP Roundtable III**, aimed at discussing the nuances of **implementation** for employers was also successfully convened. Access to funding was explained by funding body representatives from England, Scotland and Wales; recruitment, assessment and employer responsibility issues were covered. One important issue raised around funding, was that for health and safety reasons, demand from employers will be predominantly for training and up-skilling apprentices in the 19+ age category. BWEA is assuring that a strong overlap is being coordinated between Health & Safety and broader training agendas. Industry's commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of existing and future industry employees stands strong.

Following BWEA's completion of research into demand for wind service technician apprentices, it is likely that the **first cohort of such trainees will consist of 20-30** employees.

Following the National Skills Academy for Power's (**NSAP**) anticipated approval it is hoped that it will take on the task of acting as a facilitator between the sector's employers and the skills provider network. BWEA has had strategic meetings with NSAP and the closely related Power Sector Skills Strategy Group (PSSSG) and has drafted a **joint work plan** on engagement.

- **Progress: Renewable Energy Careers and STEM Outreach Skills Accord**

The set-up of the '**Wind and Marine Energy Human Resource Practitioners Forum**' has been initiated – with the launch of the forum being organised for June 2010. HR professionals joining the forum will play a key part in attaining the goals of the Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) and renewable energy careers outreach Agenda.

BWEA has started its work on fulfilling commitments by developing a work plan with **STEMNET** – a UK wide organisation with the mandate to increase young people's choice and chances through STEM.

The **vacancy pages** of the BWEA website have been **re-launched as a 'jobs and courses'** pages with the aim of acting as a channel for disseminating information on all employment and education issues. The web pages have been restructured and new content will be added throughout the year to benefit corporate members who post vacancies, companies wishing to get involved in the BWEA skills and training agenda, academic members and all those interested in finding out about renewable energy careers. Feedback is welcome, please visit: <http://www.bwea.com/jobs/index.html>.

Committed to fulfilling their pledge to helping provide **clearer careers guidance**, in February, three of the signatory partners to the Skills Accord presented at the Renewables East - Offshore Careers Conference for service men and women looking to make their transition out of the armed forces.

- **Next steps**

Thank you for ensuring that time and resources have been dedicated by your organisation to supporting this work. Some excellent outcomes are already being achieved through collaborative efforts, and your continued support is vital to provide the momentum needed to secure long-term success.

Please refer to the original Skills Accords that you signed up to, under the Skills Summit section at: <http://www.bwea.com/jobs/employers.html> to ensure that your organisation is being involved where it can be.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Fruzsina Kemenes, Skills & Education Policy Officer: f.kemenes@bwea.com