

HOT ISSUES

The logo for the Department of Trade and Industry (dti), consisting of the lowercase letters 'dti' in a white, sans-serif font on a dark teal square background.

Materials and Engineering Newsletter
Hot Issues

Issue 12: July 2004

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the July edition of our Hot Issues newsletter. Issues in this edition include the Trade and Investment White Paper, Review of the Government's Manufacturing Strategy, the Hampton Review of Regulatory Inspection and Enforcement, Working Time Regulations and Consultation on European Commission proposals on Regional State Aid.

Landfilling of Hazardous Waste

We are aware that some of you have been experiencing difficulties in disposing of your hazardous waste, as a result of the end of co-disposal at landfill sites from 16 July. We are working with Defra and the Environment Agency to find solutions, so please keep your relationship manager informed of any problems you are incurring in identifying suitable disposal routes. A new hazardous waste web portal (www.hazardouswaste.org.uk) has just gone live, which aims to help waste producers and waste handlers through the new requirements and provides links to various sources of help and advice.

We are always grateful for any suggestions for new subjects to be covered in future issues of the newsletter. Ambert Prosper at Ambert.Prospert@dti.gov.uk will be happy to take these on board. Alternatively my team would be happy to meet you to discuss issues affecting your sector if you would find this useful. Your first port of call to arrange a meeting should be your relationship manager. Contact details are included in the newsletter should you need them.

Terry Martin
Assistant Director, Influence and Impact Section
Materials and Engineering Sector Unit.

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HOT ISSUES

Issue: Review of the Government's Manufacturing Strategy

Main points:

The Government's Manufacturing Strategy was originally launched in 2002, setting out a framework of action necessary for the success of the UK manufacturing sector.

A **review of the strategy** has now been published presenting:

- A review of stakeholder views on the strategy, helping to identify priorities in going forward.
- A set of at-a-glance key performance indicators, designed to monitor the success of the UK manufacturing sector, that will be regularly updated.
- A review of what has been achieved since the launch of the original Manufacturing Strategy in 2002.
- An action plan, bringing together key themes identified in the review, and identifying the priorities of Government, Business and key stakeholders in going forward.

Priorities for the future include improving understanding of manufacturing, better regulation, promoting best practice, encouraging high value added investment, encouraging intelligent public procurement, and promoting science and innovation.

A new **Manufacturing Forum**, jointly led by industry and Government, will take responsibility for implementing the priorities identified in the report, and will co-ordinate industry, stakeholder and Government action.

We welcome your thoughts on the review. Please contact Ray Ward in the DTI's manufacturing policy team (see contact details below).

Deadline for input: N/A

Hot links:

[The DTI manufacturing website](#) has PDF documents and the executive summary.

[Order the original strategy](#) (published May 2002) free of charge.

[Order the review of the strategy](#) (Published July 2004) free of charge.

[Order a summary \(leaflet\)](#) of the review.

Contact: ray.ward@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Issue: Trade and Investment White Paper

Main points:

The Trade and Investment White Paper published on 6 July follows on from the Globalisation White Paper of 2000, the Competitiveness White Papers of 1998 and 2001 and the Sustainable Development Strategy of 1999.

It brings together these strands of policy, in the context of a dynamic UK economy and an enlarged Europe. It sets out the vision of a world trading system that is fair as well as free. It deals with the impact of global trade and investment upon British workers and businesses; the implications for European reform and competitiveness; and the benefits and risks which growing global trade brings to the people of developing countries.

The paper calls on the EU to:

- Lead the way in showing the necessary flexibility to achieve an ambitious outcome to the Doha Development Agenda;
- Work with the rest of the developed world to eliminate all export subsidies and trade-distorting domestic support;
- Push ahead with structural reforms and complete the liberalisation of product, capital and labour markets in order to meet the Lisbon agenda;
- Ensure that no EU regulation is passed without a proper assessment and consideration of its impact on the EU's international competitiveness.

The White Paper can be accessed via the weblink below.

Deadline for input: Ongoing

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/ewt/whitepaper.htm>

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/ewt/forewordintroduction.pdf>

contact: jonathan.holyoak@dti.qsi.gov.uk

Contact us at: Ambert.Prosper@dti.qsi.gov.uk

Issue: Emissions Trading Scheme

Main points:

The EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS), one of the policies being introduced across Europe to tackle emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, is due to begin on 1 January 2005. As part of the implementation of the EU ETS, the UK Government submitted its National Allocation Plan (NAP) for the first phase of the scheme (2005-2007) to the European Commission at the end of April.

On 7 July, the Commission announced its decisions on the first eight NAPs. This included the UK's plan which was approved by the Commission on the condition that more information is supplied on the operation of the new entry reserve and on allocations for installations in Gibraltar. Work is underway on these issues and the UK will be in a position to notify the Commission with the information required in the coming months. Following the Commission's decisions, some Member States are now required to make changes to their NAPs.

In May a further consultation exercise was launched to accompany the submission of the NAP to the Commission. This consultation gave stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the UK NAP as submitted to the Commission and addressed a number of issues which were raised by stakeholders as a result of the earlier consultation on the draft NAP.

Earlier this week, the government published the decisions it has taken on the allocation methodology as a result of this consultation. Operators who are affected by these decisions may, in some cases, be required to submit further data by 10 August. The decisions paper gives more details on this. There are a number of decisions still to be published, in particular with regard to new entrants. Work in this area is continuing and an announcement on these is likely shortly. Benchmarks have now been produced for the calculation of allowances to new entrants. These were also published this week, alongside a request for submission of data by new entrants and incumbent operators with no or little historical data. The allocation methodology decisions and announcements on new entrants, as well as further information on the scheme, can be found on the websites given below.

The following sectors are specifically covered by the first phase of the scheme:

- Electricity Generators
- Oil Refineries
- Steel Production
- Processing Cement
- Glass Manufacturing
- Brick Manufacturing
- Pulp and Paper

In addition installations in any sectors that have combustion plants of a thermal input of over 20MW, including aggregated plants on a single site, are also covered.

Deadline for input: 10 August

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/trading/eu/index.htm>

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/euets.shtml>

Contact us: Emma.Briggs@dti.qsi.gov.uk

Issue: Government Consultation on Common Commencement Dates for New Regulations

Main Points:

In the 2004 Budget, the Government gave a commitment to consult business on the feasibility of introducing common commencement dates (i.e. a single date(s)) when changes are made to an area of either sectoral or generic UK regulations. This would extend the existing arrangement for domestic employment law, which is now implemented on 6 April or 1 October each year.

The harmonisation of commencement dates for new regulation is intended to ensure that changes to policy are made in a co-ordinated fashion and to provide businesses with greater clarity and awareness about when changes will be made. This would assist all parties to plan for new measures and help implement them effectively.

The consultation (see weblink below) is seeking the views of business, their

representatives and other interested organisations on this proposal. Responses to the consultation should be submitted through the Consultation Response Form and sent to Common.CommencementDates@sbs.gsi.gov.uk. Any enquiries concerning the consultation document should be directed to the Small Business Service contact below.

Andy Harrison
Assistant Director
Enterprise and Regulation Directorate
Small Business Service
Bay 644, Kingsgate House
London SW1H 0ET
Tel: 020 7215 8180, Fax: 020 7215 4369

Deadline for input: 3 September 2004

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

<http://www.sbs.gov.uk/consultation/ccdates.pdf>

Contacts us at: Terry.martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Issue: Consultation on European Commission proposals on regional state aid

Main Points:

The document invites views on European Commission proposals to amend the guidelines governing regional aid (which define assisted areas and aid intensities allowed within them) after 2006. Against the background of EU enlargement and European Council decisions to move towards less and better targeted state aid, the proposals would result in reductions in eligibility for such aid in the UK and the other longer standing Member States, though additional levels of aid would be permitted for SMEs outside the assisted areas. The consultation (see weblink below) seeks the views of all interested parties to help inform the Government's response to the Commission proposals.

Enquiries to Julie Evans, State Aid Branch, DTI, Tel: 020 7215 4428,
Email: Julie.evans@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Deadline for input: 6 September 2004

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

www.dti.gov.uk/ewt/stateaid.pdf

www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/stateaid.pdf

Contact us at: Ambert.Prosper@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Issue: The Working Time Regulations

Main Points:

The Government has embarked on a 12-week consultation on long hours working and the operation of the individual opt out in the UK. The Government is seeking views and information from both employers and workers on the current areas of discussion surrounding the future of the opt out.

This consultation closes on 22 September 2004. Early responses will be better placed to inform the Government's negotiations in Europe.

The European Commission has commissioned research on the working time opt-out, and are discussing issues with Member States and other stakeholders. They have issued two communications, the first one on 5 January 2004, covering the opt-out, along with doctors' on call time and the reference period over which workers' hours are averaged. The Communication asked for responses by 31 March 2004.

The UK have responded to the Communication and details of our response can be found on the following website:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/work_time_regs/com_response.doc

The Commission also issued a 2nd stage consultation on 19 May 2004. The Second Stage Consultation Paper is for consultation with EU Social Partners (**not** Member States) who normally have six weeks to respond with comments and a decision whether to negotiate on the options within the document or not.

The Social Partners are:

UNICE, the European employers' federation
ETUC, the European employees organisation
CEEP, the public sector employers' organisation

The Second Stage Consultation paper has proposed four options on the opt-out:

Option 1

Keep the individual opt-out with tighter conditions of application

Option 2

Opt-out only available through collective agreement

Option 3

Opt-out available through collective agreement, but retain the possibility of individual opt-out in the absence of such an agreement and for undertakings without worker representation.

Option 4

Phase out the opt-out

The Second Stage Consultation paper can be found

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/labour_law/docs/wtd_en.pdf

Previous topics

The [Regulations](#) were amended, with effect from 1 August 2003, to extend working time measures in full to all non mobile workers in road, sea, inland waterways and lake transport, to all workers in the railway and offshore sectors, and to all workers in aviation who are not covered by the sectoral Aviation Directive.

Mobile workers in road transport have more limited protections. Those subject to European Drivers' hours rules 3820/85 are entitled to 4 weeks paid annual leave and health assessments if a night worker from 1 August 2003. Mobile workers not covered

by European drivers' hours rules will be entitled to an average 48 hours per week, 4 weeks paid holiday, health assessments if a night worker and adequate rest.

Deadline for input: 22 September 2004

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/work_time_regs/consultation.pdf

Contacts: Fran.Quin@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Issue: Hampton Review of Regulatory Inspection and Enforcement

Main Points:

The Chancellor announced the Hampton Review in Budget 2004. The review is looking at all interactions between business and regulators, from form-filling to enforcement action, through inspection and licensing.

The review is keen to hear opinions from businesses that have significant concerns about the ways in which inspection and enforcement regimes currently operate, and also any ideas for beneficial changes that could be introduced. Contributions are welcome in any form - a list of questions has been compiled to guide businesses and others in their responses (see weblink below).

The review is being led by Philip Hampton, formerly Finance Director for Lloyds TSB, BT and British Gas. The review expects to finish its work in time for Budget 2005.

You can contact the review team in any of the following ways:

e-mail: hamptonreview@hm-treasury.gov.uk

fax: 020 7270 4414

letter: Philip Hampton, HM Treasury, 1 Horseguards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ.

Further details can be obtained from the weblink below. The deadline for submissions is **15 September 2004**.

Deadline for input: 15 September 2004

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/consultations_and_legislation/hampton/consult_hampton_index.cfm

Contacts: terry.martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Issue: Landfill Tax

Main Points:

Following the commitment in Budget 2003 that the increases in landfill taxes will be revenue neutral to business as a whole, the Chancellor announced in Spending Review 2004 that the revenues, rising to £146 million a year in England by 2007-08, will be used to support business in improving resource efficiency.

This will include support that specifically targets waste minimisation and diversion of waste from landfill as well as resource efficiency more generally. Up to £20 million a year by 2007-08 will be used to co-fund the DTI led Technology Strategy to support

research and development aimed at waste minimisation and energy efficiency and at least £40 million a year by 2007-08 will be used to expand the Carbon Trust's programmes supporting business in improving energy efficiency.

In introducing these new programmes Defra will establish a customer focused delivery structure. The Government will also consult on a new enhanced capital allowance scheme for waste and associated resource efficiency technologies.

Other expenditure options are still in development, but are likely to include increased provision of resource efficiency advice to business and market development for certain waste materials. Over the summer, Government will be seeking business input and finalising ideas, with a view to making an announcement in the autumn on year 1 (2005-06) expenditure.

Deadline for input: Ongoing

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_sr04/spend_sr04_index.cfm

Contacts: terry.martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Issue: Climate Change Agreements: Extension of Eligibility Criteria

Main Points:

Budget 2004 announced the extension of the Climate Change Agreement (CCAs) scheme. Subject to European Commission state aid approval, the eligibility criteria are to be extended to cover other energy-intensive sectors of industry not included within the existing arrangements (those already eligible for CCAs under the current arrangements will continue to benefit and will be unaffected by these changes).

The additional qualifying criteria for CCAs are based on one of the definitions of energy intensity set out in the EU Energy Products Directive, which came into force on 1 January 2004. Qualifying processes must:

- Meet or exceed a 12% threshold of energy intensity, or
- Fall between a 3% and 12% threshold of energy intensity, provided they meet or exceed either:
 - An import penetration ratio of 50% or
 - An export to production ratio of 30%

In both instances, energy intensity is defined as energy costs being at least 3% of production value. These tests will be applied once only, at the beginning of negotiations, and at sector level.

Further details are available from the Defra website below. Applications should be submitted electronically, including all supporting data, and should be returned **by 31 August 2004** to levy.agreements@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Deadline for input: 31 August 2004

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/ccl/extension.htm

Contacts: terry.martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Issue: Amendments to the Pollution Prevention and Control (England and Wales) Regulations 2000

Main Points:

Defra has just published a consultation paper and draft Amendment Regulations setting out how the Government proposes to amend certain provisions of the Pollution Prevention and Control (England and Wales) Regulations 2000. This consultation follows on from the one initiated in December 2003 on proposals to amend certain provisions of the PPC Regulations.

Proposed amendments include:

- In the case of ferrous metals, removing the operation of vacuum furnaces from Part A. Their retention in Part A for non-ferrous metals in certain circumstances is necessary to maintain compliance with the IPPC Directive;
- The operation of electro-slag furnaces will move from the list of exemptions in paragraph (b) of Part A(1) of Section 2.1, but will be added to the list in paragraph (b) of Part B of that section;
- Regulation 2(7)(d) amends the table in paragraph 10 of Part 2 of Schedule 3 to the PPC regulations to provide the relevant date in respect of the Ferrous Metals activities in Section 2.1, which are going to be transferred from Part A(1) to Part B to be at a date after the intended coming into force of the regulations (i.e. 1 April 2005). This will avoid operators having to make a new part B application in respect of these regulated activities.

For further details access the weblink below. The deadline for comment is **Friday 15 October 2004** and should be sent to control.pollution@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Deadline for input: 15 October 2004

Hot links (to further information/consultation documents):

www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/ppc-amendregs2/index.htm

Contacts: terry.martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk

OTHER ISSUES

The following are some of the other ongoing issues.

Operating and Financial Review

The Government has published draft regulations for consultation on the Operating and Financial Review (OFR) and the Director's report. The consultation document contains Government's proposals for a new statutory OFR designed to give shareholders the information they need to help assess companies' past performance and future prospects. This proposal applies to quoted companies only. Directors will need to report on all factors that significantly affect the company and its future performance. These are likely to include the company's impact on the environment and the wider community as well as its relationships with employees, customers and suppliers.

The consultation document and draft regulations can be accessed via the weblink below. Responses should be sent to ofr.condoc@dti.gsi.gov.uk by **6 August 2004**.

Government White Paper on the New Commission for Equality and Human Rights

On 12 May Government published a White Paper setting out its proposals for the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) in detail, including its role, duties and powers, and outline the way in which it will deliver to its key stakeholders. It also sets out the anticipated next steps towards establishment.

The new body will bring together the work of the existing equality commissions – the Commission for Racial Equality, The Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission. It will also take responsibility for new laws outlawing workplace discrimination on religion or belief, sexual orientation and age. The White Paper can be accessed via the weblink below. Responses should be sent to equality.project@dti.gsi.gov.uk by **6 August 2004**.

EU Temporary Agency Workers Directive

The European Commission published its proposal on 20 March 2002 - negotiations continue within Europe on the proposed Directive, and the Dutch are looking to discuss the dossier during their six month Presidency, which began on July 1. The directive has the broad aim of improving the basic working conditions of Temporary Agency Workers by requiring that, following a qualifying period, they be treated no less favourably than comparable permanent workers in the user enterprise to which the temporary worker is assigned. The UK wants to make sure that both agency workers and their job opportunities are protected, and is calling for a qualifying period that is significantly longer than the current proposal of six weeks.

Contact: Karen.Wilshaw@dti.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.dti.gov.uk/er/agency/directive.htm

Information and Consultation Guide

Draft guidance to help firms implement a new employment law to encourage better workplace communication was published on 7 July. The guidance relates to the Information and Consultation regulations, which come into effect in the spring. They give all employees the right to be consulted and informed about key decisions that affect their employment. The closing date for responses is **22 October**.

Further details can be found on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/er/consultation/draftguidance.doc

EU Chemicals Legislation – REACH

REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) is a new proposal for regulation of substances, adopted by the European Commission in October 2003 and now the subject of negotiations expected to last into 2006. It has the same scope as existing regulations and will therefore apply to certain minerals and ores, eg, metals, cement. The aims of the regulation are to improve the

protection of human health and the environment while maintaining the competitiveness of the EU chemicals industry. One of the features of REACH is that it aims to shift responsibility from public authorities to industry for carrying out risk assessment and the management of risks from substances and to provide safety information on substances and their uses.

The Government carried out a consultation on REACH during March-June this year and the responses are currently being considered.

The Dutch Presidency (July-December) marks the beginning of a more detailed scrutiny of the text, now that the high level read through has been completed by Member States in the working group negotiations. It is expected that this period will focus on the registration provisions.

Contact us at: Keith.avis@dti.gov.uk

Robin.Ashman@dti.gov.uk

Weblink: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/reach/index.htm>

EU Batteries Directive

Government has published a consultation document seeking initial views on a proposal by the European Commission for a new Directive on batteries and accumulators. The proposed Directive covers all types of batteries and accumulators, regardless of their shape, volume, weight, material composition or use. Accumulators are defined in the Directive as rechargeable batteries. The Government invites comments on the proposal, both in general terms and also in response to specific questions posed on the main implementation issues.

The consultation document can be accessed via the weblink below. Responses should be sent **by 5 August 2004** to paul.creary@dti.gsi.gov.uk.

Contact: paul.creary@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Consultation document: www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/ep/Batteries_Consultation.pdf

EU Environmental Liability Directive

The Directive was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 30 April 2004 and has now come into force. Member States have until 30 April 2007 to transpose the Directive into national law. Transposition in the UK will involve two or three formal public consultations, the first of which is likely to begin around November 2004.

Websites: Environmental Council minutes:

<http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/loadbook.asp?BID=89&LANG=1>

DG Environment site: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/liability/>

Contact: Terry.Martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Alex.Wilson@dti.gsi.gov.uk

European Commission proposals for an eco-design for Energy-using Products (EuP) framework Directive

The European Commission adopted a proposal for a framework Directive on the eco-design of energy-using products, such as electrical and electronic devices or heating equipment, on 1 August 2003. The proposal does not introduce directly binding requirements for specific products, but does define conditions and criteria for setting requirements regarding environmentally relevant product characteristics (such as energy consumption).

The EuP proposals were presented to a meeting of the EC Energy Council Working Group in September 2003 and were discussed by Ministers at the full meeting of the Energy Council on 15 December 2003. Political agreement on a text was agreed at a meeting of the Energy Council at the end of June.

At the same time however, MEPs in the Environment Committee of the European Parliament had been considering their Report on the Commission's text and came up with just under 350 amendments to the original text. A plenary discussion of the Directive took place in May, where the list of amendments was reduced but it was too late for a final text to be agreed with the Energy Council and adopted before the then-current European Parliament was dissolved. The new Parliament will return to consider its next move in the Autumn, which means that final agreement on these proposals is now unlikely before early 2005 at the earliest.

Contact: Steven.Andrews@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/eco_design/index.htm

EU Integrated Product Policy Directive

As reported in previous issues, the European Commission adopted a Communication on Integrated Product Policy (IPP) on 18 June 2003 that outlined its strategy for reducing the environmental impact caused by products. IPP represents a new approach and puts emphasis on three dimensions:

- Life-cycle thinking - when pollution reduction measures are identified, consideration is given to the whole of a product's life-cycle from cradle to grave;
- Flexible - as to the type of policy measure to be used, working with the market where possible;
- Full stakeholder involvement

The Environment Council reached its formal conclusions on the Commission Communication in October 2003 and the European Parliament produced a Draft Report on 1 March 2004, which is now under consideration.

Contact: Steven.Andrews@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Website: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ipp/ippcommunication.htm>

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ipp/qa.pdf>

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE) and the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (ROHS) Directive

The DTI's second consultation on the WEEE & ROHS Directives ended 1 March 2004. There were 219 responses. DTI has published the results of the consultation. Copies of the consultation, a summary of responses and other relevant documents are available from the DTI website below. The next step, following this consultation and in the light of further discussions with stakeholders, is for the Government to develop draft implementing legislation and guidance for the WEEE and RoHS Directives, which will be shortly issued for consultation. Preparation of these is in hand.

Contact: chris.tollady@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/weee/index.htm>.

Energy Bill Receives Royal Assent

The Government's Energy Bill received Royal Assent on 22 July 2004. The new Act provides the framework for:

- The establishment of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) to manage the decommissioning of the UK's nuclear legacy;
- The development of offshore wind and other marine renewable energy sources outside territorial waters;
- The implementation of the British Electricity Trading and Transmission Arrangements (BETTA).

Copies of the Energy Act are available at www.uk-legislation.hmso.gov.uk.

Information on the Energy Bill can be obtained at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/energy_bill.shtml

Proposals for the Control of Major Accidents Hazards (Amendment) Regulations

The draft regulations will implement the health, safety and environmental aspects of Directive 2003/105/EC which amends Directive 96/82/EC (the Seveso II Directive) on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances. Seveso II was implemented in great Britain through the COMAH regulations.

Directive 2003/105/EC is a broadening of the Seveso II Directive rather than a major revision. It takes account of recent major accidents within the EU since Seveso II was introduced, and also the results of studies on carcinogens and substances dangerous for the environment carried out by the European Commission at the request of the Council at the time of the Seveso II Directive was adopted.

Comments should be sent to: Carol Miller, Health and Safety Executive, Nuclear and Hazardous Installations Policy Division 1, Room 101, Daniel House Trinity Road, Bootle, Merseyside L20 3TW, Telephone: 0151 951 3337

Email: comah.consultation@hse.gsi.gov.uk

Closing date for Consultation: **1st October 2004.**

Consultation document: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd193.pdf>

Website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd193.htm>

INDUSTRY SUPPORT

National Composites Network (NCN)

Trade and Industry Secretary Patricia Hewitt announced at the recent Farnborough Airshow the new £30 million network to disseminate lighter, stronger composites technologies for aerospace, automotive and other industries.

“Composite” technologies are vital to transport industries because they can lead to lighter structures, allowing planes to use less fuel and carry heavier loads. Composite technology will also benefit other sectors including the UK’s automotive, marine and construction industries.

The National Composites Network will bring together industry experts in composites; share knowledge in composites across different industries and between companies; and help smaller companies source their research and development and access state of the art technology.

The National Composites Network will have various regional centres, each of which will specialise in particular technologies. The first part of the network will be at the GKN Centre on the Isle of Wight, and will focus on automated manufacture.

Other centres are planned in the South West, Wales and Yorkshire, each with a focus on specific technologies. The South West centre at Airbus will focus on technologies for large and technically advanced structures, the centre in South Wales at TWI will specialise in non-destructive testing technology, and the Yorkshire centre (run jointly by TWI and AMRC) will focus on machining and joining. The Network will have a steering group of major composite users and contributors including MG Rover, Vosper Thornicroft, NPL and Qinetiq.

The Department of Trade and Industry is putting £4.75 million into the network from its Technology Programme, announced in April. The UK’s various Regional Development Agencies are putting in a further £14 million, with industry contributions bringing the total funding up to £30 million.

The network will be run by GKN, the Motor Industries Research Association, the British Marine Federation, the Composites Processing Association, Airbus and The Welding Institute (TWI). All the other key players in the UK composites industry support the network. From 1 September a dedicated telephone helpline and web site will be in place but in the interim enquirers should contact TWI via telephone 01223 – 891162 or web site www.twi.co.uk or e-mail composites@twi.co.uk.

National Metals Technology Centre (NAMTEC)

The National Metals Technology Centre (NAMTEC) was launched in October 2002 following DTI sponsored research, which found overwhelming support for a metals centre of excellence. Funded by the DTI, Yorkshire Forward and Objective 1, NAMTEC aims to increase the global competitiveness of the UK’s metals sector by stimulating high technology innovation and research and development.

With a remit that encompasses every metal, every sector and every application, NAMTEC aims to be a flagship organisation, bringing value to the metals industry by

a combination of knowledge sharing, technology transfer and focussing of research and technology activity.

NAMTEC's activities currently focus on three main areas:

Technical help

A technical helpline is staffed by a team of experienced metallurgists who will advise on metals related problems and identify solutions. Over 600 enquiries have been dealt with by NAMTEC over the past year.

Information

The DTI survey which led to the establishment of NAMTEC showed that information was the most important issue to both industry and the science base. The NAMTEC website (www.namtec.co.uk) allows registered users to search information about metals and their properties, processing technologies and applications.

Project management

A team of project management specialists can identify funding opportunities and partners, co-ordinate funding bids and manage secured projects. They are currently working on 20 metals related projects.

A key development over the past year has been the establishment of an advisory council made up of key figures from industry, trade organisations and universities. The council meets twice a year and provides a forum in which different sectors in the industry can share experiences, discuss the different issues they face and make recommendations for a way forward. NAMTEC's technical expertise has been recognised with the award of Centre of Expertise in Manufacturing status by MAS.

Plans are in place to expand the NAMTEC business portfolio with a major skills and training division and an R&D division that will seek to optimise use of the scientific and technological expertise available in the Corus R&D laboratories.

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