

BWEA31 SKILLS SUMMIT

RENEWABLE ENERGY APPRENTICESHIPS PROGRAMME **SECTOR SKILLS ACCORD**

We, the signatories to this Sector Skills Accord, commit to supporting the delivery of Renewable Energy Apprenticeships. Recognising that there is a need for a nationally accredited, standardised route for training new recruits and members of the existing workforce, we support the development of new qualifications suited to the specific needs of the wind and marine energy industries.

As signatories of this Accord we accept that time and resources should be invested in four key areas:

1. The development of wind and marine energy industry specific National Occupational Standards and qualifications;
2. The design and delivery of a large scale wind energy service technician apprenticeship programme from 2010 and beyond; and
3. The design and delivery of a broader Renewable Energy Apprenticeship Programme for the future
4. Making a commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone training and working in the industry.

Our specific commitments set out to drive this agenda forward are detailed in the Annex sections 1-4.

We agree that this Accord is not intended to be a legally-binding document, but represents the intention of its supporters to ensure that the future skills needs of the wind and marine energy industries will be met.

ANNEX SECTIONS

Renewable Energy Apprenticeships Programme **Sector Skills Accord**

Background

In October 2008 – the Bain Report commissioned by the British Wind Energy Association (BWEA) to analyse the labour market for the wind and marine industries was released. This Report provided not only an overview of the workforce of today, documenting where employers are finding it difficult to recruit; but also provided projections for the scale of potential employment opportunities for the future. One of the key conclusions of this report was that employers are already finding it difficult to recruit individuals with the right skills and experience for technician level roles. The labour market projections suggest that this is a key area for scaling up recruitment for the future. Between 10,000-20,000 construction, installation and operations and maintenance staff will be needed to support the British Wind Energy Industry by 2020¹.

The evidence presented highlighted technician training as a key 'skills gap'. Apprenticeships are an effective means of bridging this particular skills gap for industry, both in the immediate future and the long-run. Modern Apprenticeships enable individuals to train whilst they are in employment, allowing companies to home grow talent. As employees, apprentices work alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills. Off-the-job, usually on a day release basis, apprentices receive training with a local training provider such as a college or private training centre. There are many business benefits; Apprenticeships can improve an organisation's productivity and profitability through reducing training costs and raising staff retention. Where a nationally recognised apprenticeships framework exists, businesses can access financial assistance from Government towards the cost of training of apprentices.

Corporate members of BWEA, the Sector Skills Councils (SSC), Awarding Bodies and other stakeholders have been working together throughout 2009 with the ambition to launch the training of the first cohort of large-scale wind energy service technicians through a tailored apprenticeship programme in September 2010. One of their first achievements has been to put together National Occupational Standards (NOS) for this specific industry role. As the cornerstone to all formal qualifications, the development of NOS is very important and the collaborative efforts of those involved must be highlighted. However for a full Renewable Energy Apprenticeships Programme (REAP) to be successfully put into practice, continued medium to long term future commitments need to be secured from central government, devolved administrations, skills bodies from across the four nations, employers² and training providers alike.

This Skills Accord is about setting out what commitments are essential for such a national framework to be successfully set up for the wind and marine energy industries.

¹ Bain & Company (2008) 'Employment opportunities and challenges in the context of rapid industry growth' O&M staff demand by 2020 – Low industry growth scenario: 6,700 O&M; dynamic case projection: 10, 800.

² Employers – a range of companies active across the wind and marine value chain

1. National Occupational Standards and Qualifications for the Wind and Marine Energy Industries

BWEA commits to

- Act as the facilitator to industry and the Sector Skills Councils (SSC's) for the development, roll-out and continued review of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and qualifications demanded by the wind and marine energy industries
- To this end BWEA shall coordinate a NOS sub-group of the 'Skills & Education Strategy Group' which will work the Power Sector Skills Strategy Group (PSSSG) to drive forward the introduction of NOS for the wind and marine energy industries as a whole
- Act as a central source of information on wind and marine energy NOS developments for all UK industry stakeholders
- Work with the SSC's to ensure that in the long-run the NOS that are established continue to be monitored and revised where this is due

Companies party to this Accord commit to

- Take a collaborative approach in developing NOS for the benefit of industry as a whole
- Accept NOS headings³ and proposed qualification structures that have been developed to apply to all UK wind industry service technicians over the course of 2009, with a view to utilising these in the workplace once they are fully refined
- Dedicate resources to the development and continued review of NOS by participating in NOS meetings organised by BWEA

EU Skills commits to

- Work directly with wind energy employers in conjunction with the BWEA sub-group and the PSSSG to develop a suite of wind and marine energy NOS where occupational roles lie under the EU Skills footprint
- Maximise synergies with the rest of the power sector to ensure efforts are not duplicated and the development of new wind and marine energy NOS links into the work of others on related NOS
- Take a lead role in coordinating activities with the wider SSC's and skills bodies in developing a broader set of renewable energy NOS
- Act as a first port of call for employers within the wind and marine energy industries for communicating with SSC's

³ Wind Energy Service Technician NOS development has been industry led. These NOS can be viewed at: <http://www.bwea.com/membersarea/supplychain.html>

Supporting organisations party to this Accord commit to

- Acknowledging new NOS headings that have been developed for the UK wind industry by SSC'c through their engagement with BWEA corporate members

2. The Design and Delivery of a Large Scale Wind Energy Service Technician Apprenticeship Programme from 2010 and Beyond

BWEA commits to

- Act as the facilitator for the development of tailored apprenticeships for wind service technicians so that the programme may be launched in September 2010
- To this end BWEA shall coordinate the REAP sub-group of the BWEA 'Skills & Education Strategy Group'. It is intended for this group to meet at least bi-monthly leading up to September 2010
- Develop links with the PSSSG and its subgroups to support the development of a sector wide approach.
- Maintain the momentum for the development of the wind service technician apprenticeships, so that the ambition to launch the programme can be met by September 2010
- Lobby with EU Skills to secure funding across the four nations of the UK for the wind and marine energy industries
- Ensure that in the long-run the apprenticeships framework continues to be monitored and revised where this is due
- Act as a central source of information on wind energy apprenticeships developments
- Ensure cohesion, at both a strategy and delivery level, between its Skills & Education and Supply Chain work-streams, with a view to increasing the UK employer-base needed to underpin vocational training

Companies party to this Accord commit to

- Take a collaborative approach to developing the wind service technician apprenticeship programme for the benefit of the UK industry as a whole
- Dedicate time and resources to the development of the wind technician apprenticeship programme, by participating at bi-monthly REAP meetings
- Sign up wind service technician apprentices for September 2010 provided that a suitable robust programme is successfully developed; **or** where a company does not directly employ technicians, they shall support and encourage companies they contract for maintenance services in doing so
- Provide indicative numbers on their companies' demand for apprentices in the UK by December 31st 2009

EU Skills commits to

- Continue working directly with wind energy employers through the REAP sub-group, the PSSSG, a preferred awarding body, government agencies and educational providers to see through the development and launch of the new wind service technician apprenticeships in September 2010
- Lobby to secure funding across the four nations of the UK for the wind and marine energy industries

The Awarding Body party to this Accord commits to

- Consult industry through the REAP sub-group and develop a new wind energy service technician technical certificate in a timely fashion to ensure that the apprenticeship can be launched in September 2010

The National Skills Academy for Power commits to

- Establish and maintain a quality assured network of providers who can deliver the wind service technician apprenticeship
- Develop innovative and high quality training materials to support the delivery of the wind service technician apprenticeship
- Maintain an overview of supply and demand and develop additional provision as required
- Work with employers to gather workforce planning data to facilitate long term planning

Funding bodies party to this Accord commit to

- Review what financial support they can assign to wind industry service technician apprenticeships from September 2010 onwards
- Ensure that budgeting considers the need to regularly review and revise the qualifications in line with the changing needs of industry over time

Supporting organisations party to this Accord commit to

- Recognise the need for a standardised apprenticeships route for wind energy service technicians that is accredited throughout the UK
- Promote the new UK wind energy service technician apprenticeships to the public

3. The Design and Delivery of a Broader REAP for the Future

BWEA commits to

- Act as the facilitator for the development of REAP, where overall the wind and marine energy industries would benefit from standardised training
- Develop links with the PSSSG and it's subgroups to support the development of a sector wide approach
- Act as a conduit for helping external stakeholders in prioritising what roles REAP should be developed for and where existing frameworks need to be reviewed over time. To this end BWEA shall retain the REAP sub-group of the Skills & Education Strategy Group
- Ensuring cohesion, at both a strategy and delivery level, between its Skills & Education and Supply Chain work-streams, with a view to increasing the UK employer-base needed to underpin vocational training

Companies party to this Accord commit to

- Take a collaborative approach to developing REAP for the benefit of industry as a whole
- Dedicate resources where this is appropriate to the development and continued review of the need for REAP by participating in REAP meetings

EU Skills commits to

- Take a lead role in coordinating amongst the SSC's on developing a broader set of REAP
- Act as a first port of call for employers within the wind and marine energy industries for communicating with SSC's

National Skills Academy for Power commits to

- Continue support for the development, delivery and promotion of REAP, where overall there is sufficient demand from the wind and marine energy industries

Supporting organisations party to this Accord commit to

- Recognise that for certain roles there is a need for UK-wide standardised apprenticeships routes into wind and marine energy
- Support the development and launch of REAP where there is a clear need for industry and learners to have access to these training routes

4. Making a commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone working in the industry.

Ensuring the health, safety and well being of everyone working in the industry will be vital if we are to ensure the delivery of a safe and sustainable future. In addition to maintaining the reputation of the industry, investing in best practice health and safety standards will enhance the skills and competence of apprentices, technicians and wider supervisory and operational management. This will in turn increase the likelihood that accidents and incidents will be prevented or minimised. The responsibility for delivering a safe and sustainable industry is shared by everyone.

Each party therefore commits to:

- Ensuring that all initiatives arising out of this Accord take explicit account of health, safety and wellbeing issues both collectively but also the specific needs of individuals;
- Ensuring that everyone strives to the development of a positive health and safety culture as part of every initiative or education program and that this is actively communicated to all concerned.

Acronyms

BWEA: British Wind Energy Association
EU Skills: Energy and Utility Skills
PSSSG: Power Sector Skills Strategy Group
REAP: Renewable Energy Apprenticeships Programme
SSC: Sector Skills Council
NOS: National Occupational Standards