

# Seeds of Success

As the UK experiences some of its most economically challenging times, SEEDA is doing everything it can to help South East businesses weather the current storm and emerge stronger for the upturn

SEEDA continues to help businesses grow and become more efficient

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) continues to fund support to help businesses grow and become more efficient. SEEDA is working with Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council and the Government's 'Real Help for Businesses Now' scheme to provide support for business, ranging from access to finance through to tackling redundancy. Businesses can access these services through the SEEDA-funded support service Business Link (see page 40), which also offers free business 'Health Checks.'

## Increased Funding

Among the key financial measures in place SEEDA's **Transition Loan Fund** offers short term bridging loans to fully established, viable and growing businesses facing difficulties obtaining credit through banks and other traditional routes. Capital grants under the Grant for Business Investment scheme have been extended to SMEs with long-term viability whose capital investment plans are being held up by current economic conditions.

SEEDA has committed a further £6m to fund the **Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS)** for another three years, giving manufacturers in the region access to high quality, free advice on how to increase efficiency and reduce margins. Alongside this, funding has been made available for the **Immerse** programme, which provides intensive, extended design support to selected larger businesses.

## Export Support

Through an enhanced **Passport to Export** service, SEEDA is helping more businesses to trade overseas by offering new and inexperienced exporters free capability assessments, support in visiting potential markets, mentoring from a local export professional, free action plans, customised and subsidised training, and ongoing support once they're up and running.

Financial support has also been provided for a new **International Trade Sector Advisor**, providing professional advice on a range of services including financial subsidies, export documentation, contacts in overseas markets, overseas visits,

