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ENGLAND  
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**TOURISM  
SOUTH EAST**

# Hosting the World

## Training Project 2008-2010 Independent Evaluation Report



# Contents

Hosting the World Project Evaluation Summary .....	3
1. Hosting the World – An Introduction .....	7
2. Hosting the World Project Overview .....	8
3. Project Delivery .....	11
4. Project Performance .....	17
5. Project Impact .....	21
6. Learning Lessons .....	29
7. Conclusions .....	31
8. Recommendations .....	33
9. Appendix 1: Survey Participants and Acknowledgments .....	34
10. Appendix 2: Evaluation Framework .....	36
11. Appendix 3: Hosting the World Case Studies .....	37



## Hosting the World Project Evaluation Summary

The Hosting the World Training Project is an innovative initiative that ran from May 2008 to March 2010. It was managed Tourism South East (TSE), the regional tourist board for the south east region, and funded by the South East of England Development Agency's "Training Pools" Skills Programme. The Project is a compelling example of how a training Project can be shaped by employers in the tourism, leisure and hospitality industry to meet their needs whilst also making the very best of the once in a lifetime opportunity that is the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Project is an excellent demonstration of how to inspire businesses to improve workforce skills in areas that really matter – in the lead up to, during and importantly as a legacy of the Games.

The main aim of the Project was to assist tourism, leisure and hospitality organisations in the Eton Dorney Corridor to provide world class standards of customer service by delivering innovative skill development programmes. In fact the Hosting the World Project gave rise to the creation of nine highly relevant training courses and associated seminar, workshop, podcast and even vodcast resources as well as myriad conference and networking opportunities between 2008 and 2010. All this, successfully achieved at a time when the recession was truly at its most savage in the United Kingdom and when many businesses had felt forced to reduce staff and training in their organisations.

In fact this harsh business reality, did impact directly on the Hosting the World Project, but in a way that ultimately served to benefit more businesses and the South East region than was perhaps originally intended because both the timescale for the Project and the geographical scope for its delivery was extended. This meant that Tourism South East was able to overcome the significant challenges they had faced in recruiting businesses to the Hosting the World training courses experienced in 2009 and build up momentum and bookings more successfully across the South East region, and amongst different types of business in the industry during the year. In the evaluator's opinion, these decisions were both correct and critical to the success of the Project overall.

### How do we know the Project was successful?

First and foremost because it over performed despite the economic conditions within which the Project was being delivered. The Project funding from SEEDA (£119,661) and the Learning and Skills Council (£10,000) came with a range of conditions and an expectation that the Project would lead to 100 tourism businesses being assisted in the Eton Dorney Corridor, and that 200 individuals (usually employees but often times the owner managers too) would be assisted in their skills development. There was also an expectation that each individual should complete at least 6 hours skills development activity to count towards the contractual objectives.

<b>Contractual Outputs</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Business Support:</b> Number of businesses assisted in improving their performance	<b>100</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>Skills:</b> Number of people assisted in improving their performance	<b>200</b>	<b>255</b>

Secondly, we know the Project was a success, because independent interviews with samples of business and employee participants confirm that the training was of the highest quality, and delivered results that met with their expectations and had impact and application in their workplaces.

Thirdly, many of these businesses made an important decision to invest both cash and time in the Project. Although the courses were heavily subsidised (typically from £120 down to £20) they still had to invest an amount of money per participant, and cover the cost of staff cover. In total, TSE calculated that amongst these businesses, and other strategic partners involved in the Project a total of £30,176 of beneficiary in-kind match funding was contributed during the lifetime of the Project to the end of March 2010 - an impressive achievement again in the context of an economic downturn and recession.

Finally, the Project is deemed a success by the evaluation team because it has demonstrated 'additionality', that is to say, it has given rise to a range of unexpected and positive benefits for the TSE team, the funding agent, the businesses, partners and training participants not originally envisaged. This could range from the extra networking and business opportunities created for delegates attending each training session; to the significant cost savings achieved by working with partners to help raise awareness of the Project at jointly delivered promotional events; through to simply delivering more 'product' than was originally expected in the contract, for example more seminars and workshops than required to respond to changing industry needs.

### **What stands out about this Project compared to other training Projects?**

The evaluators have significant experience of undertaking training Project evaluations and it is not uncommon to find that Projects perform well in terms of achieving or exceeding outputs, but what stands out about Hosting the World Project for them is:

- The way it exceeded targets at a time of economic downturn
- The way in which it achieved an excellent spread of engagement with the Project across the South East region and tourism, leisure and hospitality industry i.e. it was not reliant on one type of business in one sub-region
- That despite the contractual stipulations (i.e. minimum 6 hours skills development activity per individual to count towards contractual targets), the TSE team did not make the targets its overarching motivation for engagement. Instead they focused on the genuine opportunity to create a meaningful legacy from the Games and therefore engaged many more businesses and individuals than required to do so – in fact 304 individuals were in some way impacted on by the Project
- The Project has not been afraid to evolve if aspects were not working as well as hoped. The Project Manager was not afraid to try different types of marketing and engagement techniques to recruit businesses to the Project, and was very driven to ensure its success
- The quality of the trainers delivering the courses were absolutely integral to its overall impact i.e. if the right team of experienced trainers had not been in place we are certain that delegate feedback would not have been as positive as it has proven to be

### **Has the Project made a difference?**

It would certainly appear so if we are to base our assessment on the results from independent surveys completed with 6 of the participating businesses, 49 of the learners in receipt of Hosting the World training and feedback from 5 of the trainers involved in the Project. There were extremely high levels of satisfaction and impact recorded by these people, and some strikingly positive results in respect of expectations being met overall 90%-100%) and the new learning that had been achieved (91% of training delegates).

Moreover, the Project appears to have genuinely helped develop business performance and capability in a number of ways that were envisioned when the Project was conceived.

- 82% of learners (employees) felt that their course would help owners, managers and supervisors in their business to train and coach employees and volunteers and generally have a more positive attitude towards training and career development
- 73% of learners (employees) thought that their training course would contribute to helping create a culture and reputation for customer service excellence at their business
- 71% of learners (employees) reported that they felt their training would help them / their organisations maximise the benefits of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games
- Encouragingly, nearly seven in ten learners have already or are likely to change working practices positively as a result of undertaking their Hosting the World training

The full report provides a range of survey statistics that help to reinforce the overall findings above, but the numbers don't always tell the full story. The evaluators were therefore also impressed by some of the comments that employers and learners made about their experience of the Project, a small selection of which are extracted below:

***“The training was of a very good quality and highly relevant to our needs. The course has provided valuable development in a number of areas, for example it has helped those attending the courses to more effectively appraise, encourage, and monitor in the workplace. It has opened their minds in realising the importance of effective appraisals and providing feedback to staff in their job role.”***

Karin Gray, Personnel Manager for the Complex and the entire Beaulieu Estate talking about the impact of her supervisors attending the 'Reviewing the Performance' training course:

***“It's given me ways to have greater appeal to 'green thinking' visitors through appropriate marketing. Tourism South East has been doing the right thing with the Hosting the World Project and its approach. I think it's a case of little and often regarding training and learning and local events are especially good for small businesses like ours.”***

Roger Taylor, Owner Manager of Granny Anne's Bed and Breakfast in Marlow, Buckinghamshire talking about his experience of the 'Green Awareness / Sustainability' seminar:

The evaluation confirms that there have been many important **outcomes** from the Project including:

- Improving business and workplace performance through higher staff motivation levels thereby helping staff retention
- Being able to impart skills and knowledge to bring a structured approach to cascading information to staff and other team members
- Continuous professional development for tourism employers and employees which will enable them to build better and more professional businesses
- Increased awareness amongst businesses of the business opportunities in the run up to 2012 and beyond
- Many participating employers went on to attend and participate in a range of other learning and development activities which in the longer term will result in more professional and better run tourism businesses

## What learning lessons have there been?

It is very rare indeed that any Project goes exactly to plan, and the Hosting the World Project was no different in this regard. There were significant challenges in the early stages of the Project in engaging businesses which were overcome, and even some disappointments in the way in which all aspects of the Project might develop with all the partners involved in its delivery. The main learning lessons appear to include:

- The need for Project funders and delivery organisations to be flexible regarding contractual timescales and parameters is critical if they are truly wishing to respond to changing demands and experiences in the tourism, leisure and hospitality marketplace
- The use of top quality trainers with industry experience and insights is highly valuable to Projects of this nature - they bring course materials to life for learners and impact directly on the overall experience and results achieved
- Training course content must be 'malleable' enough to cater for businesses of all sizes (from micros to larger concerns) and types in the industry for it to be perceived a) as attractive in the first place and b) as useful in its application back in the workplace
- Managing partner expectations is important in Projects like Hosting the World, and it is important to have processes and protocols in place should these expectations change or not be realised
- The subsidy for the training has been important to businesses in order to engage with the Project, but this does not mean that the training should proceed in precisely the same way in future. Survey results suggest that most learners value the training between £61 and £200 per course in real market terms

## What is the future for Hosting the World?

The Project Manager confirmed in April 2010 that Hosting the World had enabled TSE to pilot a range of 2012-specific customer care courses at level 3 that had previously not been available. Through this pilot Project TSE was able to develop and run a programme of ten courses which will result in the best elements from five to six of these courses being taken forward over the next 18 to 24 months as part of TSE's wider programme of customer care training in the run up to and beyond 2012. The Hosting the World branding will form part of TSE's overall 2012 campaign.

This vision is applauded by the independent evaluation team, as our work confirms the Hosting the World Project has delivered value for money<sup>1</sup> and funding partners should be reassured that it has been an excellent use of public money to exceed contractual outputs and achieve meaningful outcomes for the tourism, leisure and hospitality industry in the South East region. Moreover, the value of the training courses in 'market rate' terms appears to be somewhere in the range of £61 to £200 per course, and with all the creative and technical time that has now gone in to developing the content of the Project courses it will be important to ensure that a further return on that investment is achieved in future by the partners, and it is recommended that those deemed most successful and in highest demand, be continued at least up to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in July 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hosting the World Project has offered a good return on the funding investment made by SEEDA and other partners, primarily because it has significantly over-performed in respect of its two contractual outputs. The number of businesses assisted was much greater than expected, as was the total number of individuals assisted with skills development. If we consider that £119,661 of funding from SEEDA was agreed to catalyse 100 business assists and 200 skills development assists the funding cost per output would have been £432.20<sup>1</sup>. The Project delivered 158 business assists and 255 skills development assists meaning that the unit cost per output was much lower at £289.74. Moreover, although they could not be included in the contractual outputs, a further 49 individuals were engaged through the Project and each of these benefit from 4 hours (as opposed to 6 hours) skills development activity (equivalent in real time terms to a further 33 engagements at 6 hours). Had this activity been included in the outputs, then the unit cost per output would have been even lower at £268.30

# 1. Hosting the World – An Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The Hosting the World Project ran from May 2008 to March 2010. It was managed Tourism South East (TSE), the regional tourist board for the south east region, and funded by the South East of England Development Agency's "Training Pools" Skills Programme.

The Project was catalysed by the completion of a detailed skills needs analysis research Project undertaken in 2007 and early 2008 with tourism, leisure and hospitality businesses in the Eton Dorney Corridor confirming the opportunity and demand for a range of skills and knowledge development programmes that could be enhanced by these businesses in the run up to, and beyond the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

Hosting the World provided employers in this Corridor, and ultimately, across the South East region with relevant training and learning opportunities that have left them with a greater capability to improve their business' performance, and become more aware of the Games-related opportunities.

This report evaluates the extent to which the ambitions for the Hosting the World Project were met. Section 2 provides an overview of the Project, its original aims, objectives and output targets. Section 3 provides some information about the Project's delivery. Section 4 provides an assessment of the Project's performance. Section 5 provides an assessment of the Project's impact and sustainability following the strict evaluation framework developed for this Project. Section 6 outlines strategic and operational learning lessons whilst Sections 7 and 8 provide the evaluator's conclusions and recommendations.

The appendices include a number of case studies that help to demonstrate the impact that the Hosting the World training courses have had on participating businesses and employees in the industry as well as a list of evaluation participants. Also included in the appendices is a copy of the over-arching 'evaluation framework' developed for this Project in order to inform studies of a similar nature in future undertaken by SEEDA and / or Tourism South East. Copies of surveys and the technical data analysis tables produced by Skyblue for the evaluation are also available from the Project Manager by request.

## 1.2 Sources of Information used in this Evaluation

This report has been prepared by Skyblue Research Limited on behalf of TSE. It is the second such report produced during the Project's duration as the approach has been formative in order that learning and improvements could be made throughout.

The report draws on data from various sources including: independent telephone interviews and online surveys completed with a sample of forty-nine training course participants (equivalent to approximately twenty percent of all training beneficiaries); six Human Resource Managers / Senior Directors from participating companies; in depth interviews with five of the Hosting the World Project Trainers; and detailed management information kindly provided by Michelle Grant, the Project Manager, from the Training Team at Tourism South East.

We would also like to thank the ten businesses that gave their valuable time and support in developing and validating the promotional case studies included with this report.

## 2. Hosting the World Project Overview

### 2.1 Background to the Project

The London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games will be the largest cultural event ever to be held in the UK. As a gateway for the 2012 Games and host region for Olympic and Paralympic events, improving the skills of employees in the South East will leave a legacy in terms of higher productivity, more sustainable communities and enhanced cultural and sporting venues and activities. London 2012 offers a unique opportunity to:

- showcase the Eton Dorney Corridor to the whole of the UK and throughout the world;
- gain a reputation for world-class service excellence;
- boost tourism, leisure and hospitality business performance;
- boost the Eton Dorney area's profile as a stand-alone visitor destination and build the destination brand of South East England;
- improve facilities and services available to disabled people;
- act as a catalyst for accelerating improvements in quality.

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) Training Pools Skills Programme for the London 2012 Games has been providing funding for a number of employer-led Projects to help ensure that the region has the skills necessary to maximise the employment and engagement opportunities provided by the London 2012 Games. In response to a bid submitted by Tourism South East (TSE) on behalf of a number of tourism, leisure and hospitality sector partners in 2008, SEEDA agreed to provide funding to support a Hosting the World pilot Project in the Eton Dorney Corridor.

### 2.2 Strategic Linkages

The Project was commissioned and delivered in the context of wider strategic plans, priorities, targets and activity in the South East and nationally including:

- SEEDA's Compete, Create, Collaborate for a World Class Performance
- Raising the Bar, the People 1st National Skills Strategy
- The South East Skills Vision for the 2012 Games developed by the SEESSEL group
- The DCMS Winning: A Tourism Strategy for 2012 and Beyond
- The South East England Tourism Skills Strategy and Workforce Development Plan: 2006-2010
- "Requirements of Businesses for the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games and beyond within the Eton Dorney Corridor" (January 2008) – research commissioned by the Dorney Dorney Skills Training Group (DSTG)<sup>2</sup> to explore the probable impact on the supply and demand for skills, and employment opportunities in the Eton Dorney Corridor<sup>3</sup> as a result of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games

With reference to the last of these documents, the research with businesses in the Eton Dorney Corridor in 2007/2008 suggested that specific skills and knowledge areas would be amplified by the Games. Key areas included: customer service and visitor welcome skills; Games knowledge; transport knowledge and practical information for visitors; cultural awareness; basic foreign language skills; disability awareness / training; local area, product knowledge for visitors; upselling and cross-selling; and general communication skills including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). It was a recommendation by consultants at that time that these areas required 'packaging' and promotion to the tourism, leisure and hospitality business community in the Corridor and in part Hosting the World is a direct response to that recommendation and market requirement.

<sup>2</sup> The DSTG is a group of partners comprising the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), SkillActive (the Sector Skills Council for Sport and Active Learning), Tourism South East (TSE) and People 1st (the Sector Skills Council for Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism).

<sup>3</sup> The Dorney Corridor is defined as the geographical area covered by Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough Borough Council and South Bucks District Council

### 2.3 Project Aim and Objectives

The aim of the Hosting the World Project was to assist tourism, leisure and hospitality organisations in the Eton Dorney Corridor to provide world-class standards of customer service to boost the visitor economy and ensure that the South East England region can maximise the potential benefits of the 2012 Games. The original objectives of the Hosting the World Project were to:

- Enhance the ability of owners, managers and supervisors to create a culture of service excellence in their business
- Develop the capacity of owners, managers and supervisors to train and coach their employees and volunteers, and to appreciate the business benefits of training and career development
- Share and celebrate best practice in the delivery of world-class service

### 2.4 Project Outputs

The Hosting the World Project had two specific headline outputs. These were:

<b>Contractual Outputs</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>Business Support:</b> Number of businesses assisted in improving their performance	<b>100</b>
<b>Skills:</b> Number of people assisted in improving their performance	<b>200</b>

These outputs would be achieved by developing 10 innovative, skill development programmes at level 3 on themes linked to customer service and maximising the business benefits of the 2012 Games. Through engagement with 100 businesses TSE would also enrol these organisations as 'Hosting the World Champions' and provide each one with a bespoke business support and signposting pack so that training knowledge and capacity within firms could be increased. Furthermore, TSE would celebrate success by producing and disseminating 10 case studies based on Hosting the World Champions initiative. These formed the core outputs for the contract, but there were also a number of secondary outputs identified at the bid stage. These were:

- Plan and deliver a minimum of 10 events to raise awareness of the Project and its aims, facilitate networking, promote sharing of best practice and celebrate success
- Raise awareness of WorldSkills 2011 among employers and ensure that 100 tourism, leisure and hospitality businesses in the Eton Dorney Corridor appreciate how they can support WorldSkills 2011 contribute to the improvement of the UK's position in the Nation's Brand Index in preparation for 2012
- Sign up 120 employers signed to People 1st's Good Employer Guide
- Issue 600 UK Skills Passports to employees (5 per 'Good Employer Guide' business)

Please see section 4 for our assessment of the extent to which these outputs have been met

## 2.5 Financial Targets

The Hosting the World Project bid suggested a need for £119,661 funding to cover core expenditure as follows:

- Project management costs including office overheads and staff costs (£49,534)
- Training delivery costs including development, marketing, promotion and dissemination (£43,127)
- Good Employer Guide delivery costs including marketing, outreach, design and printing (£20,000)
- Project evaluation and external audit costs (£7,000)

Subject to further negotiations at the early stages of the Project's inception TSE also secured £10,000 from the Learning and Skills Council (June 2008) to take forward a number of specific recommendations put forward by consultants in the (January 2008) Dorney Skills Training Group skills research report that would ultimately assist with the engagement activity anticipated for the Hosting the World Project.

TSE was also set a target to lever in £30,000 of beneficiary in-kind matched contributions.

## 2.6 Strategic Added Value Outcomes

The contract between SEEDA and TSE identified six areas where the Hosting the World Project would add strategic added value (SAV):

- Raising the capacity of partners and stakeholders to realise the potential of growth and improved regional performance
- Generating cross-regional partnerships of mutual benefit to enhance growth prospects of each participating sub-region
- Scaling up Projects and programmes that achieve larger economies of scale and secure greater beneficiary benefits
- Improving the quality and innovation of interventions
- Adopting new training solutions
- Disseminating best or good practice models



Please see section 5 for our assessment of the extent to which these objectives have been met

## 3. Project Delivery

### 3.1 Project Management

The overall co-ordination and day-to-day delivery of the Hosting the World Project was undertaken by the Training Team within TSE. They were the Accountable Body, managed all the administrative and financial responsibility and the regular monitoring of the Project during its delivery. The experience of the TSE Training Team in delivering Projects of this nature proved to be a real strength, particularly at a time when the recession was biting and the when the Hosting the World Project faced significant challenges in terms of being able to attract businesses to training at a time when budgets were being cut or reduced.

The Project Manager, Michelle Grant, has proven to be very capable and flexible regarding her orientation of the Project especially when major decisions were required to both extend the Project's delivery timescale and geographical scope – decisions that proved ultimately critical to the success of the Project and the achievement of contractual outputs and outcomes.

Michelle has provided the evaluation team with an impressive set of management data that provides evidence of the delivery of the core training programme associated with this Project, detailing very precise information about the amount of time each beneficiary has undertaken for their skills development activity; and the amount of in-kind contribution provided by partners and beneficiaries.

Overall, the management of the Project appears to have been efficient, methodical and innovative at times of change and challenge. The feedback from businesses and employees taking part in the training programme and / or range of complementary activities (such as seminars or events) appears overwhelmingly positive suggesting that the Project Team has in many cases exceeded their expectations.

Feedback from partners<sup>4</sup> is slightly more limited in this evaluation<sup>5</sup>, but there is evidence of both positive and slightly disappointing partnership working<sup>6</sup> which the TSE Training Team have been keen to learn from in case it informs Projects of a similar nature in future. There is some good evidence of joint working, particularly where it involved the skill of marketing and promotion to the industry at events in the region.

***“TSE have been great in helping get partners understanding the enormity of the opportunity of the Games. They have helped us appreciate that we need to work differently to maximise that opportunity.”***

Julia White, Visitor Manager Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

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<sup>4</sup> Over the course of the Project it is understood that the following partners made contributions and / or benefited from its delivery: Buckinghamshire Economic Partnership; Business Link Kent; East Berkshire College; People 1<sup>st</sup>; Reading Borough Council; Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead; SkillsActive; South Bucks District Council and Slough Borough Council

<sup>5</sup> Limited only because of the evaluation budget available and the direction provided by the Project Manager to the evaluation team that resources were better spent on obtaining business and learner user feedback

<sup>6</sup> The Project Manager reported that some of the challenges with partnership working had directly impacted on some of the original bid outputs in relation to engagement of businesses to become part of the 'Good Employer Guide' and in the promotion of UK Skills Passports within these companies. TSE raised this issue with SEEDA at the time it was important and agreed a contract variation accordingly so that these outputs were not required to be met by the Project by March 2010

## 3.2 Hosting the World Project Components

The Hosting the World Project included the following components:

- **Project marketing:** branding, launch and awareness-raising events, production of marketing literature, direct mail shots, development of a [Hosting the World](#) section of the TSE website, and presentations at relevant events by the Project Manager and / or wider TSE Training Team.
- **Skill development programmes:** A series of 9 innovative, 'mix and match', half, one and two day, sector-specific skill development programmes were developed at level 3 or above<sup>7</sup>. These focused on different aspects of customer service and marketing skills linked to London 2012, other major events to be held in the Eton Dorney Corridor, the achievement of a lasting legacy from London 2012, and how these link to business success. The programmes were as follows:
  - Creating the Vision
  - Welcoming the World
  - Going the Extra Mile
  - Competing for Business
  - Selecting the Team
  - Creating the Coaches
  - Training the Team
  - Meeting the Media
  - Reviewing the Performance
- **Online skill briefings:** a number of online skill briefing sessions were created along with podcasts and even vodcasts all available to view at the dedicated Hosting the World Project website
- **Hosting the World champions:** enrolment of participating employers as Hosting the World champions, development of a Champions business support and signposting pack and the development and dissemination of case studies
- **Events:** launch and awareness raising events, networking and signposting events
- **Project management and evaluation:** as well undertaking internal Project management, financial, administrative and monitoring procedures the Project Manager commissioned an external evaluation to complement her own continuous evaluation of feedback from skills development programme delegates.

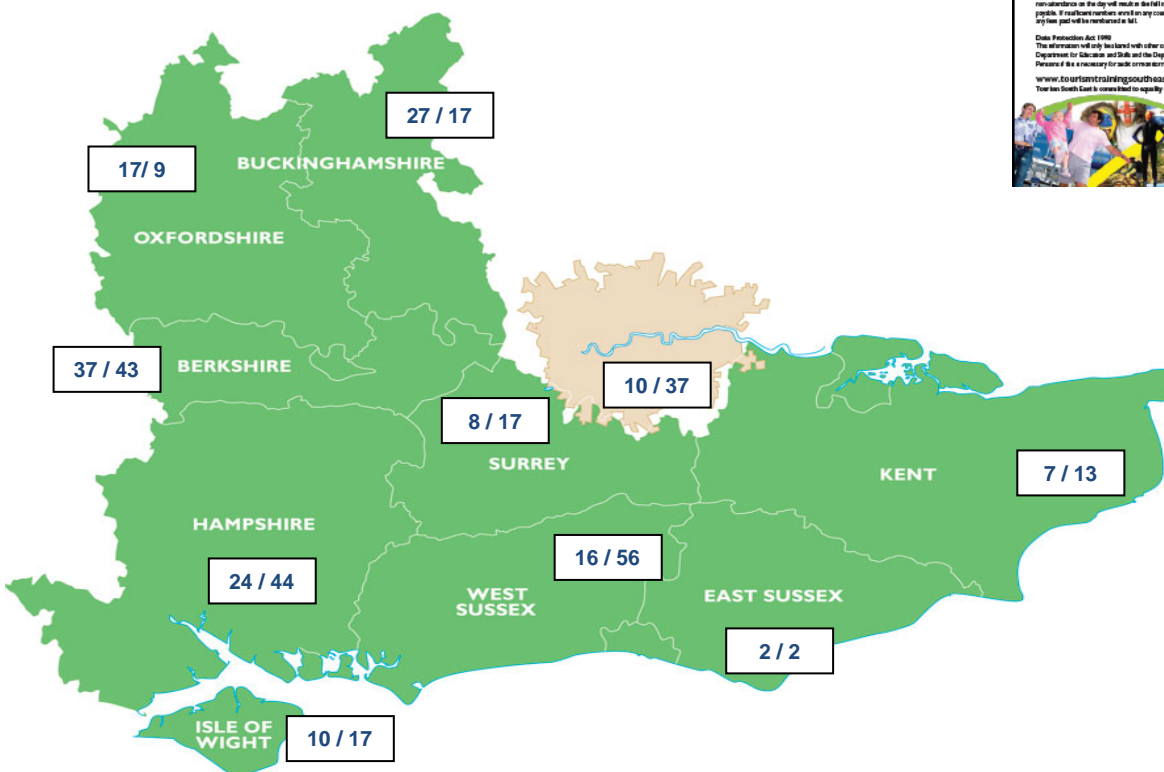
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<sup>7</sup> To avoid duplication of resources at TSE, the tenth course from the original Project objective specification 'Succeeding at Events' was developed by the TSE Training Team called "Winning More Conference Business" and pilots have started to take shape already in 2010

### 3.3 Marketing of the Project

One of the most impressive aspects of the Hosting the World Project is the dogged determination of the Project Manager to develop attractive marketing materials, and approaches to engage tourism, leisure and hospitality industry businesses at a time of significant economic challenge. Marketing activity included: launch events; direct mail (of information leaflets such as the one shown on the right of this page); direct and personal contact by the TSE Training Team with businesses in the Eton Dorney Corridor, and subsequently across the South East region; and the joint marketing and awareness raising of the Project with partners at a variety of events and conferences during 2008 and 2009. The Project in fact exceeded its targets in respect of engaging businesses and learners to the skills development programmes. Although the evaluators cannot be certain as to the extent to which these businesses were already engaged in training activity with TSE prior to the Hosting the World Project it is nevertheless impressive to note the spread of business engaged across the region during the extended period of its delivery:

	<u>Businesses</u>	<u>Individuals</u>
Berkshire	37	43
Buckinghamshire	27	17
Oxfordshire	17	9
East Sussex	2	2
West Sussex	16	56
Hampshire	24	44
Surrey	8	17
IOW	10	17
Kent	7	13
Middlesex/London	10	37
	<b>158</b>	<b>255</b>



#### Key:

Example: 37 / 43

37 businesses engaged

43 skills development programme beneficiaries

ONE DAY COURSES £20  
SUBSIDISED FROM £120

HALF DAY COURSES £10  
SUBSIDISED FROM £30

## Become a tourism winner!

### Get ahead of the pack with new, specialist low-cost courses

Practical, targeted new training courses are now on offer to tackle key industry challenges. Low-cost Hosting the World training will help you improve service standards, strengthen customer-facing teams, and maximise benefits from the growing domestic tourism market.

**Building a winning team**

Essential training and support to help develop a world-class customer service culture across your business

- **Selecting the team** Find the best people to join your team, select and recruit staff aligned to deliver outstanding customer service
- **Training the team** Learn one-to-one and group training techniques to give your business and team service skills
- **Creating the culture** Discover effective strategies for creating a coaching and mentoring culture throughout your team, so business staff are all working consistently focused on delivering service excellence
- **Reviewing the performance** Easy ways to monitor and evaluate service standards, leading performance management issues and drive a healthy culture of continuous improvement

**Aiming high for service excellence**

Practical customer service training to make your business stand out from your competitors and your customer's experience

- **Creating the vision** Learn how to establish a customer service vision and how to embed it through your leadership by setting specific goals and creating a culture of service excellence
- **Getting the extra mile** Learn how to motivate your staff with specific reward systems you can put in place to ensure your greatest service to all customers - your staff with a growing low-cost customer and a great service to all customers - your staff with a growing low-cost customer and a great service to all customers
- **Winning the world** Learn how to establish a customer service vision and how to embed it through your leadership by setting specific goals and creating a culture of service excellence

**Building a winning business**

Whatever your size and type of business, consider the development opportunities now to make sure you're well to take advantage of opportunities for the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics

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or email: [bookings@tourstraining.com](mailto:bookings@tourstraining.com)

### Application Form

Hosting the World™ Courses 2009

Weeks and dates	Subject	Subsidised price	Book
1 Sep	Computing for Business	IOW	£20
8 Sep	Creating the Vision	Surrey	£20
15 Sep	Welcoming the World	Oxfordshire	£20
22 Sep	Reviewing the Performance	Berkshire	£20
29 Sep	Computing for Business	Buckinghamshire	£20
6 Oct	Training the Team	Berkshire	£20
13 Oct	Welcoming the World	Surrey	£20
20 Oct	Creating the Culture	IOW	£20
27 Oct	Reviewing the Performance	Surrey	£20
3 Oct	Computing for Business	Kent	£20
10 Oct	Welcoming the World	Hampshire	£20
17 Oct	Creating the Vision	Surrey	£20
24 Oct	Selecting the Team	Surrey	£20
31 Oct	Creating the Vision	Kent	£20
7 Nov	Welcoming the World	Surrey	£20
14 Nov	Training the Team	Hampshire	£20
21 Nov	Creating the Vision	Buckinghamshire	£20
28 Nov	Creating the Culture	Kent	£20
5 Dec	Creating the Vision	IOW	£20
12 Dec	Training the Team	Surrey	£20
19 Dec	Reviewing the Performance	Hampshire	£20
26 Dec	Welcoming the World	Kent	£20
2 Jan	Creating the Culture	Surrey	£20

**Bookings and Enquiries**  
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Email: [bookings@tourstraining.com](mailto:bookings@tourstraining.com)

**Terms and Conditions**  
Cancellation: Candidates must be notified in writing at least three weeks before the published date of the course. Please note that cancellations after the date of confirmation on the day will result in a fee being charged for the course. If no bookings are made in any course a fee may be charged and any fees paid will be refunded in full.

**Other Information**  
This information will only be shared with other organisations, such as the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Work & Pensions if it is necessary for the course to run.

[www.tourstraining.com](http://www.tourstraining.com)  
Tourism South East is committed to equality of opportunity.

**Business Details**  
Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Main Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Can I be contacted? Yes  No   
You've visited? Yes  No

**Applicant Details**  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Details**  
 I have an eligible business to attend Hosting the World™ course at the subsidised rate and would like to complete the necessary paperwork. Please send the cost to me. I will return the completed forms about 4 weeks before the course.  
 I wish to check my eligibility to attend the course.  
 I wish to check my eligibility to attend the course.  
 I wish to check my eligibility to attend the course.

**Signature**  
 I have read and agree with the terms and conditions.  
Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3.4 Delivery of the Hosting the World Skills Development Programmes

The skills development programmes were purposely designed at level 3 in order to attract and meet the needs of owners, managers and supervisory level staff in the industry. Management information from TSE suggests that over 300 delegates attended the nine programmes available, far higher than required by the contract with SEEDA<sup>8</sup>.

Skills Development Programme	Number of Delegates
<b>Training the Team</b> Developing one-to-one and group training techniques to enable the development of customer service skills among front-line employees and volunteers	69
<b>Creating the Coaches</b> Coaching and mentoring skills, particularly related to helping front-line permanent, seasonal and casual employees to deliver world class customer service	51
<b>Meeting the Media</b> Developing strategies and plans for welcoming media representatives and undertaking PR activities	44
<b>Selecting the Team</b> Recruiting, selecting and retaining employees and volunteers to deliver worldclass service	38
<b>Creating the Vision</b> Appreciating world-class service standards and creating a culture of service excellence	32
<b>Reviewing the Performance</b> Monitoring and evaluating the delivery of customer service, overcoming performance shortfalls, quality enhancement and continuous improvement	25
<b>Competing for Business</b> Practical online and offline marketing, customer relationship management and branding tips to help businesses attract and retain more customers	24
<b>Welcoming the World</b> Developing strategies and plans for welcoming international visitors and communicating successfully with them	21
<b>Going the Extra Mile</b> Developing strategies and plans for welcoming visitors with specific needs	4

<sup>8</sup> NB. Delegates could attend more than one training course

It appears that a number of the courses in the portfolio were particularly popular with delegates from local businesses. The three most popular courses in fact – Training the Team, Creating the Coaches and Meeting the Media – account for just over half of all enrolments. At the other end of the scale the ‘Going the Extra Mile’ appears to have been less attractive as indeed has the ‘Welcoming the World’ training.

The Project Manager explained to the evaluators in April 2010 that some of the most popular courses will be taken forward as part of their sustainability plans for learning from and building on the success of this Project. The choice of courses to continue have not however been based purely on the volume of participants that were attracted during the Project, rather TSE have used a range of inputs to inform that judgment. For example, the Project Manager received post-training feedback forms immediately after each training session examining delegate opinions in relation to the content of the individual programme, its accessibility and its ability to meet delegate expectations. Overall ratings per programme were impressive scoring between 8.17 and 9.33 (out of a maximum available score of 10). Nevertheless, the slight variances in scores achieved at each session were monitored closely by TSE and improvements made as the Project evolved.

Please see section 4 for further insights from users about the impact of these programmes

### 3.5 Training the Trainers

The detailed learning objectives and content of these skill development programmes was steered by employer participants in the Project to ensure that they succeeded in meeting identified needs. The skill development workshops were delivered through face-to-face sessions, facilitated by TSE associate trainers. Trainer briefings were organised to ensure that all facilitators/trainers were fully prepared to deliver high quality skill development programmes and that they were briefed on local, regional and national 2012 related activities.

The trainers recruited to the Project by TSE had all been involved with tourism and hospitality in the past and were passionate about customer service. When asked how well prepared they had felt prior to delivering the Project they felt that the ‘trainer briefings’ had been well planned and a lot of thought had clearly gone in to the programme. They did comment, however, that there were some immediate improvements that needed to be made prior to launching the programme to industry, particularly in respect of making sure the content was sufficiently practical to appeal to the kind of businesses that would be engaged. In practice trainers added their own examples and practical training work when delivering the Hosting the World training courses as they felt there was perhaps originally too much ‘chalk and talk’ style teaching involved and that the materials had needed ‘livening up’.

***“I was surprised that recognised training models had not been alluded to in the materials.”***

#### Hosting the World Training Associate

The fact that the trainers went on to describe how the Project continually improved and evolved is testament to TSE’s approach in being open and responsive to constructive criticism from these training experts, and is a concrete example of how learning has been actively applied to the Project prior to and during its delivery in the region.

### 3.6 Hosting the World Champions

This pilot Project was much more than a training initiative. It intended to develop the capacity of businesses in the industry in a way that would leave them with a sustainable legacy in terms of skills and training culture and know-how long after the Games have been and gone. One of the ways to achieve this would be by engaging businesses and encouraging them to become 'champions' for learning and development in their organisation catalysed by the Hosting the World Project.



158 business champions were ultimately engaged during the Project, and they were provided with a specially commissioned business support pack, and information that would help them organise Hosting the World (and other) training for their staff now and in future. There was also a significant celebratory aspect to this initiative which sought to recognise champions with award and certificate ceremonies as some of the photographs on the right of this page demonstrate



### 3.7 Flexible Learning Solutions

TSE recognised that 'traditional' training courses would not meet all needs of the businesses they were targeting for the Hosting the World Project, and therefore sought to develop a range of associated learning opportunities and media in an attempt to widen participant in the Project and make it as accessible as possible. This include a range of online skills briefings, seminars, events, podcasts (on sustainability and accessibly) and even vodcasts available from the dedicated Project website. Links to these innovations can be found at [www.tourismtrainingsoutheast.com](http://www.tourismtrainingsoutheast.com)

### 3.8 Project Phasing and Contract Variations

Originally the Hosting the World Project was to be delivered between May 2008 and December 2009, but a contract variation was agreed between TSE and SEEDA that would allow the Project to be extended until the end of March 2010. This was in response to early challenges in recruiting businesses in sufficient volume from the Eton Dorney Corridor owing to recession and issues with promoting the training at a less-than-perfect time in the industry's calendar i.e. coming in to high season when training is difficult to fit in around the pressures of running a tourism business. A number of contract variations were agreed between the Project Manager (TSE) and SEEDA including:

- The overall timescale for delivery (see note above) and the agreement that businesses could be engaged from across the South East region (not just the Eton Dorney Corridor)
- The agreement to create nine (as opposed to ten) level 3 skills development programmes
- The agreement not to include one of the original objectives as a requirement of the contract delivery: 'Raise awareness of WorldSkills 2011 among employers and sure that 100 tourism, leisure and hospitality businesses in the Eton Dorney Corridor appreciate how they can support WorldSkills 2011'
- Flexibility regarding the development and delivery of 'three online briefings' and their subject matter to meet local employer and industry needs
- The agreement to not insist on the achievement of UK Skills Passport and Skills Pledge outcomes originally scoped out in the contract between TSE and SEEDA

## 4. Project Performance

This chapter evaluates the extent to which the Project has been successful. It is not just about quantifiable outputs information, though that is of course very important. It also makes best use of qualitative data provided by Project beneficiaries and allows the evaluators to be confident in assessing the Project's performance (outputs), impact (outcomes) and sustainability. Selected quotations from surveys with beneficiaries have often been inserted to help highlight a point or observation, but should not necessarily be interpreted as representative of the whole group (of businesses, learners or trainers) from which they come.

### 4.1 Headline Outputs

The two headline outputs were exceeded with 55 more beneficiaries engaging with the Project than originally envisaged, drawn from 58 more businesses. Early challenges with recruitment were overcome through the persistence of the TSE Training Team and through the prudent decision to extend the timescale for delivering the Project and extending its geographical scope to the whole of the South East region rather than focusing entirely on the Eton Dorney Corridor.

Contractual Outputs	Target	Actual
<b>Business Support:</b> Number of businesses assisted in improving their performance	100	158
<b>Skills:</b> Number of people assisted in improving their performance	200	255

These headline statistics mask other important achievements, specifically the finding that over 300 individuals had in fact been engaged by the Project. The reason they are not included in the performance figures is because it was a contractual stipulation that to 'count' towards the outputs an individual must show evidence of having completed at least 6 hours skills development activity. 255 beneficiaries completed at least this amount of activity but a further 49 individuals also undertook (typically 4 hours) skills development activity as part of the Project.

The evaluators were also impressed by the composition of the businesses that were engaged in the Project in terms of:

- **Type of business** – 26 different types of business took part ranging from racecourses and activity centres to public houses, leisure centres, local authorities, holiday parks, charities and even churches. Particular concentrations were observed amongst hotels (23%), bed and breakfasts (10%) and tourist attractions (8%)
- **Location of businesses** – 158 businesses were engaged across the entire South East region including Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, East Sussex, West Sussex, Hampshire, Surrey, the Isle of Wight, Kent and even some businesses in Middlesex/London. Particular concentrations were observed in Berkshire (23%), Buckinghamshire (18%) and Hampshire (15%) [Please refer to section 3.3 for detailed statistics by sub-region]
- **Size of business** – one of the hopes was that this Project could appeal to smaller businesses. In fact 79% of those engaged employed less than 10 people. A further 9% employed >10 but <25 staff. 8% employed >25 but <100 staff and 4% employed >100 staff.

The majority of the (255) beneficiaries who attended at least one Hosting the World training course were female (68%). 34% of beneficiaries identified themselves as other than “White British”. 6% of beneficiaries described themselves as “disabled”. In terms of the age of participants, we observed that 62% were aged between 25 and 59 years old (typically referred to as the ‘prime working age’ group), followed by those aged 50+ accounting for 27% of all beneficiaries. Only 16% were aged 24 or less, a not unexpected result given that the focus of the Project was on (Level 3) supervisors, owners and managers expected to be some way in to their career in the industry.

<b>By county – by age</b>	<b>18-24</b>	<b>25-49</b>	<b>50+</b>	<b>Not given</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	0	6	11	0	17
<b>Berkshire</b>	3	32	7	1	43
<b>Oxfordshire</b>	0	2	6	1	9
<b>Hampshire</b>	7	23	14	0	44
<b>Surrey</b>	5	10	1	1	17
<b>East Sussex</b>	0	0	2	0	2
<b>West Sussex</b>	5	40	11	0	56
<b>Kent</b>	1	5	7	0	13
<b>Middlesex/London</b>	4	30	3	0	37
<b>Isle of Wight</b>	0	9	8	0	17
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>255</b>

There were no diversity targets set for the Hosting the World Project, but it is encouraging to find that the Project Management team has kept such detailed individual learner records that would allow themselves and or their funding partner to satisfy themselves that the Project has been offered in an entirely accessible way with equality embedded in their thinking.

## 4.2 Secondary Outputs

There were a number of secondary outputs set out in the Project bid. Not all of them have been achieved or delivered in the manner originally anticipated, but by enlarge the TSE Training Team has sought to keep the funding agent abreast of any factors hindering Project delivery and sought to agree an appropriate revision of contractual requirements.

	Output	Result
Training Portfolio	Development of 10 innovative, skill development programmes at level 3 on themes linked to customer service and maximising the business benefits of the 2012 Games	<b>Mostly achieved</b> - 9 training courses were developed and one was felt to be duplicative of effort and not offered as part of this Project
Marketing	Engagement activity to achieve 100 business and 200 'learner' beneficiaries	<b>Achieved</b> – business and beneficiary targets exceeded
Capacity Building	Develop the capacity of 50 owners, managers and supervisors to train and coach their employees and volunteers, and to appreciate the business benefits of training and career development	<b>Achieved</b> – 130 of the 255 beneficiaries attended courses that directly related to this objectives
Champions	Enrol 100 tourism, leisure and hospitality organisations along the Eton Dorney Corridor as Hosting the World champions	<b>Achieved (with variation)</b> – 158 businesses were engaged as Champions across the SE region (not just the Eton Dorney Corridor)
Case Studies	Share and celebrate best practice in the delivery of world-class service by producing and disseminating 10 case studies based on Hosting the World champions	<b>Achieved</b> – 10 case studies have been produced and are included in the appendices to this report
Events	Plan and deliver a minimum of 10 events to raise awareness of the Project and its aims, facilitate networking, promote sharing of best practice and celebrate success	<b>Achieved</b> – the Project Manager reports that more than 10 such events were organised successfully for the Project
Employer Guide and UKSP	Sign up 120 employers signed to People 1st's Good Employer Guide and issue 600 UK Skills Passports to employees (5 per 'Good Employer Guide' business)	<b>Not achieved</b> – variation agreed with SEEDA when challenges with this objective were first identified
WorldSkills	Raise awareness of WorldSkills 2011 among employers and ensure that 100 tourism, leisure and hospitality businesses in the Eton Dorney Corridor appreciate how they can support WorldSkills 2011 contribute to the improvement of the UK's position in the Nation's Brand Index in preparation for 2012	<b>Not achieved</b> – variation agreed with SEEDA when challenges with this objective were first identified

### 4.3 Financial Management and Value for Money

The Project delivered outputs in excess of those anticipated, at no extra cost, which suggests that the finances were well managed. We have not been required as evaluators to scrutinise the financial management or deployment of SEEDA resources (119,661) across the various elements of the Project, but observe that £20,000 of this was originally provided in relation to the Good Employer Guide and UKSP outputs, subsequently varied by SEEDA and TSE. It is assumed by the evaluators that this funding was redistributed across other headline output areas of the contract helping explain perhaps to some extent the impressive over-performance in those areas.

TSE was set a target of leveraging in £30,000 of in-kind matched funding from beneficiaries, and this target was met though the Project Manager concedes this was an extremely difficult task. A total of £30,176 matched funding was attracted between May 2008 and end of March 2010.

On a very positive note the evaluators would like to draw attention to the value for money offered by this Project to the funding partners. They feel that the Hosting the World Project has offered a good return on the funding investment made by SEEDA and other partners, primarily because it has significantly over-performed in respect of its two contractual outputs. The number of businesses assisted was much greater than expected, as was the total number of individuals assisted with skills development. If we consider that £119,661 of funding from SEEDA was agreed to catalyse 100 business assists and 200 skills development assists the funding cost per output would have been £432.201. The Project actually delivered 158 business assists and 255 skills development assists meaning that the unit cost per output was much lower at £289.74. Moreover, although they could not be included in the contractual outputs, a further 49 individuals were engaged through the Project and each of these benefit from 4 hours (as opposed to 6 hours) skills development activity (equivalent in real time terms to a further 33 engagements at 6 hours). Had this activity been included in the outputs, then the unit cost per output would have been even lower at £268.30.

## 5. Project Impact

### 5.1 The Impact of the Hosting the World Project

Measuring the impact of a training Project is traditionally quite difficult, because often it requires a period of time to elapse after any training intervention before a business and / or learner can be certain that it has affected their practices, cultures or performance. Whilst performance is primarily about the measurement of outputs (as described in sections 4.1-4.3), 'impact' requires an assessment of 'outcomes'. As evaluators, we have drawn on a number of sources of information to develop our assessment including:

- Course feedback forms from delegates supplied to us by the Project Manager
- Quantitative and qualitative feedback gained through detailed telephone interviews with 49 learners<sup>9</sup>
- Quantitative and qualitative feedback gained through detailed telephone interviews with 6 Human Resource Managers / Senior Directors of participating businesses
- Quantitative and qualitative feedback gained through detailed telephone interviews with 5 of the Project's associate trainers

Detailed data tables from the interviews are contained in the Appendices whilst this section of the report seeks to summarise the kind of impact that the Project has had on the different audiences it intended to support and assist in terms of:

- Meeting participants' varied expectations satisfactorily and providing tangible benefits
- New learning, skills acquisition and application in the workplace
- Business performance, cultures and practices
- Strategic Added Value

### 5.2 Expectations, Satisfaction and Benefits

Participants had different motivations and expectations for taking part in the Hosting the World Training Project. For some owners, managers and supervisors the Project provided a welcome opportunity to 'refresh' and update their knowledge and skills, particularly in fields of dealing with the media, marketing and recruitment. For others, some of the course content was brand new and it would hopefully lend itself to them acquiring new knowledge and skills helpful to their jobs, especially in the fields of environmental and accessibility issues. Common to almost all feedback reviewed was the aspiration that the participant would be able to take back learning and apply it to the benefit of themselves (professionally) and their employer. Motivations also differed sometimes by individual training course or specialist seminar:

***"I wanted to learn more about the benefits of being greener to a small business from a starting point of being fairly sceptical."***

Bed and Breakfast Proprietor in Buckinghamshire talking about Green Advantage Seminar

***"...to keep abreast of developments in accessibility with a particular view on the opportunities generated by the forthcoming Games."***

Tourist Attraction Manager talking about his motivation for attending the 'One Step Ahead' Seminar

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<sup>9</sup> This represents just under 20% of the total number of beneficiaries (255) that undertook at least 6 hours of activity during the HtW Project. Detailed survey tables have been provided to the Project Manager in prior versions of this evaluation report should further technical survey data be required

The Project Manager and Trainers learned more about different expectations and motivations of delegates as the Project evolved, and sought to ensure that the content of the training courses was as practical as possible and relevant to the audience. This meant tailoring the training in such a way that it was equally valuable to small as well as larger tourism businesses.

Overall, we know the Project had significant impact on the participants in terms of meeting their expectations as 90% of beneficiaries reported that they had been fully or partially met in respect of course content, format and quality of presentations. Those in receipt of the training appeared to particularly appreciate the practical aspect of the training and 'top tips' that they could take back to colleagues in their workplace. Furthermore, 100% of Human Resource Managers and Senior Directors interviewed independently said their expectations had been fully met. Feedback they had elicited from staff they had arranged to attend Hosting the World training suggested that the effectiveness of the training was owing to two important factors - the quality of the tutors and the applicability of the material to their business and the industry.

***"I wasn't expecting 'wow!' I did know a bit before [the training], but it was interesting to learn and meet others. It was difficult to know what to expect but the presentations were interesting and I fully intend to press my managers for the Access Audit to see where we can improve for external clients."***

DDA Champion from a participating University in the region

***"The training exceeded our expectations. The tutors very good and they came with excellent visual aids."***

Holiday Park in West Sussex

From course feedback information provided by the Project Manager we have already reported that on average each course scored a total of between 8.17 and 9.33 (out of a maximum available score of 10) in terms of satisfaction with practical aspects of its delivery including: suitability of training venue; content of the course; the quality of the course materials; the value of the course; the presentation skills of the trainer; the additional qualities of the trainer; extent to which the course met expectations; and accessibility. Through continuous dialogue with the Project manager the evaluators are also satisfied that improvements were made to ensure satisfaction levels were maximised as the Project developed, particularly before the major promotional push that took place at the end of the high season and into the shoulder season for the industry around September 2009.

This resulted in a range of benefits being achieved by participants. For example, there is real evidence that some individuals' attitudes and perceptions about disability were genuinely altered as a result of the accessibility training, and that some very simple and practical ideas have been taken back to their workplace immediately after the workshop. Moreover, personal and professional benefits have arisen as a direct result of the training.

***"The training has given me more confidence in my abilities to co ordinate the team and get the best from them. Plus my organisation can now benefit from a more modern Vision statement"***

Tourist Information Centre participant from Buckinghamshire talking about the benefits from attending the 'Creating the Vision' training course

***"We're getting a leaflet printed up in many different languages."***

Local Authority participant talking about the immediate benefit of attending a Welcoming the World training course

The Project has also brought about a range of quantifiable benefits for participants as follows:

- Within 6-12 months of the training up to 59% of delegates will very likely have formally shared their learning with colleagues in their workplace thus cascading the learning within their organisation
- In the same time period, four out of five participants will likely have done some follow up research catalysed by the training experience in relation to the training topic they attended and / or the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, thus leading to a wider and deeper understanding of their training area and the Games opportunities for their organisation
- Six out of ten learners experiencing one of the Hosting the World courses reported at the mid-point of the Project that they had already or would likely book on to another course available during the programme's lifetime. This suggests that the initial training experience has provided a benefit of inspiring participants to undertake further learning thus contributing to a wider positive attitude towards learning and development in the industry

### Evaluator Summary Point

The Hosting the World Project has clearly met participant expectations despite the wide range of motivations for their involvement. High levels of satisfaction have been recorded in respect of the practical delivery of the training courses and seminars and the quality of the tutors and materials used. This high quality experience for participants has ultimately contributed to positive benefits for both the individual learners and their businesses owing to the positive and tangible opportunities to take action soon after the training was completed.

### 5.3 New learning, Skills Acquisition and Application

91% of learners surveyed said that they had learned new things from attending one of the Hosting the World training courses that they had not come across before. They particularly liked the opportunity to share and communicate new intelligence with each other. Even those who were motivated just to 'refresh' their skills or knowledge through the training were pleasantly surprised about the new learning they achieved. Senior Managers also reported that employees attending the training left with greater skills and ability to train others in their organisations and conduct effective appraisals suggesting. This marries neatly with one of the aspirations of the Project Manager who said that a key impact of the courses should be for supervisors or senior staff attending the training to be able to use the learning from that training to then impart and cascade skills and knowledge to other staff and team members at their business.

***"I learned about changes to the discrimination act and how this impacts on notices and posters for the office – we need to ensure we get the right colour background for paper etc..."***

TIC participant from Buckinghamshire talking about 'Going the Extra Mile'

***"...Will help me to write job descriptions..."***

Resort hotel participant from Surrey talking about 'Selecting the Team'

One delegate who felt they had not learned a great deal qualified this by saying they thought the training was useful for big companies for not for our 'tiny guesthouse with four rooms', a useful reminder that the need to tailor content to 'all' delegates is really important if they are to get something applicable to them out of it.

The full set of survey responses also suggested that delegates had learned a mixture of information (increasing knowledge) and skills (increasing competence and capability) including:

- Games-related facts and figures – the training appeared to open some delegates' eyes to the possibilities for their business
- Awareness of funding and availability of other training programmes that they or their work colleagues might benefit from
- Techniques for writing compelling, user-friendly press releases (at the Meeting the Media course) or search engine optimisation skills (at the Competing for Business course)

Clearly, there were some very specific skills 'taught' by the trainers at each individual course aligned to its specialist topic or theme, but there were also some generic messages and information imparted in order that every delegate could go away a little more knowledgeable about the Games and training opportunities for their business. The evaluators would have liked to have seen even more clear evidence that the 'Games' opportunity had been truly embedded amongst delegates than the interviews had suggested, but responses from some of the trainers help to explain why not everybody went away 'Olympified'. Trainers commented that '2012' as a theme ticked boxes for some delegates but not all. It was not their principal motivation for being there. They also commented that there was sometimes a bit of a mismatch between the intentions of the person (owner / senior director) who sent their staff on a course and the staff members themselves, which trainers felt they had to therefore manage as best they could. That is to say the senior director may have been inspired by the Games-related aspect of the training package or its promotion, whereas the employee was not necessarily as enthused about that particular part of the offer.

Trainers are, however, in no doubt about the learning that took place during the courses and its application thereafter by delegates. They reported good and immediate feedback from learners after the courses with individuals saying they had, for example, written a press release for the first time ever, and reconsidered translating menus and signs into relevant languages for visitors. The trainers also reported that delegates really enjoyed learning about other cultures – especially more exotic ones like Japanese. One group wrote a promotional plan for the New Forest (unexpectedly) whilst others simply enjoyed the experience of the practical exercises and watching others doing the exercises too. Communication was a key aspect of many sessions, and improved public relations both through press releases and better use of the Internet were mentioned. As a result of these benefits, an ability to capture more business going forward was seen as an outcome of the sessions. A substantial benefit of the workshops was the sharing of knowledge, ideas and resources by participants on their return to their organisations.

### **Evaluator Summary Point**

The Hosting the World Project has demonstrated emphatically that it has provided an opportunity for participants to acquire new learning, pitched at a suitable level in order that skills and knowledge could be applied practically in the workplace immediately after the course was completed. The practical examples of usage of these skills help underline the importance of getting the right balance between 'theory' and 'practice' in the content of training modules. The professional skills of the trainers have also been critical to success in this regard.

## 5.4 Business Performance, Cultures and Practices

Assessing the impact of a single short course training intervention on overall business cultures, performance and practices is, in the evaluators' experience often over exaggerated. We are cautious therefore in our assessment of the longer term impact the Hosting the World Project may have on participating businesses as more time needs to elapse yet before one can be genuinely confident of the extent to which a strand of knowledge, new information or learning gained at the courses can genuinely affect behaviours at the participants' businesses.

That said, the independent surveys with learners (base: 49) suggest very encouraging signs indeed:

- 82% of learners felt that their course would help owners, managers and supervisors to train and coach their employees and volunteers and generally have a positive attitude towards training and career development
- 73% of delegates thought that their training course would contribute to helping create a culture and reputation for customer service excellence
- 71% of delegates also reported that they felt their training would help them / their organisations maximise the benefits of the 2012 Games

Learners believed that their organisations had seen changes of mindset emerging from the training sessions, with new mission statements, different ways of thinking, and affirmation of existing good practice all benefits seen at this level. Improved training procedures were also noted as a common benefit and impact of the experience.

***“I went away with a more enlightened attitude towards green issues.”***

Bed and Breakfast Proprietor in Buckinghamshire talking about Green Advantage Seminar

***“As a result of the training we will be looking at the different business opportunities, cost cutting and providing a better service.”***

Bed and Breakfast participant from Oxfordshire talking about Green Advantage Seminar

And these views from learners were echoed by senior directors who had arranged for some of their staff to attend Hosting the World training courses. They reported that as a direct result of the training their staff would have increased skills 'immediately' for use in the business; have a greater awareness of the potential Olympic impact on the business; and greater awareness of customer service know-how. These same people felt that staff they had arranged to take part in the training would also recognise the business' investment in their potential and would see it as a development opportunity. The business would therefore benefit in terms of staff retention/ loyalty in the long-term. That said, one was keen to point out that they still expected staff turnover before the Games and it was therefore still going to be a challenge to cascade the learning from this cohort of staff attending the training to future staff:

***“Most of the staff won't still be here in six months let alone 2012. Many will have gone back home overseas. That's the only problem with training.”***

Hotel participant from Buckinghamshire

Meantime, each senior director stated an intention to carry out further evaluation of this training so it may be possible for TSE to monitor the longer term impact of the training should they so wish. Four out of six senior directors, tellingly, reported soon after the training had been completed that they would as a direct result change specific working practices.

Finally, there is evidence from the independent surveys with learners that they have been inspired to take action after their learning experience and / or find out more about specific areas of information mooted during their training:

- Within two weeks of the training course 27% of delegates had already done some follow up research / internet browsing to get further information of interest e.g. relevant to the training topic or perhaps relevant to the London 2012 agenda and a further 51% were very or quite likely to do this in due course
- Within two weeks of the training course 14% of delegates had already changed working practices or procedures in their business as a result of tips / advice gained during the training and a further 51% were very or quite likely to do this in due course
- Within two weeks of the training course 22% of delegates had already contacted other delegates from other businesses who attended the training course to network / discuss ways of possibly collaborating in future and a further 20% were very or quite likely to do this in due course

### **Evaluator Summary Point**

The Hosting the World Project has demonstrated some early, positive and encouraging impacts on the participants and their organisations as far as can be determined through sampled surveys and feedback from the trainers and Project Manager. Sometimes the impact is small, but nevertheless very significant for the participating company i.e. it is those 'golden' practical tips and techniques that have often led to a direct, resulting change of working practice soon after the training was completed. TSE has an opportunity to develop relations with participating companies in future by continuing to help them access other relevant training opportunities that will further embed good attitudes towards learning in the industry amongst 'leaders' (senior staff members) who will then be able in turn to cascade that experience and positive attitude to others in their business.

## 5.5 Strategic Added Value (SAV)

The contract between SEEDA and TSE identified six areas where the Hosting the World Project should add strategic added value (SAV). Based on information provided by the Project Manager in April 2010, the next table provides examples of how SAV has been achieved by the Project.

<b>Contract SAV requirement</b>	<b>HtW Project Manager evidence</b>
<p><b>Raising the capacity of partners and stakeholders to realise the potential of growth and improved regional performance</b></p>	<p>10 employer case studies are being produced at time of writing this report</p> <p>Learning was shared with partners throughout the Project and at the Grand Finale of the Project on 22nd March 2010 at Lainston House Hotel, nr Winchester in Hampshire</p> <p>Partners will receive this evaluation report in the interest of informing future collaborative working</p>
<p><b>Generating cross-regional partnerships of mutual benefit to enhance growth prospects of each participating sub-region</b></p>	<p>Over-arching launch event at Dorney Lake on 27 Nov 2008 in partnership with another Training Pools Project called "South East Media Network". This enabled costs and resources to be shared. TSE held workshops on Accessibility at the Buckinghamshire 2012 Conference on 19th February 2009 in partnership with the Visit Britain Accessibility Project Manager and additionally at Legoland on 13th May 2009 and in partnership with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.</p>
<p><b>Scaling up Projects and programmes that achieve larger economies of scale and secure greater beneficiary benefits</b></p>	<p>Additional beneficiaries engaged as a result of scaling up / regional roll-out following initial pilot in the Eton Dorney Corridor</p>
<p><b>Improving the quality and innovation of interventions</b></p>	<p>Podcast and vodcast delivery trialled during the Project</p>
<p><b>Adopting new training solutions</b></p>	<p>A total of 8 seminars were delivered against a target of 6. TSE have also looked at ways of mainstreaming the training solution and have worked with SEEDA on a sustainability plan for the Project post March 2010</p>
<p><b>Disseminating best or good practice models</b></p>	<p>A series of case studies are being produced and will be disseminated through the TSE B2Bwebsite and by the Tourism Skills Network South East when appropriate</p>

The Project has certainly demonstrated that SAV was embedded in its approach and mindset in delivering this Project, but it is still difficult to assess at this stage (so soon after the Project has ended) to what extent this SAV will have genuinely been achieved and have the desired sustainable affect on participants and partners in future. The measurement of SAV in itself is still an imperfect science and varies by region in the UK and by individual project.

The evaluators are confident that the training interventions, when coupled with the associated Hosting the World Project initiatives (such as seminars, Champions activity and networking events) has developed the capacity of participating businesses to improve their working practices, but cannot prove in quantitative terms whether this training has so far led to growth or improved regional performance at that level of assessment.

Similarly, there has been evidence of joint working with partners through the Project, but not all of these were successful and it is difficult to understand whether this impact has ultimately led to a missed opportunity for the industry at regional level or not i.e. the fact that employers were not engaged in the Good Employer Guide or issued with UK Skills Passports.

The Hosting the World Project has definitely satisfied the SAV requirement to scale up as a Project from a small localised area (the Eton Dorney Corridor) to the wider region, with demonstrable success. This bodes well, as it would appear that were the Project to continue at regional level (and be promoted successfully using all the learning from the pilot initiative), the likelihood is high that it would attract a greater concentration of businesses to take part.

The Project has been 'fleet of foot' and responsive to meeting the needs of potential businesses and learners throughout, and has experimented with novel training interventions such as podcasts and vodcasts. Seminars and online briefings were also created with partners, so from a point of fact, the Project has sought to develop innovative interventions and adopt new training solutions. This evaluation has not however had access to the users of these resources and so is unable to comment as to the extent to which they have been used or received.

The Project manager has been careful to ensure continuous dissemination of 'good practice' mostly as a means of helping to promote awareness of, and take up of, the training courses. Testimonials from participants feature heavily on the dedicated Project website, and a range of events have celebrated the successes of training course delegates and Champions. The evaluators would highlight one area of improvement for future Projects though, namely the creation of a greater number of promotional case studies during the Project rather than right at the end. It would also have been excellent to have seen the creation of 'partner' case studies in the absence of partner consultation as part of this independent evaluation to demonstrate the SAV on those stakeholders, and may yet be something TSE wishes to commission or compose. Nevertheless, it is good that soon the Project will have ten validated employer / learner case studies in place to promote to the wider industry via the TSE website and its networks.

## 5.6 Project Sustainability

There are a number of indicators and developments that suggest the most successful aspects of the Hosting the World Project will be sustained post March 2010:

- **The training has a genuine market value (£61-200 per course)**

40 out of 49 learners that took part in at least one HtW training course felt able to suggest a 'market rate' (i.e. the true value of the training they had received were a public subsidy not available in future) for the training they had experienced. Of these, 14 (35%) respondents perceived the courses as worth between £101 and £200; a similar proportion 14 (35%) respondents felt the courses were valued at a £61-100; and 12 (30%) think the courses were valued at less than £60 per delegate.

- **There is further demand for the training**

55% of learners requested information about further Hosting the World courses (if available) in future i.e. having experienced at least one course over half would like to do a different course from the portfolio. HR Managers were unable to estimate the value of the training as it was their employees – rather than themselves – who experienced it. That said, five of the six respondents were interested in further information about dates and venues for other Hosting the World training courses in future, further emphasising the impression of real value being seen from the present portfolio of courses.

*“What's happened is because of the quality of the programme it's been a launch board for promoting training in the company. We are looking to continue this training next season.”*

Holiday Park General Manager from West Sussex

- **The training is filling an identified need and gap in the market**

Michelle Grant, the Project Manager, reported in March 2010 that the Project had enabled TSE to pilot a range of 2012-specific customer care courses at level 3 previously not available. Moreover, through this pilot project TSE was able to run a programme of courses which will result in the best elements from a small number of these courses being taken forward over the next 18 to 24 months as part of TSE's programme of customer care training in the run up to and beyond 2012. The Hosting the World branding will form part of TSE's overall 2012 campaign.

## 6. Learning Lessons

### 6.1 Strategic Lessons

It is very rare indeed that any Project goes exactly to plan, and the Hosting the World Project was no different in this regard. There were significant challenges in the early stages of the Project in engaging businesses which were overcome, and even some disappointments in the way in which all aspects of the Project might develop with all the partners involved in its delivery. The main learning lessons appear to include:

- **Flexibility** - the need for Project funders and delivery organisations to be flexible regarding contractual timescales and parameters is critical if they are truly wishing to respond to changing demands and experiences in the tourism, leisure and hospitality marketplace
- **Partners** - managing partner expectations is important in Projects like Hosting the World, and it is important to have processes and protocols in place should these expectations change or not be realised

- **Price elasticity** - the subsidy for the training has been important to businesses in order to engage with the Project, but this does not mean that the training should proceed in precisely the same way in future. Survey results suggest that most learners value the training between £61 and £200 per course in real market terms

## 6.2 Operational Lessons

The Project Manager has been extremely capable in anticipating users' needs during the Project, and has not been afraid of adapting solutions should something prove less than satisfactory. She has been proactive in obtaining and analysing training delegate feedback forms in relation to their views about the suitability of chosen venues, their location and the logistics of the Project. She has also ensured that feedback from the trainers themselves, which often suggested improvements to the content of the training courses, were incorporated in to the Project in a positive and responsive fashion. Areas of feedback from learners that suggested continuous improvement was needed included:

- **Venues** – the more local to the participant the better; those with parking on site were preferred as were venues that had training rooms with good sources of natural light; novel venues were seen as a real plus point

*“It was a great venue – so different doing training on a boat!”*

Tourist guide participant from Windsor talking about the Meeting the Media training course

- **Pre-event communication** – participants said they appreciated pre-event reminders; some commented that as part of that process of communication it would be helpful for TSE to advise even more explicitly what level of management / supervisors the courses were aimed at suggesting a strong requirement to tailor the training proposition to an individual business. As part of the pre-event registration process, we also recommend that TSE gathers information about delegates' expectations and whether there is any specific information they are hoping to receive to avoid delegates leaving with a sense of disappointment

*“...Not much of an emphasis on the Island Games”*

Local Authority participant from the Isle of Wight talking about the Competing for Business course

- **Group size** – a variety of comments were received that were both positive and negative about the group size achieved at different training courses. Some were seen as too small, others too large. As a guide it seemed that around 10 delegates (from different businesses) appears to be an optimum number to aim for in future training

- **Experienced Trainers** – the recruitment and selection of experienced, professional trainers with direct experience of the industry cannot be overstated. Their ability to bring training course materials to life through practical examples for delegates has been critical to success

*“...The speaker was fantastic - kept your attention. Came across extremely well...”*

B&B participant from Buckinghamshire talking about the Green Advantage Seminar

- **Course content** – training course content must be 'malleable' enough to cater for businesses of all sizes (from micros to larger concerns) and types in the industry for it to be perceived a) as attractive in the first place and b) as useful in its application back in the workplace. Course content will also need to be kept constantly updated to reflect the needs of individuals. Comments suggest that during the Project content needed to be adapted in order to be equally applicable to micro as well as larger companies in the tourism sector

## 7. Conclusions

### Project Manager Conclusions

Evaluators gave an opportunity to the Project manager to give her reflections on the Project since its inception. She reported that the Project had been successful, though not without its challenges, particularly in the early stages of marketing and recruitment for the training courses – at a time of biting recession. There have been some exceptional moments and outstanding achievements, tempered at times by more disappointing moments trying to align differing partner and supplier expectations and services. Overall the Project has undoubtedly benefited business and learner participants.

*“The Project has improved business and workplace performance through higher staff motivation thereby helping staff retention. Many participating employers went on to attend and participate in a range of other learning and development activities which in the longer term will result in more professional and better run tourism businesses. There is also an increased awareness amongst businesses of the opportunities in the run up to 2012 and beyond.”*

Feedback for the Hosting the World Project has been extremely positive with learners and HR managers alike showing a great deal of enthusiasm for the quality of training and the benefits to both themselves and organisations. It is clearly the case that if funding were still available or an alternative model found for delivering the ‘most successful’ aspects of the Hosting the World pilot Project, the quality of the courses is such that their continued provision would be greatly appreciated.

At the time of writing this evaluation report Michelle Grant reports that TSE has levered further funding from SEEDA following this pilot Project which will enable a discounted offer on future customer care courses to tourism businesses across the South East. Within the suite on offer will be several courses – those deemed most successful and most in demand from the industry - from the Hosting the World portfolio thought to include Selecting the Team, Reviewing the Performance, Training the Team and Meeting the Media.

### Evaluator Conclusions

#### 7.1 Value for Money

The Hosting the World Project has offered a good return on the funding investment made by SEEDA and other partners, primarily because it has significantly over-performed in respect of its two contractual outputs. The number of businesses assisted was much greater than expected, as was the total number of individuals assisted with skills development. If we consider that £119,661 of funding from SEEDA was agreed to catalyse 100 business assists and 200 skills development assists the funding cost per output would have been £432.20<sup>10</sup>. The Project delivered 158 business assists and 255 skills development assists meaning that the unit cost per output was much lower at £289.74.

<sup>10</sup> £119,661 divided by 300 outputs (NB. the evaluators have not been provided with any further specific information from SEEDA regarding a different ‘value’ associated with a business assist compared to a skills development output, therefore for the purpose of this calculation each output has been appropriated the same standard value

Moreover, although they could not be included in the contractual outputs, a further 49 individuals were engaged through the Project and each of these benefit from 4 hours (as opposed to 6 hours) skills development activity (equivalent in real time terms to a further 33 engagements at 6 hours). Had this activity been included in the outputs, then the unit cost per output would have been even lower at £268.30.

## **7.2 Course continuation to 2012**

The value of the training courses in 'market rate' terms appears to be somewhere in the range of £61 to £200 per course, and with all the creative and technical time that has now gone in to developing the content of the Project courses it will be important to ensure that a further return on that investment is achieved in future by the partners, and it is recommended that those deemed most successful and in highest demand, be continued at least up to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in July 2012. It is our understanding that TSE is in discussion with SEEDA about this opportunity at time of writing this final evaluation report which we hope helps to reassure decision-makers that further investment would be appropriate and beneficial to the tourism, leisure and hospitality industry in the South East region.

## **7.3 Critical Success Factors**

With hindsight, it was very important that the Hosting the World Project was allowed to extend its timeframe for delivery, and expand its geographical catchment. This has certainly helped ensure an over-performance in terms of outputs, and so it is expected that learning from the 2008-2010 period will be used to inform delivery of a similar nature between 2010 and 2012.

Flexibility of approach between the funding partners and TSE is therefore to be applauded. The evaluators were also struck by how many excellent comments were made about the trainers involved in delivering the Hosting the World Project courses, and it is therefore hoped that as many of this 'team' as possible are retained to help deliver and roll out further courses in the South East region in future. The learning, knowledge and experience they now have as a result of delivering the courses will be of huge added value in taking the Project forward to the Games.

## **7.4 Improvements**

Suggestions for improving the Project were relatively limited to small matters of content or venue in the earlier stages of the Project, or the hope that slightly larger groups might be attracted to future courses. The more practical the courses are, and the greater the volume of industry examples and insights, apparently the better in delegates' opinions so this should be embedded as a principle for future delivery.

The evaluators are uncertain about the relative value of online learning versus the formal training sessions (and this is something that TSE and SEEDA may wish to re-examine), but our opinion is that the training sessions were very well received and surveys point to evidence of immediate impact on delegates (i.e. they apply new learning in the workplace and share learning with colleagues soon afterwards) and medium-term potential impact on participating businesses (i.e. staff attending the training demonstrate that they have developed skills and capability that will have a more long-lasting benefit e.g. delivering effective appraisals or using new customer service techniques).

We would continue to encourage the partners to use the catalytic effect of the Games in the marketing of the courses, but then to ensure that genuinely useful and up-to-date intelligence about Games-related opportunities and legacy is continuously refreshed and incorporated into any training materials or courses delivered. Keeping the courses fresh, industry relevant and local will help ensure their continued attractiveness and allow partners to build on the success of this pilot Project.

## 8. Recommendations

Having assessed the Project independently there are a small number of recommendations we would urge TSE, SEEDA and other partners to consider in developing this pilot project and in any current negotiations taking place to determine its future and sustainability:

1. Involve Hosting the World Champions in the continuous development of the training course materials, particularly emphasising 'real-life' practical examples and application of learning to the target audience. Capture these examples 'as they happen' in a continuous programme of case study development and promote these in any future marketing to the industry across the region
2. Anticipate change and challenge in respect of recruitment and engagement of a sufficient critical mass of businesses to the training in future – avoid being caught out by the seasonal nature of the industry, a learning point that has been reported in many of TSE's other training project evaluations. TSE and funding partners need to be aware of, and build in sufficient lead times and resources to ensure that the Project is not 'late' in promoting training at a time when industry is more likely to access it (i.e. not during high season)
3. Ensure that any planned arrangements with national, regional, sub-regional or local partners for maximising the opportunity of this style of training programme is clearly in place before commencement. Typically, a simple Memorandum of Understanding or Service Level Agreement suffices to ensure there is discipline in this regard and a shared understanding of respective roles, responsibilities and contributions
4. If the 'Games' are still to be used a hook for attracting more businesses to this training in future then make the links even more explicit and ensure that the very latest Games-related business opportunities and intelligence (from the London 2012 team / SEEDA's personnel with responsibility for CompeteFor) is incorporated into each training session. A practical checklist of contacts and web resources available for businesses to use in relation to the Games after their training session is also highly recommended
5. In targeting the training courses to the industry in future, be careful not to simply engage those that have already got a known heritage and positive attitude towards training. Although harder to reach, it is perhaps those businesses without this kind of training culture that the Project could most benefit in future. In this way the Project would ultimately demonstrate significantly higher levels of strategic added value. Trainers

## 9. Appendix 1: Survey Participants and Acknowledgments

We are extremely grateful to the following individuals who kindly participated in this evaluation during 2009 and 2010.

### Learner Survey Participants

Alison Brothers <sup>11</sup>	High Wycombe TIC	Sue Percy	Peartrees
Elizabeth Eades	Foxhills	Henry Dawe	Royal Collection
Heather Armitage	Oxford City Council	Simon Hall	International Hotels Group
Kelly McCarthy	International Hotels Group	Amanda Bryett	Windsor Tourist Guide
Chris Brace	French Brothers Ltd	Yvette Buckingham	Bellhouse Hotel
Roger Taylor	Granny Anne's, Bed & Breakfast	Mary Purdy	Tanamera B&B
Hannah Buckle	Wycombe District Council	Jo Kane	Wycombe District Council
Katie Mayger	Coppid Beech Hotel	Arlene Hornby <sup>12</sup>	Hitchambury Manor Ltd
Karen Atfield	Wycombe Tourist Information Centre	Ian Barham	Buckinghamshire 2012
Martyn Jeffs	Newton House B&B	Frances Emmett	Little Parmoor Farm
Sandie Venables	Royal Holloway, University of London	Mark James	Ramada Ascot, Royal Berkshire Hotel
John Phillips	Royal Collection Enterprises	Kathryn Dobson	Princes Risborough TIC
James Levick	Ramada Ascot, Royal Berkshire Hotel	Charlotte Stewart	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Barbara Hunt	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	Abigail Fox	Goodleaf Tree Climbing
Peter Pusey	Dinosaur Isle	Mary Gregory	Heatherleigh Guest House
Sara Mousley	Nova Lifestyles	Paula Gora (on behalf of Alexandra Worska)	Arora International
Karena Barton	Bedford Lodge	Clint Greggor	Elizabeth House
Helen Vrba	IOW Council	Anne Hendry	Newington Nurseries
Emma Vinters	Sir Christopher Wren's House Hotel	Nathalie Hosenbocus	Sofitel London Heathrow
Paul Roberts	Canal and Tipi Experience	Jenna Haylock	Rezidor Park Inn
Liana Cook	Village Life	Bill Ritchie	Spectre Theatre Company
Peter Smith	Dorney Self Catering Apartments	Stephanie Musk	Beetle and Wedge Boathouse
Roger Orchard	Didcot Railway Centre	Jodie Evans	Village Life
Jemma Boynton	River Thames Alliance Marketing Partnership	<i>Note: 47 individual respondents providing 49 valid survey responses</i>	

<sup>11</sup> Alison kindly provided views about two different training experiences

<sup>12</sup> Arlene kindly provided views about two different training experiences

### Senior Director / HR Manager Survey Participants

Sue Lilley	Shorefield Holidays	Karin Gray	Beaulieu Motor Museum
Tracey Chen	Sheraton Heathrow Hotel	Caroline Lowe	Park Inn Hotel
Richard Wise	Bewl Water Outdoor Centre	Philip Mitcheson-Smith	Bunn Leisure

### Trainer Survey Participants

- Vivienne Boucher
- Trisha Bennett
- Jacqueline Matthews
- Gill Heighington
- Carol Wager

**Thanks also to Michelle Grant and Sue Gill of Tourism South East for management information and continuous co-operation throughout the Hosting the World Project period.**

## 10. Appendix 2: Evaluation Framework

The following evaluation framework was designed by Skyblue and subsequently approved by TSE to ensure it met all their and funding organisation contractual objectives.

Evaluation Framework Theme	Measurements
<b>1: Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement of agreed outputs [TNAs; Champions; business assists (2hrs); learning (6hrs); number of seminars / events delivered]</li> <li>• Successful delivery of Project processes including marketing, employer engagement, Project management, responsiveness, adaptability</li> <li>• Successful design and delivery of Level 3 'innovative skills development programmes'</li> <li>• Successful recruitment, training and retention of trainers to deliver the training events</li> <li>• Achievements in line with business, employee and partner expectations</li> <li>• Levels of satisfaction with the Project expressed by each audience</li> </ul>
<b>2: Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of positive outcomes for participants               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Business benefits directly attributable to the Project</li> <li>○ Partner benefits directly attributable to the Project</li> <li>○ Learner benefits (owner / manager / supervisor) benefits directly attributable to the Project</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Value added – evidence of new skills and knowledge acquisition</li> <li>• Evidence of new or improved application of learning in the workplace e.g. better levels of customer services; improved use of recruitment and selection techniques in the business; improved levels of custom from domestic or international visitors based on new or improved marketing practices</li> <li>• Net economic impact – taking account of any impacts considered to be deadweight, substitution or displacement</li> <li>• Strategic Added Value achieved with and for partners</li> </ul>
<b>3: Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of the value of the Project / training in 'real market terms' i.e. were no subsidy available to businesses</li> <li>• Consideration of future intervention funding by SEEDA or other key partners involved in the Project e.g. could the training be mainstreamed in future?</li> </ul>

The evaluation framework was also mindful of the format and scope of the interim evaluation of the Training Pools programme for SEEDA (undertaken by GHK Consultants), and the desire to be able to report progress against RDA Tasking Framework Outputs.

- Businesses assisted to improve performance
- People assisted in their skills development
- Adults gaining a qualification at Level 3 or above

## 11. Appendix 3: Hosting the World Case Studies

### Case Study 1: Beaulieu - Reviewing the Performance



The National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, in the New Forest, is one of the most popular visitor destinations in the South East attracting 320,000 visitors per year. The Complex is managed by Beaulieu Enterprises Ltd and has a total workforce of 200 paid staff and 8 volunteers.

Karin Gray, Personnel Manager for the Complex and the entire Beaulieu Estate, was motivated to send some of her supervisors on a Reviewing the Performance training course as part of the Hosting the World project. This course is aimed at providing staff within the tourism industry with easy ways to monitor and evaluate service standards, tackle performance management issues and focus on a quality culture of continuous improvement in their organisation.

Karin was overall extremely enthusiastic about the training. *“The training was of a very good quality and highly relevant to our needs at Beaulieu and provided a great opportunity to help some of our supervisors”*

*Karin added, “Furthermore the trainer (Julia) was excellent at involving my supervisors in the training process, and tailoring the sessions to their needs. All of which brings about positive changes in attitude amongst the workforce.”*

When asked if the Hosting the World training had met her business objectives, Karin confirmed that she was very happy with the impact it had had on her colleagues: *“The course has provided valuable development in a number of areas, for example it has helped those attending the courses to more effectively appraise, encourage, and monitor in the workplace. It has opened their minds in realising the importance of effective appraisals and providing feedback to staff in their job role.”*

Employee feedback after the course was overwhelmingly positive, with one employee commenting, *“This was a useful course that highlighted development points at both a personal level and for the whole team.”*



## Case Study 2: Bunn Leisure



Bunn Leisure provides family holidays and operates three holiday villages and a caravan park in West Sussex on the South Coast of England. The location's facilities and ability to cater for large groups of visitors will make it a popular destination for those seeking a base with activities on site yet from which it will be possible to visit London for the 2012 Olympics.

With this in mind, General Manager Philip Mitcheson-Smith looked at Hosting the World Project to meet the training needs for the present as well as the future: *"I was keen to introduce formal customer service training into our team. It had been a bit scattered before, and needed to be brought up to date and refreshed."*

Philip was very impressed with the quality of the training, and has seen it have a real impact on his staff: *"It scratched a lot of itches – people learned how to deal with difficult issues. It gave people a lot of confidence, and tips and tools for dealing with situations."*

Philip praised the quality of the training materials provided by the courses, in particular the visual aids. He added that it had helped to bring staff skills up to date, and had had visible benefits for the way they approached issues such as carrying out effective appraisals.

When asked what attracted him to arrange for staff to undertake several of the courses available in the Hosting the World training portfolio Philip said that initially he found the part-funded nature of the courses to be very attractive : *"Because the training was subsidised it was one of those opportunities you simply couldn't afford to miss."*



But it was not just the funding aspect that has proven to be beneficial. Philip added that the feedback from his staff confirmed the quality of the training and resources that had been used. The training has impacted positively on staff behaviours and has had a marked effect on the mindset of the whole company for the longer term as Philip concludes: *"The Hosting the World Project has ignited a training culture within the company. We're now looking to continue this training next season as a result of our experience with this programme."*

### Case Study 3: The Ramada Jarvis Royal Berkshire Hotel – One Step Ahead



Near both Ascot racecourse and Legoland Windsor, the Royal Berkshire Hotel is a converted Queen Anne mansion providing services to business and tourist clients alike and is under the umbrella of the international Ramada Jarvis group. With the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games forthcoming, the Royal Berkshire is well-positioned to take full advantage of the increased international tourist community catalysed by the Games. This formed part of the motivation behind James Levick and Mark James' attendance at the 'One Step Ahead' Accessibility workshop held at Legoland Windsor to launch the new 'One Step Ahead' national information

booklet on accessibility. This workshop aimed to help delegates explore how to make their business more accessible and improve profits.

Another motivation was a desire to improve accessibility training. Mark said: *"I wanted a refresher in disability awareness. It was good to get another perspective."* James added: *"With the Olympics coming up, we hoped to get more understanding of how to get better gradings at the business."*

Both James and Mark gained new knowledge from the workshop, and consequently took action to look at accessibility in their organisation. Mark, for example, tasked one of the trainee managers to review all disability services across the business starting with the website. By implementing accessibility changes both delegates felt that it would result in a greater ability for the hotel to attract business.

James explained: *"The workshop has given us a better understanding of how we can look after people with disabilities. Plus, it makes good business sense to attract more of a market that's worth £8 billion."* Both have already shared some of their learning from the course informally with colleagues, and expect to include it in a formal team briefing in the near future.

In addition to a positive shift in staff attitudes and training, the hotel has also already seen logistical changes arising out of the learning acquired by James and Mark on the One Step Ahead workshop. James commented: *"We've just gone through the ten 'Golden Behaviours' that we learned about at the workshop. As a result we've changed the seating in our restaurant to improve access for wheelchairs. We have generally improved the way to make it easier for visitors with wheelchairs to navigate around the hotel."*

James has also contacted other delegates he met on the training course to discuss ways of networking and possible future collaboration. Overall, both James and Mark thought the workshop was a useful, inspirational, and well-presented reminder of the importance of catering fully for the needs of all communities in order to make the most out of the opportunities afforded by the Games. James felt that one of the workshop presenters (Peter Norfolk), himself a Paralympian brought the session to life, and Mark said: *"I felt I left the event with new knowledge. The timing was just right to get the information across."*

Both Mark and James believed that the course had helped to maximise the benefits of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and felt it had helped them to develop a positive attitude towards training and career development.

## Case Study 4: Dinosaur Isle – Competing for Business



The Dinosaur Isle Museum at Sandown on the Isle of Wight is a purpose-built facility designed to showcase the rich paleontological heritage of the island, one of the most significant sites for dinosaur remains in Europe. It provides an up-to-date and accessible environment for the island's collection, parts of which date back to 1819.

Peter Pusey is the General Manager at Dinosaur Isle. *“These are difficult times for the industry, and we want to be ahead of the game,”* Peter explained as he discussed his motivation for attending the Competing for Business course. This course – one of nine available

from the Hosting the World Project portfolio - was thought to be most relevant to the Museum as it covered practical online and offline marketing, customer relationship management and branding tips to help businesses to attract and retain more customers.

Peter saw a significant benefit of the course in providing an opportunity to reflect on where Dinosaur Isle is as a business and where it is going: *“It was a good opportunity to reflect on the business and whether we were covering the right ground. It was great to take a day out to focus on ideas. It will keep us buoyant.”*

Peter believes that the Competing for Business course has helped to foster a culture of customer service excellence at Dinosaur Isle, and has encouraged his staff to think more about training and career development. Personally, he saw the chance to expand his knowledge and understanding of marketing at the course as useful professional development. He was also very interested in being put in touch with other businesses for the purposes of networking and has in fact already shared ideas with other attendees on the course.



## Case Study 5: Granny Anne's Bed and Breakfast - Green Awareness / Sustainability



Granny Anne's is a friendly family-run bed and breakfast in Marlow, Buckinghamshire, which prides itself on cleanliness, excellent service and a can-do attitude. After attending the Green Awareness / Sustainability seminar, designed to highlight ways to save businesses money by 'going green', owner Roger Taylor now freely admits that he has a much more enlightened attitude than he had before attending the session.

Roger said he was initially unable to see the benefits of this area to his small business, but acknowledged afterwards that *"the profile of potential visitors will shape our marketing and that increased global environmental awareness was a factor in the mindset of our client base"*.

The course gave Roger the tools to improve his business' profile in this regard: *"It's given me ways to have greater appeal to 'green thinking' visitors through appropriate marketing."* More significantly, perhaps, is the effect the course had on Roger personally.

Roger enjoyed the session and has shared his learning with those with whom he works since returning from the course, finding the quality of the session very useful: *"The trainer was really knowledgeable and competent and answered all the questions we raised,"* he said. Roger believes that the bite-size structure and multiple events run as part of the Hosting the World Project is the best way of getting the training out to as many people as possible.

Roger concluded by saying that, *"Tourism South East has been doing the right thing with the Hosting the World Project and its approach. I think it's a case of little and often regarding training and learning and local events are especially good for small businesses like ours."*



## Case Study 6: Goodleaf Tree Climbing - Competing for Business



Goodleaf Tree Climbing, based on the Isle of Wight, was set up by New Zealander Paul McCathie in 2005. Paul has been climbing trees professionally for over 10 years as a qualified arborist and has worked in New Zealand, Australia and the UK. The organisation gives visitors all the training and equipment they need to climb trees safely and experience life in the canopy, 50 feet above the ground.

The experience on offer has proved particularly popular with large groups, and Goodleaf caters for parties as varied as hen parties and corporate team-building events. A rising profile over the past few years has culminated in the organisation featuring in the Sun newspaper in March 2010, while the BBC's Mike Bushell has also been climbing with Goodleaf in recent months.

Abigail Fox, Director of Goodleaf, feels better placed after attending the Competing for Business course to maximise the benefits for her organisation of activities taking place in the run-up to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, including the forthcoming Natwest Island Games taking place between the 25<sup>th</sup> of June and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011. Abigail said: *"We wanted to find out about opportunities arising from the Games and marketing for the Games."*

The Competing for Business course covered practical online and offline marketing, customer relationship management and branding tips to help businesses to attract and retain more customers. Abigail found the course useful in developing strategic thinking for marketing the business, saying, *"It gave a really good overview of opportunities. The trainer was good and ran the course very well. There was a very clear way explained for us to go away and produce a plan of our own."*

In particular, Abigail found information and training on marketing extremely useful. She explained, *"With 2012 coming up quite quickly, it's helped to focus my mind on the best way to market the business and take advantage of opportunities."* She believes that the course has helped her to maximise the benefits of the Olympics, and has already shared learning from it with colleagues.

She expects that the knowledge gained from this course will inspire changes to working practices at Goodleaf and concludes with this pledge: *"I will be more strategic – I don't want to just muddle along anymore!"*

## Case Study 7: French Brothers

### Background

Dorney Lakes is a world-class rowing and flat-water canoeing centre in a spectacular, 400-acre parkland setting near Windsor, and is a host venue for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

For businesses in the Eton Dorney corridor - across Windsor, Maidenhead and further into Berkshire and Buckinghamshire - the opportunities are huge. But with a mixed economy of employer size and type across the tourism, hospitality and leisure sectors, how could they come together to fully leverage the Olympics opportunity and secure a legacy for the visitor economy?



### Businesses' needs

SEEDA engaged local employers from the start. Research aimed to identify opportunities, employment and recruitment challenges, skills gaps, training needs, and support programmes that would make a real impact.

Key issues included the need to:

- Offer consistent, world-class customer service
- Effectively train a diverse, often transient and flexible workforce
- Deliver flexible training programmes to varied tourism, leisure and hospitality organisations, mainly SMEs
- Improve cultural understanding, disability awareness, basic language abilities, commercial skills, general communications, local knowledge and overall welcome and customer service standards amongst staff

With an estimated 30,000 visitors per day to the Dorney Lakes events plus the ongoing global spotlight, businesses identified a unique chance to raise their game and secure long-term sustainability.

### Solution: Hosting the World - world-class customer service

Tourism South East developed an integrated training and development programme - Hosting the World - combining a focussed Training Needs Analysis with a series of 12 specialist courses and support materials. This highly tailored programme will give SME owners and managers new knowledge, skills and targeted training for delivery to their staff, and to help drive improved performance.

Thanks to SEEDA funding, businesses in the Eton Dorney Corridor will benefit highly subsidised, low cost training (half, one and two-day courses) in topics like: planning and welcoming international visitors; looking after customers with specific needs; selecting, coaching and reviewing teams; marketing and managing customers' experiences; maximising media opportunities; and creating and delivering a vision for world-class customer service.

## The impact for business

Leading River Thames passenger boat operators French Brothers identified a clear business opportunity. With experience of transporting thousands of people by boat locally, they are looking to see how they can support visitor transport needs - in a highly sustainable way.

French Brothers has also recognised the potential long-term benefits for the area's entire visitor economy, especially through raising customer care standards and has already signed up for Hosting the World. It plans to roll out training to potentially hundreds of staff over the coming years.

*"We must all stand up to be counted and ensure staff are trained to deliver customer service at a level that customers from around the world expect,"* said Don Yates, the company's sales and marketing manager.

"The Olympics can act as a catalyst for improving standards - ensuring customers return, and that they tell another ten people about their great experience with us. Our training needs analysis identified areas that aren't just specific to 2012 but will make a real difference to our business in many ways."

Don added: *"For SMEs, flexibility and cost-effectiveness is crucial. We also need to invest to train people in core job skills, like how to skipper a boat! We all have challenges, but we must strive for outstanding customer service, or 2012 will be a wasted opportunity. Hosting the World - and the funding from SEEDA - will be crucial in helping businesses thrive, and create a legacy."*

## Case Study 8: Hitchambury Manor - Creating the Vision and Selecting the Team



Hitchambury Manor House provides self catered accommodation in Maidenhead, Berkshire. The Manor is fully furnished serviced accommodation targeting the business traveller, tourists on extended holiday or those relocating to the area who require a base while moving home.

Property Manager Arlene Hornby attended both the Creating the Vision and Selecting the Team courses because of the excellent quality of training provided by Tourism South East.

She found the Creating the Vision course a useful refresher, as she learned more about world-class customer service and how to embrace it profitably for her business by setting relevant goals and creating a culture of service excellence. The Selecting the Team session improved her knowledge and understanding of anti-discrimination practices, putting the foundations in place for recruitment, selection and retention of staff equipped to deliver outstanding customer service. Arlene described the courses as “*comprehensive and concise*” and added that they “*provided very good value for money*”.

Overall, Arlene felt that both courses gave her many useful pointers and reminders for her management of her team: “*The courses updated me on legislation regarding various aspects of managing staff, and on many aspects of recruitment.*” This has had benefits for the organisation as a whole, with Arlene cascading her knowledge to colleagues both formally and informally. She has also contacted other course attendees for networking and knowledge sharing about good practice.

This has led to a process of evaluation at Hitchambury Manor: “*We’re constantly looking to improve and update. The courses helped us to focus on the potential of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games. We’re also very keen to ensure that we continue to recruit and employ in a professional manner.*” Out of this, Arlene believes that the Hosting the World courses have genuinely helped to create a culture and reputation of customer service excellence.



## Case Study 9: Village Life - Meeting the Media and Competing for Business



Village Life is based near Maidenhead in Berkshire. It includes a variety of family activities including Shires Farm, which has opportunities for children to learn about and interact with animals, a toy collection, play area and craft shops. As the company's

marketing specialist had recently left, both Jodie Evans (Manager) and Liana Cook (Catering Assistant) saw that two of the Hosting the World courses could help fill the gap. Jodie attended the Meeting the Media course and found that it helped her greatly to write effective and attention-grabbing press releases. The course prepared her to welcome the media to Village Life, and to discover PR tips and tactics to proactively secure positive coverage.

Liana attended the Competing for Business course, which covered practical online and offline marketing, customer relationship management and branding tips to help businesses to attract and retain more customers. She said that *"the course clarified a lot about tailoring your marketing and advertising. It confirmed that we were doing a lot right in the first place."*

The size of the group at the training courses had distinct benefits too, as Liana explained: *"We got a lot out of being in a small group, because the lady that ran the course tailored it to our businesses. As a result, I came away with a practical business plan that I could put in place."*

Both Liana and Jodie believe that the courses have helped them to maximise the benefits of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and have inspired a development culture within the organisation. They have already shared knowledge and done some research into expanding their understanding of the ideas that were discussed on the courses.

Liana was very keen to take advantage of the networking opportunities afforded by the course, and indeed has already begun to do so. While the part-funding of the course was extremely welcome, she pointed out that it was definitely *"well worth paying for!"*



## Case Study 10: Dorney Self Catering Apartments - Meeting the Media

Dorney Self Catering Apartments operate three apartments in the grounds of a Tudor mansion just outside the village of Dorney in Buckinghamshire. The owner, Peter Smith, attended the Meeting the Media course because new developments required a better understanding of how to promote the business on a global level: *“We are launching a new business which is to encourage homeowners to let their houses, and we provide a website for people across the world to book online. Being launched on the back of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, we needed to promote ourselves.”*



The Meeting the Media course prepares learners to welcome the media to their businesses, and to discover PR tips and tactics to proactively secure positive coverage so it seemed highly relevant to the business' needs and vision.

The course gave Peter new ideas about how to promote the business: *“It gave us lots of good ideas about how to use the media. I wouldn't have thought of press releases or known how to do them,”* he reported. This new found confidence in dealing with the media will impact on both Peter personally and the organisation generally, with Peter confident that it will enable them to make the most of the increased visitor numbers arising from the Games.



After attending the Meeting the Media course, Peter is keen to share the ideas he learned on the course with his colleagues both formally and informally. He is also hoping to extend his knowledge through personal research and from this expects that the organisation will see positive changes to its working practices. Overall, he believes that the course was *“very good indeed.”*

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## Further Information about the Hosting the World Project

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This independent evaluation has been completed by Skyblue Research Limited, specialists in evaluation of skills, employment, education and training programmes in the UK. ([www.skyblueresearch.co.uk](http://www.skyblueresearch.co.uk))



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### Disclaimer

Information contained in this evaluation report has been collected in good faith and is thought to be accurate at time of publication (May 2010). The authors cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions.