

**Evaluation of  
Tourism Skills Network  
South East  
Activities 2004-2006**

Prepared by



John Harrison and Alan Graver of Impact Research  
[www.impactresearch.co.uk](http://www.impactresearch.co.uk)

October 2006

## Table of Contents

1.	Executive Summary .....	5
1.1	Background .....	5
1.2	Overall Impressions .....	5
1.3	Success and Achievements .....	5
1.4	Challenges .....	7
1.5	Impact.....	8
1.6	Future Priorities.....	8
1.7	Suggested Recommendations .....	9
2.	Background .....	10
2.1	Background of Tourism Skills Network South East .....	10
2.2	The Network Team.....	10
2.3	Purpose of the Evaluation.....	11
3.	Management Information.....	12
3.1	Output Summary at a Glance .....	12
3.2	Funding and partner contributions.....	12
3.3	Project Targets .....	13
3.4	Summary of Network Project Outputs .....	14
3.5	Additional Network Project Outputs.....	15
4.	Network Team Input.....	17
4.1	Challenges of the role .....	17
4.2	Key Successes.....	18
4.3	Impact of the Co-ordinator role:.....	19
4.4	Future development opportunities: .....	20
5.	Key Partner Input.....	23
5.1	Successes .....	23
5.2	Challenges .....	24
5.3	Failures.....	24
5.4	Sustainability .....	24
5.5	The Future .....	25
6.	Evaluation of TSNSE by Partners .....	26
6.1	Respondent Profile Information.....	26
6.2	Sample size and reporting conventions .....	26
6.3	Location of Respondents .....	26
6.4	Partners' Involvement with the Network.....	27
6.5	Benefits of Involvement with Network .....	27
6.6	Improvements .....	27
6.7	Success of Network Activities.....	28
6.8	Main Achievements and Impact.....	29
6.9	Gaps in Provision.....	30
6.10	Beneficiaries .....	30
6.11	Future Priorities.....	30
6.12	Future Support for Co-ordinators and Their Activities.....	31
7.	Appendix 1 – Glossary .....	32
8.	Appendix 2 – Partner Survey Questionnaire.....	33

**Table of Figures**

Figure 2-1: The Project Team..... 10  
Figure 3-1: Project Costs and Funding..... 13  
Figure 3-2: Proposed Project Outputs, Outcomes and Milestones..... 14  
Figure 3-3: Network Outputs..... 14  
Figure 3-4: Network Outputs by Sub-region ..... 15  
Figure 3-5: Strategic Added Value in the Sub-Regions..... 16  
Figure 6-1: Partners Participating in the Evaluation .....26  
Figure 6-2: Partner’s Involvement with Network .....27  
Figure 6-3: Partner’s Awareness and Rating of Network Activities .....28  
Figure 6-4: Partner’s Perception of Main Impact of Network.....30  
Figure 6-5: Beneficiaries of Partners Involvement with Network .....30

## **I. Executive Summary**

### **I.1 Background**

This report is based on input from around 50 partners and beneficiaries of the Tourism Skills Network, collected independently between June and August 2006. Partners were invited to make comment about the effectiveness of the Tourism Skills Network South East since its inception in September 2004. Throughout this report the Tourism Skills Network South East or TSNSE is also referred to as “the Network”.

Since 2004 the Tourism Skills Network South East (TSNSE) has delivered a range of initiatives, services and support relating to skills and workforce development for the tourism sector. The overall aim was to raise regional productivity, skills levels and economic competitiveness through effective partnership alliances.

This evaluation aimed to:

- Measure success and achievements compared to their original aims and objectives
- Determine whether they could have done anything better or differently
- Establish what they did that was particularly important
- Determine the future priorities for the network at regional and sub-regional level from September 2006 onwards

### **I.2 Overall Impressions**

The Tourism Skills Network South East has been successful. It has met most of its targets and established itself as a presence in the region. However, partners (and particularly funders) have stressed that we should pay less attention to the targets and contractual obligations and give greater prominence and kudos to outcomes and the work of the Network in areas of success such as:

- Providing an understanding of the needs of businesses and individuals in the tourism sector.
- Building partnerships and engaging key agencies.
- Presenting national policy and initiatives to the region and representing the region in national fora (e.g. through the memorandum of understanding with People 1<sup>st</sup> and work with DCMS).

In fact, the Network has met most of its contractual obligations and it can indeed prove (through the management information and the comments of partners, key partners and funders) that it has been fit for purpose, was good value for the money invested in it and can demonstrate considerable additionality and value added. As independent evaluators we are wary of reaching conclusions or making assertions that cannot be supported by solid evidence, but given the overwhelmingly positive messages we received from consultees we must conclude that the Network has been very successful in its first two years of activity.

### **I.3 Success and Achievements**

Although less importance is placed by partners on contractual achievements, for the record the Network's outputs have included:

- Securing funding from SEEDA (around £72,000) and to date in excess of £158,000 of match funding has been generated in support of the Network.
- Exceeding most of its contractual outputs between 2004 and 2006
- Over-achievement in four outputs and particularly high levels of achievement in training needs analyses (2.5 times the target).
- Regional Co-ordinator and 6 Sub-Regional Skills Co-ordinators in place.

- Regional Tourism Skills and Workforce Development Strategy launched with SEEDA and People 1<sup>st</sup> by DCMS / the Minister for Tourism (March 2006).
- Six sub-regional skill strategies and action plans prepared.
- Five employer led skills forums established to guide sub-regional activity.
- New South East Tourism CoVE at Brockenhurst College shaped.
- 8 ESF co-financing projects secured or in the process of being submitted on behalf of Sub-Regional Co-ordinators to take forward local strategy actions.

Value added and additionality has been recorded diligently by the Regional Network Co-ordinator and her records and the input of key partners and funders shows major achievements beyond the contract include:

- Overcoming local politics in Sussex to secure LSC funding (matching SEEDA) to provide a co-ordinator for one day a week in the sub-region when it looked likely that one would not be appointed.
- Securing £169,000 from Surrey LSC (with no SEEDA funding allocated) over two years for a specific co-ordinator for 3 days a week in Surrey.
- £79,000 secured for delivery of Welcome to Tourism in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire for period January – July 2006.
- £9,000 secured through the Local Skills for Productivity Alliance for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight for a project involving JobCentre Plus.
- Major work with the LSC in Hampshire/IOW to put forward views for a SE wide Tourism CoVE. This involved running focus groups on behalf of People 1<sup>st</sup> and contributing to their research phase. The Network has also been part of the CoVE Steering Group and the Curriculum Development Group.
- The Memorandum of Understanding with People 1<sup>st</sup> has led to the Network being the voice of the SSC in the region and delivering actions relating to the National Skills Strategy.
- The Network has liaised with and formed a partnership with Springboard UK.
- The Regional Co-ordinator represents the tourism sector on the Steering Group for the Cultural South East Consortium. She has contributed to their current research on funding a regional Olympics Co-ordinator and has worked with them on a Learning Curve Conference.
- The Regional Co-ordinator is also part of the People 1<sup>st</sup> national working group on customer service.

All key partners feel that the Network has been successful and many of the achievements listed above are also mentioned by them. They stressed the importance of the development of partnerships with key sector organisations and organisations responsible for skills, business support and workforce development at national, regional and sub-regional level. They feel that the Network was fit for purpose and should be sustained whilst key funders feel that the Network represented value for money. Other key successes identified by key partners are mentioned in subsequent sections.

Partners suggest that much of the additional activity and achievements of the Network have occurred at a sub-regional level. These are described in greater detail in subsequent sections but in summary specific achievements include:

- Leading or delivering ESF co-financed projects
- Working with the Regional tourism CoVE
- Setting up Tourism Skills forums and action groups and facilitating improved communication with partners
- Running workshops for Business Link advisers and delivering the skills brokerage role for the tourism sector

- Delivering training and developing specific tourism initiatives according to employer demand and need
- Undertaking impartial training needs analysis and independent advisory service
- Achieving full sub-regional co-ordinator coverage across the South East
- Securing resources on behalf of employers and partners
- Cross-network / sector learning

Network Co-ordinators also identify strategic value including the creation of the regional and sub-regional strategies, raising the profile of the sector (particularly in relation to skills) and influencing partners (particularly local training providers and colleges). Importantly, Co-ordinators feel that they have made a real difference to the tourism sector in terms of employer engagement and supporting employers who might otherwise not have participated in any form of learning.

In the partner survey, all Network activities were deemed to be successful. The activities rated as most successful are the HR Forum in Hampshire, good practice events, skill strategy development, identifying training needs, producing a newsletter and preparation of training needs analyses.

In conclusion, the Network can demonstrate a wide range of achievements (contractual and strategic added value) that are acknowledged by partners and funders.

#### **1.4 Challenges**

Contractually, there was some underperformance in relation to employer engagement. However, it took time in some of the sub-regions to set up and co-ordinate relevant partnerships. It also needs to be stressed that in most cases, only one day a week was dedicated to this work. Key partners were undoubtedly very supportive of the concept of the Network and were keen to stress achievements and to talk about challenges in a positive way. Some of the challenges identified include:

- Employer engagement is generally seen as a particular challenge.
- Sustaining the Network beyond the second phase of funding.
- Securing the right champions and support within agencies such as SEEDA to ensure the skills agenda in tourism is understood, appropriate funding is dedicated and the right actions are taken.
- Success at sub-regional level is very dependent on the skills and abilities of the Co-ordinators and in addition interests and abilities vary. This can result in varying levels of success in certain strands of activity (e.g. employer engagement or communication) vary.

Key partners felt that in some sub-regions the Network might have engaged better with key partners and industry groups. They also feel that in some sub-regions, the requirements and agendas of key sub-regional partners may have taken precedence over the Network objectives and affected its impact. However, key partners suggest that these challenges / failures are areas for fine tuning or improvement rather than an intrinsic problem.

Network Co-ordinators also identified some key challenges which can be summarised as follows:

- Initial momentum - building up relevant contacts and developing them into effective relationships
- A limited budget constraints and lack of resources have constrained activity
- Product knowledge - keeping up-to-date with the many and varied initiatives and being able to translate these into benefits and opportunities to employers on an ongoing basis
- Sustainability of funding for the Network
- Resistance from partners in some sub-regions

- Buy-in to strategic planning processes

However, in most instances Network co-ordinators felt that these challenges were overcome or dealt with in a positive way.

Very few comments in the partner survey were negative and very few improvements to the service offered were identified. In a couple of instances where a lack of success is identified, partners feel that the reasons were, at least in part, beyond the control of the Network.

With regard to challenges / failures, there does seem to be some contradiction in the opinions of partners and key partners. Co-ordinators and many partners feel that employer engagement has been a success whilst some key partners feel it has been less successful.

## **1.5 Impact**

Key partners feel that the Network has had a very positive impact and reiterate many of the achievements mentioned above in relation to building partnerships, influencing at national, regional and sub-regional level and giving strategic guidance. One key partner (and funder) noted that if the Network did not exist there would be 20-30 additional agencies involved in related activities with little co-ordination and the potential for overlap and inefficient use of funds.

Network Co-ordinators themselves feel that the key impacts of their activities include:

- Employer engagement leading to better uptake of provision at all levels and increased understanding of the availability of training and business support
- Industry credibility and impartiality leading to being accepted as an on the ground local resource
- Improving and building training provider relationships leading to changes / enhancement of provision and strengthened links with CoVEs
- Increased partnership working - bringing together stakeholders and moving towards a 'seamless service'
- Levering in support of LSCs and other external funding agencies by demonstrating successful project delivery / involvement
- Creation of a central, authoritative industry contact point

The survey responses from some partners focussed mainly on training (perhaps reflecting a high level of input from sub-regional partners). Some were beneficiaries who thought staff were better equipped to do their jobs as a result of receiving training funded or supported by the Network. Those partners delivering training funded through the Network (such as the CoVE) felt they had been able to make new and more relevant contact. However, for most partners in the survey the outstanding impacts include:

- Employer engagement, bringing employers together and understanding their needs
- Improving awareness of gaps in current provision
- Promoting tourism as a career opportunity
- Funding, supporting and delivering relevant training to the sector
- Engaging with partners and having a strategic impact e.g. through the Regional Strategy
- Sector specific brokerage

## **1.6 Future Priorities**

A number of key partners mentioned possible future priorities for the Network:

- Focusing on outcomes rather than outputs for future activities

- Working with Business Links to act as brokers in the emerging skills brokerage and business support model.
- Specific possible targets mentioned by some key partners include:
  - Creating and rolling out to employers and individuals an Olympic Games derivative of the Welcome Suite of training activities
  - Identifying the basis and method for integration with Business Link activities across the region to simplify the offer to tourism businesses
  - Ensuring the Network is involved in the successful delivery of support relating to the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, particularly in relation to customer service skills
  - Building cross-sector activity particularly linking to the retail sector

Co-ordinators feel that, given continuation funding, future priorities might include:

- Building on the current networks and partnerships to further improve employer engagement and learning participation
- Implementing actions noted in the Regional Tourism Skills Strategy with vigour
- Working with People 1<sup>st</sup> and DCMS on dovetailing with the national skills strategy / sector skills agreement for tourism
- Building on the Network's USP of being a 'first point of contact' for tourism skills and training issues
- Continuing to source and access funding to underpin costs of participation in training and business support schemes and initiatives
- Working on an Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Strategy

The partners' survey identifies the main priority for the future, at regional and sub-regional level, as employer engagement. Other key activities identified include understanding employer needs and identifying gaps in provision and promoting tourism careers and job opportunities. At a regional level, continuing brokerage and advocacy roles, providing a strategic lead and preparing the tourism sector for the Olympic Games are also identified. At a sub-regional level future priorities also include good practice events, facilitating and developing networking opportunities and providing specific training e.g. customer service. In effect, priorities identified at a regional and sub-regional level by partners reflect existing Network priorities and it appears that there is synergy between partner future requirements and Network co-ordinator plans.

## **1.7 Suggested Recommendations**

Initially, it was envisaged that this evaluation would be used to broker appropriate resources to ensure continuation of the Network took place. However, over the evaluation period continuation funding was secured. Had it been required we feel that this report would have built a good case for the Network. Instead, we recommend that the Network:

- Disseminate and share this report with key partners to make them aware of the breadth of achievement.
- Use the evaluation as an advocacy document for attracting future funding. In particular, it is possible that the positive response of partners would be used to demonstrate the need for further support in Surrey where tourism is not a priority and funding for training is drawing to a close.
- Use some of the feedback from partners to plan and prioritise Network activities over the next three years.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 Background of Tourism Skills Network South East**

Since 2004 the Tourism Skills Network South East (TSNSE) has delivered a range of initiatives, services and support relating to skills and workforce development for the tourism sector.

The overall aim of the project was to raise regional productivity, skills levels and economic competitiveness through effective partnership alliances. The project aimed to develop a sustainable means by which tourism businesses and staff could fulfil their skills and recruitment requirements through:

- Building on current efforts / initiatives / networks by drawing together resources and sharing good practice between sub-regional networks;
- Adding value to regional sector competitiveness through the development of partnerships between employers, businesses and training providers;
- Developing a close working partnership with People 1<sup>st</sup> (the Sector Skills Council for Hospitality Leisure Travel & Tourism) to take forward strategic national and regional priorities;
- Influencing the development of industry specific training that is cost-effective, relevant, flexible, accessible and sustainable;
- Helping to shape the national qualifications structure and influencing how future provision will meet employer needs;
- Supporting businesses in achieving excellence in customer service;
- Encouraging potential new recruits into the sector and to consider tourism as a career of first choice;
- Providing a central contact point for tailored advice services.

### **2.2 The Network Team**

The project has been staffed by a number of sub-regional skills co-ordinators on a part-time basis and in some instances activities have been delivered under the umbrella of sub-regional partnerships. Current co-ordinators include:

**Figure 2-1: The Project Team**

Co-ordinator	Sub-region	Background to Post
Debbie Rouget	Berks, Bucks and Oxon	Already working for TSE as Project Manager for the Tourism Better Business Scheme (TBBS), one day a week of funding is allocated to Debbie. TBBS is based in Abingdon and is purely funded through external funding projects, mainly ESF Co-financing.
Gill Heighington	Hampshire	Already working for TSE as Training Manager, one day a week of funding is allocated to Gill.
Cat Carkeet	Isle of Wight	Working for Isle of Wight Tourism as Quality Assurance Co-ordinator – funding pays for one day a week of Cat’s time.
Farah Miri-Meziane and Kerstin Beeching	Kent	Funding fractionally covers 2 days a week of a Co-ordinator (Farah) who works for Kent County Council. A further post (Kerstin) is paid for under a Higher Education Innovative project – a 3 year bid – through Canterbury College of HE.
Sue Gill	Whole region	Sue is employed by Tourism South East and works as regional co-ordinator.

Co-ordinator	Sub-region	Background to Post
Carrie Tripp	Surrey	A separate bid was submitted to Surrey LSC for a Tourism Skills Network and this was successful – giving £169,000 over two years for a specific co-ordinator for 3 days a week in Surrey. This project ends in December 2006. No SEEDA funding was allocated to this post, but the co-ordinator links and dovetails into all the activity, networks with the other co-ordinators and attends the meetings.
Martin Brunner	Sussex	Some issues with appointing a co-ordinator in Sussex (see section 3 below). Eventually an arrangement was made to channel funding through Sussex Enterprise (which is a commercial company encompassing Business Link and the Chamber of Commerce) to fund a post. Martin is a consultant and took over the duties on a temporary two days a week basis.

In September 2006, funding for the Tourism Skills Network South East will come to an end. Funding has been secured from SEEDA to continue activity for a further three years.

### **2.3 Purpose of the Evaluation**

As the initial programme of skills and workforce development activity draws to a close, SEEDA felt it would be useful to measure the success and impact of activities. Consultation was carried out with:

- The Network team involving the regional co-ordinator and six sub-regional co-ordinators
- Key partners – funders: SEEDA, national partners People 1<sup>st</sup>, TSE: the regional tourist board
- Other partners – those who have funded the Network, acted as a delivery partner, informed its strategic direction or benefited from funding/activities

The consultations aimed to gather information that would allow the Network to:

- Measure success and achievements and compared these to their original aims and objectives
- Establish what they did that was particularly important
- Determine whether they could have done anything better or differently
- Determine future priorities for the network at regional and sub-regional level from September 2006 onwards

### **3. Management Information**

TSNSE began its work in November 2004 with financial help from SEEDA and the support of People 1<sup>st</sup>. The Network is based on the model of the South West and North West Tourism Skills Networks. Originally a bid was submitted to SEEDA for a much larger project at around £400,000. However due to lack of funding, a newly revised project was agreed, with pared down outcomes / budget. As a result, TSNSE received considerably less RDA core investment than Networks in other regions (around £33,000 per annum in the first two years). However, this has facilitated a more focused approach with the Tourism Skills Network South East managing to secure the commitment and often funding of sub-regional partners, including LSCs, Business Links, COVEs, Colleges and local authorities.

#### **3.1 Output Summary at a Glance**

Particular highlights can be summarised as follows:

- Regional Co-ordinator and 6 Sub-Regional Skills Co-ordinators in place
- The first Regional Tourism Skills and Workforce Development Strategy launched with SEEDA and People 1<sup>st</sup> by DCMS/the Minister for Tourism (March 2006)
- 6 sub-regional skill strategies and action plans prepared
- 5 employer led skills forums established to guide sub-regional programmes
- New South East wide Tourism CoVE at Brockenhurst College shaped and launched by DCMS/the Minister for Tourism (March 2006)
- 8 ESF co-financing projects secured or in the process of being submitted by Sub-Regional Co-ordinators to take forward strategies
- 133 Training Needs Analyses undertaken
- To date in excess of £158,000 of match funding generated in support of the Network and its skills agenda

#### **3.2 Funding and partner contributions**

The funding for the Network and six co-ordinators during the period comprised £33,000 per annum from SEEDA. A further £158,000 was levered through other sources. The table below gives details.

**Figure 3-1: Project Costs and Funding**

	SEEDA	Match	Total
<b>Staff Costs</b>			
Director Support (2 days per month)	£0	£10,000	£10,000
Regional Co-ordinator - on costs	£0	£37,337	£37,337
Regional Co-ordinator - travel	£0	£4,000	£4,000
Sub-regional Co-ordinators on costs (4) - 1 day*	£59,000	£6,000	£65,000
Sub-regional Co-ordinators travel (1) - 2 day**	£7,000	£0	£7,000
Administrative staff	£0	£20,000	£20,000
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£66,000</b>	<b>£77,337</b>	<b>£143,337</b>
<b>Other Costs</b>			
IT equipment / software connectivity	£0	£15,000	£15,000
Mobile phone	£0	£4,800	£4,800
Office overheads	£0	£30,000	£30,000
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£49,800</b>	<b>£49,800</b>
<b>Project Costs</b>			
Evaluation	£6,000	£0	£6,000
Dissemination	£0	£5,000	£5,000
Discretionary Fund	£0	£6,000	£6,000
Sub-regional Operational Budget	£0	£20,000	£20,000
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£41,000</b>	<b>£41,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£72,000</b>	<b>£158,137</b>	<b>£230,137</b>

\* Hampshire, BBO, Isle of Wight and Sussex

\*\* Kent

### 3.3 Project Targets

The project bid identified beneficiaries as tourism businesses, their employees and individuals with an interest in employment in the tourism sector. The bid also identified the following target outcomes:

- Diagnostics / action plans administered with a target 100 tourism companies per annum
- Long term relationships with employers with a target 100 tourism companies per annum (Effectively, tourism companies with whom there is an informal agreement to maintain contact by phone or visit)
- 10 good practice events
- 10 promotional events
- Production of a Regional Tourism Strategy and Workforce Development plan
- Drafting a local strategy and action plan for each sub-region
- Establishing Employer Forum in each sub-region
- Producing an evaluation report

The table below shows proposed outputs, outcomes and milestones at the project bid stage. Some of the outputs and outcomes remained in place throughout the project and their achievement (or otherwise) is summarised below. However, there does appear to have been significant variation between initial outputs and those measured and recorded at the end. Over the course of the project the target for good practice and promotional events were reduced from 10 to 9.

Figure 3-2: Proposed Project Outputs, Outcomes and Milestones

	Sep 04 - Mar 05	Apr 05 - Mar 06	Apr 06 - Aug 06	Total
<b>Outputs</b>				
Confirm membership of Regional and Sub-regional Partnerships set up	1			1
Confirm scope of Regional Partnership and feedback to sub-regional groups	1			1
Pool/collate regional research and background material relevant to the sector	1			1
Business diagnostics undertaken	30	35	35	100
Good Practice events held	2	5	3	10
Promotional Events to facilitate collaborative working	2	6	2	10
Interim / final evaluation reports completed		1	1	2
Evaluation report disseminated to all partners and interested parties			1	1
Establish Employer Forum	1			1
<b>Outcomes</b>				
Businesses Assisted	30	40	30	100
Partnerships serviced	7			7
<b>Milestones</b>				
Delivery Plan agreed	1			1
Appoint a chair for Regional Partnership	1			1
Prioritise which issues the Regional Partnership will focus on	1			1
Contract of Engagement between SSC (People 1 <sup>st</sup> ) and TSE	1			1
Draft Regional Tourism Workforce Development Plan	1			1
Service Level Agreements with sub regional Partners set up	1			1
Reporting and documentation systems for project set up.	1			1
South East Tourism Skills Network Group established.	1			1
South East Tourism Skills Network Group Meetings held	1	4	5	10
Sub- regional Partnership Groups - Meetings or via email	6	18	18	42
Project Group Meeting held	2	3	3	8
Employer Forum Meetings Held		4	2	6

### 3.4 Summary of Network Project Outputs

The table below shows total outputs for the whole of the South East region. The table shows over-achievement in four of the outputs and particularly high levels of achievement in training needs analyses (2.5 times the target). There are two outputs where actual achievements fell short of targets (employers engaged and good practice events).

Figure 3-3: Network Outputs

	Training Needs Analyses	Employers Engaged	Good Practice Events	Promotional Events	HR Forum	Local Strategy
Year 1						
Target	30	30	2	2	0	1
Actual	3	3	0	2	0	1
Year 2						
Target	35	40	5	6	1	5
Actual	130	18	4	9	1	5
Year 3						
Target	35	30	2	1		
Actual	29	0	3	1		
Total						
Target	100	100	9	9	1	6
Actual	162	21	7	12	1	6

The table below shows targets by sub-region. It is worth mentioning that the sub-regional co-ordinator in Surrey is not funded as part of this project and as such achievements in the sub-region are all additional to targets.

Figure 3-4: Network Outputs by Sub-region

	Training Needs Analysis	Employers Engaged	Good Practice Events	Promotional Events	HR Forum	Local Strategy
BBO	22	0	1	1	0	1
Sussex	32	2	0	5	0	1
Hampshire	5	4	1	2	1	1
Isle of Wight	29	10	1	2	0	1
Kent	39	2	1	1	0	1
Surrey	6	0	0	0	0	1
Total	133	18	4	11	1	6

The previous tables record contractual obligations but do not convey the amount of activity that has been undertaken by the Network's Team of Co-ordinators, Regional Co-ordinator. Every single event, initiative, service and activity has been recorded in detail every 3 months for the SEEDA and Strategic Added Value reports produced. Besides sub-regional outputs, key regional targets achieved included:

- Appointment of six sub-regional co-ordinators and a regional co-ordinator
- Memorandum of Understanding signed with People 1<sup>st</sup>
- Regional Skills Strategy – Draft consultation document distributed
- Regional Workforce Development Plan produced
- Signed Service Level Agreements with Sub-Regional Partners
- Creation of six sub-regional skills strategies
- Creation of reporting systems
- Production of a series of newsletters

However, as a number of partners have made clear to the evaluators, the Network has not just been interested in ticking off outputs. Where new opportunities have presented themselves to achieve a beneficial outcome for a tourism business or a learner or a jobseeker, the Network has sought to find a way to invest resources and time in practical courses of action. Many examples of this are detailed in the summary of Network team input in section 4.

### 3.5 Additional Network Project Outputs

Key additional outputs include:

- Initial negotiations suggested that problems with politics in East and West Sussex would lead to there being no co-ordinator in the sub-region. Several meetings and discussions took place with sub-regional committees / stakeholders in the East and West and with the LSC to try to find a solution. Ultimately the LSC agreed to find the finance to pay for one day a week, if SEEDA matched this amount and if the Co-ordinator covered the whole of Sussex. This was agreed and SEEDA put a further £6,000 into the 'pot'. Partners and SEEDA see this as a key achievement;
- Securing £169,000 over two years for a specific co-ordinator for 3 days a week in Surrey. Surrey LSC funds the post with no SEEDA funding allocated. This is seen as giving great added value and benefit to SEEDA;
- £79,000 secured for delivery of Welcome to Tourism for period January – July 2006;
- £9,000 secured through Local Skills for Productivity Alliances for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight for a project involving JobCentre Plus;
- Regionally the Network has undertaken major work with the LSC in Hampshire/IOW to put forward views for a SE wide Tourism CoVE. This involved running focus groups on behalf of

People 1<sup>st</sup> and contributing to their research phase. The Network has also been part of the Steering Group and the Curriculum Development Group. The CoVE also contributed to the Regional Strategy document and were major players in the launch event;

- The Memorandum of Understanding with People 1<sup>st</sup> has led to the network being the voice of the SSC in the region. This is reflected in the assistance given to People 1<sup>st</sup> in compiling their Sector Skills Agreement through workshops and regional research;
- The network has liaised with and formed a partnership with Springboard UK;
- The regional co-ordinator sits on the Steering Group for the Cultural South East Consortium and represents the tourism sector. She has contributed to their current research on funding a regional Olympic Games Co-ordinator and has worked with them on a Learning Curve Conference;
- The regional co-ordinator is also part of the national working group on customer service and has formed strong links with DCMS.

At a sub-regional level there were a number of key achievements that could be described as strategic added value. Some of these are described in the section on the co-ordinators input below. Achievements included:

**Figure 3-5: Strategic Added Value in the Sub-Regions**

Sub-region	Example Strategic Added Value
BBO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering two ESF co-financed projects “Taste of Tourism” and “Innovation in Tourism Training”</li> <li>• Focus group in conjunction with CoVE</li> </ul>
Sussex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up of Sussex Tourism Skills Action group</li> <li>• Working with WSTI on delivery of an ESF co-financed project</li> <li>• Workshop for Business Link advisers</li> </ul>
Hampshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submitted and won National Training Award in conjunction with “Pride in Pompey”</li> <li>• Training 50 volunteers in customer care skills for SeaBritain event</li> <li>• Representative on CoVE Curriculum Development Focus Group</li> </ul>
Isle of Wight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 115 participants in IoW Quality Awareness workshops</li> <li>• 8 businesses attending Profit through Productivity workshop</li> <li>• Key agency working party established</li> </ul>
Kent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back to the floor job swap day in conjunction with Springboard UK</li> <li>• Pride in Thanet training initiative and awards scheme</li> </ul>
Surrey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding through ESF for 3 days spent on Network for Skills project</li> <li>• Delivering skills brokerage role for tourism on behalf of Business Link</li> <li>• Setting up a programme of tourism related courses according to employer demand and need</li> </ul>

## **4. Network Team Input**

### **4.1 Challenges of the role**

The main challenges faced by all Skills Network Co-ordinators can be summarised as follows:

#### **Initial momentum**

The initial challenge was to build up relevant partner, provider, employer and trade association contacts, and then to develop and shape these into effective, and cohesive networking groups.

#### **Partnership Communication**

Co-ordinators needed to be extremely proactive to make things happen and to source 'latest intelligence' from partner organisations on the ground.

#### **Budgetary Constraints**

The limited resources available to deliver new projects at sub-regional level proved to be a challenge. There had to be a clear focus on delivery of individual outputs and outcomes.

#### **Product Knowledge**

Keeping up-to-date with the plethora of schemes and initiatives, was often funded by the range of strategic partners was difficult particularly when only one or two days a week was dedicated to activities. It was difficult to translate these into benefits and opportunities to which employers could understand.

#### **Sustainability of funding for the Network**

There was a period of uncertainty regarding future funding for the Network, and this had an impact on team motivation levels and the ability to plan ahead.

Some sub-regions experienced specific challenges:

#### **Resistance**

- Isle of Wight: initial fear that the Skills Co-ordinator role would duplicate / usurp Chamber of Commerce role and their relationship with businesses on the Island
- Sussex: gaining commitment and funding for a county-wide Co-ordinator due to the specific East and West split

#### **Engagement and contact time**

- Kent: Employer engagement has been challenging even though innovative and tailored schemes and initiatives were on offer. Co-ordinators would have also liked more contact time with tourism businesses to help overcome employer apathy in some local areas
- Surrey: Ensuring co-ordination of agencies and approaches so that a seamless offer was made to employers and tourism businesses
- Sussex: Engaging with some local associations proved difficult

#### **Resources**

- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire: A very large area to cover in one day a week

#### **Buy-in to Strategic Planning Processes**

- Sussex: A number of key colleges did not attend the Skills Action Plan Summit in December 2005, which was critical to move forward and implement actions from the Skills Action Plan

- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire: Very little contact with People 1<sup>st</sup> in terms of delivering a joint agenda

## **4.2 Key Successes**

The main Network-wide successes identified by all Skills Network Co-ordinators can be summarised as follows:

### **Strategy and Profile**

- The completion of the first Regional Skills Strategy for the tourism sector building on a complete portfolio of sub-regional plans, and endorsed by SEEDA, DCMS and People 1<sup>st</sup>
- Launch of the Regional Skills Strategy by the Tourism Minister

### **Impartial Training Needs Analysis and Strong Brokerage Service**

The completion of holistic and impartial TNAs (in greater volumes than contractually required) leading to quality referrals and brokerage to relevant training solutions for businesses and their employees.

### **Ability to Influence**

Co-ordinators report that through their activities they have been able to influence partners and particularly local training providers and colleges in their sub-regions; and at regional level the Network's collective identity and success allowed access to influential meetings that would otherwise not have been possible.

### **Skills Network Co-ordinator Coverage**

Achieving full sub-regional Co-ordinator coverage across the South East despite political / funding resistance in some areas from partners.

### **Making a real difference to people's lives**

The Co-ordinators feel passionately that their activities have led to life and career opportunities taking place for a range of people including the unemployed, unwaged, employed, young people and adults. They have done this through enabling individuals to find a new career, helping to create training plans or opening up access to work trials and jobs. Co-ordinators also report success through their activities with schools and young people in general in helping raise awareness of tourism sector training and career opportunities.

Some sub-regions reported specific successes and highlights including:

### **Excellence and Best Practice**

Hampshire: National Training Award in conjunction with Portsmouth City Council for a taxi driver training initiative.

### **New Product Development**

Hampshire: Identifying gaps in provision and commissioning the development of new product e.g. Equestrian tourism courses and self-study pack/CD Rom for TIC staff.

### **Rural businesses**

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire: Engaging with rural tourism businesses through close liaison with the RBAT network and being able to develop specific courses.

### **Local Forums and improved communication with partners**

- Hampshire: Developing an HR forum aimed at large hotels and tourist attractions in Hampshire
- Isle of Wight: Becoming a central point of contact for Island businesses and thus improving joined up support on the Island with training providers, Business Link Wessex, Isle of Wight COVE, TSE projects and other relevant agencies
- Surrey: Partnership working with Surrey Business Link, Surrey Economic Partnership, LSC, AONB and the LA's as prior to the Network being set up there was no engagement or consultation on training & development matters
- Sussex: Involvement with formation of partnership between TSE, Trading Standards, Fire Officer, Environmental Health and Local Authorities to promote and deliver Fit For Purpose programmes as a method of engaging the industry and signposting to other activity/projects; working with TSE and Sussex Enterprise/Business Link on a joint hospitality and tourism business advice offer; acting as central contact point for training advice (numerous requests/referrals from Business Advisers and People Development Advisors (PDAs))

### **Securing resources**

- Sussex: Making the case and finally securing a sub-regional Co-ordinator across the County
- Regional: Leverage from other sources of funding/bids/projects; ability to achieve major successes and outcomes with limited resources and funding – gave a focused approach

### **Employer Benefits**

Region: Through the Skills Network, Co-ordinators have been able to engage with and support employers who might otherwise not have participated in training. The newsletter has encouraged employers to read news about and encourage new initiatives to be planned in other regions.

### **Cross-network / sector learning**

- Kent: Useful to share ideas and resources from other sub regions and exchange best practice
- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire: Best practice e.g. the i-work project (EQUAL funding) which helped disadvantaged adults into work and training and The Welfare to Workforce Initiative with LSC (MKOB). This is the first initiative which involves cross sector working with retail and construction
- Surrey: Working and communicating with each other in the Network and sharing best practice

## **4.3 Impact of the Co-ordinator role:**

The main impact of the Co-ordinator role can be summarised as follows – we have made generic (rather than sub-regionally specific) observations for this aspect of our evaluation:

### **Employer engagement**

- Better engagement with tourism employers which resulted in better uptake of provision at all levels. The Co-ordinator had the ability to remove confusion for employers who have not in the past become involved in learning
- An increased understanding of the availability and range of training and business support by tourism employers, and reinforcing messages about what is already available locally
- Co-ordinators with practical industry experience / background have been able to empathise with employers' 'struggles and concerns' and thus engage their trust and respect

### **Industry Credibility and impartiality**

- Local presence on the ground and the opportunity to build rapport with tourism business owners – ‘local, physical presence’ - seen as the face of the industry – subsequently local confidence has grown. It has been important to connect locally rather than through a Head Office
- By remaining impartial it has enabled Co-ordinators to engage employers, and also bring partners together to work on projects in a more cohesive way

### **Training Provider Relationships**

- More individuals in local colleges are now involved with the Network in joint delivery
- Individual providers / schools / colleges have been persuaded by Co-ordinators to change / enhance their provision in different ways, including a school adopting Welcome Host for students as part of their vocational training; a college helping to develop a new Foundation Degree for Hospitality and Tourism; a University advising on the widening participation project for Tourism degree assessments
- Working in partnership to help shape provision and influence the development and delivery of sector specific training
- Strengthened links with CoVEs and opportunities to share resources e.g. joint stand at industry events

### **Partnership working**

- Bringing together stakeholders who otherwise may have been working in isolation and sometimes duplicating work, leading to sharing of knowledge, best practice, synergies and buy-in to a cohesive tourism skills action planning processes.
- Moving closer towards a ‘seamless service’ by engaging with agencies such as Chambers of Commerce, Business Links, local authority tourism and economic development officers and other training providers
- A key attempt is to share knowledge, best practice, to build synergies and avoid duplication in provision
- Having opportunities to influence local, regional, sector and other types of groups and networks
- Awareness of local activity and also the bigger picture through regular liaison with TSE and working on joint initiatives

### **Levering in support of the LSC**

- By demonstrating successful project delivery / involvement, Co-ordinators have in some instances been approached by their local LSC to run additional funded initiatives
- Being able to feedback to the LSC priorities and demands of local employers

### **Central, authoritative industry contact point**

- A central point of contact for stakeholders who understands the tourism industry
- The ability to interact and influence stakeholders to deliver exactly what businesses yearned through a more flexible approach
- The ability to provide advice and guidance to Business Link PDAs; and also work in partnership with tourism business advice specialists

## **4.4 Future development opportunities:**

At the time the evaluator met the TSE Team, there was uncertainty regarding continued funding for the Network. As such, Co-ordinators were concerned that without funding:

- Momentum would be lost
- Co-ordination of activities, partners and initiatives would revert to being more limited and duplication would occur once more
- The implementation of the sub-regional tourism skills action plans and wider regional tourism skills strategy would be significantly hampered
- Some activities would continue to be sustained but on a more protracted basis or without the same amount of focus, impetus or control
- It would give projects of this nature a poor reputation with employers for not being sustainable and they would be reluctant to engage in the future

However, funding has now been granted, and Co-ordinators have put forward a range of tasks that might now be tackled:

- Building on current successes, networks and partnerships to further improve employer engagement and learning participation
- Implementing actions in the Regional Tourism Skills Strategy with vigour
- Working with People 1st and DCMS on dovetailing with the National Skills Strategy / sector skills agreement for tourism and other initiatives to make sure the South East region is fully represented and involved
- Building on the Network's USP of being a 'first point of contact' for tourism skills and training issues and in particular forge links with the new SE brokerage service
- Continuing to source and access funding to underpin costs of participation in training and business support schemes and initiatives
- Planning a collaborative South East and South West skills conference involving People 1st and DCMS
- Working on an Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Strategy, maximising the Skills Co-ordinator activity

With continuation funding, some specific development opportunities would also present themselves in each sub-region:

Sub-region: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire

- Looking at training programmes aimed at the school market – in preparation for potential employment opportunities in 2012. This could focus on customer service and other sector specific training.
- Develop new partnerships and look at innovative ways to deliver training to employees from overseas whose first language is not English
- Devise and deliver training for tourism managers and supervisors with a view to increasing their skills and enhancing professionalism
- Deliver short and relevant 'training bursts' covering a variety of topics and where possible offer these as interactive web based learning resources
- Develop resources which demonstrate the business benefits of training and produce best practice case studies to promote a longer term ethos of learning in the sector

Sub-region: Hampshire

- Develop strategies to deliver an ESF co-financed project 'Prosper through People' with Hampshire County Council, Business Link and linking to the brokerage service
- Build on the success of the HR forum
- Roll out web-based learning resources

Sub-region: Isle of Wight

- Implement projects relating to the skills action plan
- Raise the profile and promote the work of the Skills Co-ordinator / Network role
- Leverage extra resource to help increase the time available from one to two or three days

Sub-region: Kent

- Build a programme of local comprehensive training needs analysis for Kent
- Encourage Colleges to deliver more tourism training locally – short practical training opportunities. Re-establish the previous Kent training programme – Kent Tourism Solutions - practical, hands on training dedicated to tourism businesses.
- Set up simultaneous projects across the sub region to give added value and a more joined up approach
- Increase work with schools and in particular Kent Works (Individual Learning Company, LSC and Kent County Council) and Springboard to offer a plethora of activities (for example a summer school)
- Find alternative approaches engage employers' in workshops/forums to reinforce relationships

Sub-region: Surrey

- Offer ongoing support, advice and guidance for businesses with a personal 'one-stop shop' approach
- Ensure industry kept well informed about appropriate opportunities, including funding streams and how these can be accessed
- Further strengthen partnership working and forge new links with local authorities, industry partners and Colleges
- Continuation of TSE's role in the SSAS and potential to train as a Skills Advisor
- Ensure there is no duplication and confusion with other agencies "door knocking"
- Maintain consistency of offer in the County through quick response to employer requests
- Build on the opportunity to develop and fund a 2012 tourism specific Olympics Games training programme – part of the Welcome to Excellence suite could be evolved to deliver this

Sub-region: Sussex

- Work with local associations/authorities/colleges to provide funded assistance and training in response to local need; this would add meaning to the work of many associations and encourage employer membership and therefore overall industry engagement
- Encourage business to business networks/learning groups (supported)
- Create an HR Forum (along the lines adopted in Hampshire) and use this to shape provision and fill gaps where training is not currently available
- Continue to deliver and manage TSE externally funded projects responding to identified industry needs
- Offer ongoing support for businesses with a 'one stop shop' approach

## **5. Key Partner Input**

A small number of more detailed interviews with key partners were carried out as part of the evaluation. Participants included:

- Fiona Wickins – South East England Development Agency
- Peter Colling – Tourism South East
- Jayne Jones – Learning and Skills Council (Sussex)
- Lindsay Campbell – People 1<sup>st</sup>
- Maria Vlahakis - Department for Culture, Media and Sport

### **5.1 Successes**

All key partners feel that the Network has been successful. They echoed many of the successes identified by the Network Co-ordinators. In particular, partners stressed the importance of the development of partnerships with key sector organisations involved in skills, business support and workforce development at national, regional and sub-regional level. They also feel that the Network was fit for purpose and should be sustained and represented incredible value for money. Some main achievements mentioned include:

- The role of the Network in representing the skills needs of the sector, bringing partners together and co-ordinating tourism skills activity in the SE
- Achievement regionally and sub-regionally of targets in a short period and none of the interviewees expressed disappointment with achievements
- The element of Strategic Added Value was stressed as being very important to SEEDA and the Network has been important in adding value to the region
- Securing over £230,000 of funding from partners and other agencies
- The inability to secure the full amount of funding requested from SEEDA was seen as a challenge but this gave a more focussed approach
- Amongst key partners in the region, engagement with People 1<sup>st</sup> and the Memorandum of Understanding were seen as a key success
- The creation of the regional and sub-regional skills strategies. These are seen to have had an impact on key partners' own strategies (e.g. regional tourism strategy)
- The Network's contribution to the creation and shaping of a SE wide CoVE was seen as a major success
- Comparisons with other similar Networks suggest that the funding has been used very effectively
- Gaining commitment for and finding solutions to funding issues achieved in providing a Co-ordinator in Sussex
- Providing a voice for employers and articulating needs in relation to business support and training. Effectively demonstrating demand for services to the sector
- Employer engagement although patchy initially built quickly
- All partners feel that there has been considerable additionality and much of the activity attributed to the network would not have happened without the Network being in place

One key partner (and funder) noted that if the Network did not exist there would be 20-30 agencies involved in related activities with little co-ordination and the potential for overlap and inefficient use of funds.

## **5.2 Challenges**

Whilst key partners were undoubtedly very supportive of the concept of the Network and keen to stress achievements they did identify some challenges, which included:

- Initially activity on employer engagement (relating to contractual obligations) was seen as not entirely successful. However, it was acknowledged that given the small resource available in to deliver in each region had pursued the smarter option of developing partnerships
- Finding strategies to sustain the Network beyond the second phase of funding
- Overcoming the politics and a slow start following the death of the original sub-regional Co-ordinator
- Lobbying and securing the right level of champions within partner agencies such as SEEDA to ensure that the skills agenda in tourism is understood and appropriate funding made available was difficult
- Success at sub-regional level is very dependent on the skills and abilities of the sub-regional co-ordinators. Whilst sub-regional co-ordinators are seen as effective their interests and abilities vary with the result that the levels of success in certain strands of activity (e.g. employer engagement or communication) vary

## **5.3 Failures**

Most key partners were unable (or unwilling) to identify any failures or areas where performance was unsatisfactory. As we mentioned in the previous section, partners were more willing to talk about challenges than failures.

- Employer engagement levels could have been better
- In some sub-regions there is a possibility that the Network could have engaged better with key partners and industry groups
- In some sub-regions, the requirements and agendas of key sub-regional partners may have taken precedence over the Network objectives and affected its impact

## **5.4 Sustainability**

Key partners were keen that the role and activities of the Network continue beyond the next three years. It is clear that work needs to be undertaken to link in with other agencies so that a longer term solution can be found. This might be a different scenario in each sub-region, but an overarching regional structure needs to be in place to ensure that there is no duplicity of activity on a region wide basis.

- Initial funding from SEEDA was limited because they wanted to ensure that a Network was created that was sustainable and had the commitment of other partners. Funding will not be provided by SEEDA beyond the recently agreed second phase
- Sustainability would be achieved by the work of the Network being embedded and recognised as valuable by partners
- At a sub-regional level, sustainability will be achieved if the work of co-ordinators can be integrated into the work of skills and business brokerage
- It is felt (by some key partners) that sustainability has been achieved through the development of links and support from partners other than SEEDA
- The Network and sub-regional co-ordinators have already made this an invaluable resource to the tourism sector in the SE. This should stand them in good stead for the future in terms of continued partner support and hopefully additional funding may become available to subsidise and enhance activities

## **5.5 The Future**

A number of key partners mentioned possible future priorities of the Network:

- The focus on fewer but more significant outcomes rather than smaller outputs
- Continuing to create a structure within the region for partners to influence the skills agenda and to create a skilled motivated tourism workforce
- The role of co-ordinator will evolve within the Business Link structure and integrate with PBAs and brokers in the emerging skills brokerage service
- Specific targets mentioned by some partners include:
  - Creating and rolling out a derivative of the Welcome Suite of training activities for the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games
  - Identifying the basis and method for integration with Business Link activities in the region to simplify and create a single point of contact for specialist tourism business advice
  - Ensuring the Network is involved in the successful delivery and planning of support relating to the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, particularly in relation to customer service skills
  - Cross sectoral activity and particularly links to the retail sector
- Given the conclusion reached by at least one key partner (see above) that the success and focus in the sub-regions differs, it is suggested the person specification in the future should be different with an emphasis on contact with industry.

## **6. Evaluation of TSNSE by Partners**

### **6.1 Respondent Profile Information**

As part of the evaluation we wanted to gather feedback and opinions about the Network's performance over the past 2 years from partners and stakeholders and anyone who had funded the Network, acted as a delivery partner or informed its strategic direction.

In order to gather opinion, an online survey was devised (this can be found in Appendix 2 at the end of this report and on-line at <http://surveys.impactresearch.co.uk/tourismskillsnetworkse/>). The survey was distributed to a total of 55 partners by the regional and sub-regional co-ordinators. A total of 30 partners completed the survey during July and August 2006. This represents an excellent response rate of 55%. Participating partner organisations are listed below:

**Figure 6-1: Partners Participating in the Evaluation**

People 1st	Brading Roman Villa
DCMS	Sillwood Acre Hotel
rbat Network	Pride in Pompey
Skills Network South West	Brockenhurst College
Springboard	Marwell Zoo
Guildford Borough Council	Highbury College
Guildford College	Chichester College
Hampton B&B	Solent Skills Quest
Hollybourne Hotels	MKOB LSC
Mandolay Hotel	Alan Hester Associates
Lockhurst Hatch Farm B&B	Abingdon Training
Highview B&B	The Grand Burstin Hotel, Folkestone
Sussex LSC	Edenbridge Town Council
Sussex Enterprise	Puddock Farm Pine Lodges
West Sussex Economic Partnership	The Isle of Wight College

### **6.2 Sample size and reporting conventions**

Whilst this report will use percentage responses to help convey trends of opinion amongst the 30 responding partners, the reader is asked to bear in mind that one respondent equates to 3.3% and the percentages may in fact serve to exaggerate real differences. Unless otherwise stated the results are based on 30 complete responses in each instance.

### **6.3 Location of Respondents**

24% of respondents were based in Surrey and 24% were based in Hampshire. The remainder were spread across national / regional contacts (21%), Kent (10%), BBO (10%), Sussex (10%) and Isle of Wight (10%). Two partners were based in more than one location.

Accordingly partners had dealt in the main with the Network team members in corresponding areas i.e. 33% had dealt with Gill Heighington in Hampshire compared to 10% dealing with Cat Carkeet in the Isle of Wight. 33% had also dealt directly with the Network's Regional Manager.

## 6.4 Partners' Involvement with the Network

47% of partners had attended a Network event and the same number had received Network information. 33% were delivery partners and 30% used network services. Only 13% had funded Network activities. Other types of involvement included delivering training on the Network's behalf, working jointly on delivering services, receiving training from the Network, working together on the CoVE, working on joint funding bids and having the Network represented on their industry forum.

**Figure 6-2: Partner's Involvement with Network**

	No.	%
Funded Network activities	4	13
Delivery partner	10	33
Used Network services	9	30
Taken part in Network events	14	47
Received Network information	14	47
Other	11	37
Total (multiple response)	57	207
Base	30	100

## 6.5 Benefits of Involvement with Network

Partners were asked about the main benefits of their organisation's involvement with the Network. There is a big emphasis amongst partners on training in particular:

- Some partners were beneficiaries and their staff actually received training funded or supported by the Network. The main benefit was clearly that their staff were better equipped to do their jobs.
- A number of partners were delivering training funded through the Network. The benefit to them was reaching employers they had not had contact with and having experience of delivering industry relevant qualifications. One partner noted "a key link with employer needs and developing courses that are relevant to employer needs".

A major benefit mentioned by partners (including two funders) was the research, data and strategies that have come from the Network and informed an understanding of the key issues and needs of the sectors. For instance one partner noted the Network provided a "Better understanding of regional activities and initiatives, and how regional and national tourism skills policy can be more closely aligned". This was reinforced by partners who mentioned the development of contacts and partners and networking opportunities to make strategic working possible.

## 6.6 Improvements

Partners were asked whether their partnership/involvement with Network could have been improved in any way. 18 of the 30 partners did not feel that their involvement could have been improved and one partner did not feel they had been in post long enough to comment. Three partners mention that they would like more contact and to become more involved with the Network. One partner mentioned "Allowing some additional time for delegates to complete evidence documentation during the course". One partner wanted help establishing a strategic employer forum to inform training and skills development.

Effectively none of the comments received were negative and very few improvements in the relationship were identified by partners.

## 6.7 Success of Network Activities

Partners were presented with a list of some of the activities of the Network. They were asked to indicate if they were aware of the activities and if they were how successful they felt they were. With regard to awareness of activities, Skill strategy development and providing information and intelligence about the skills and workforce development needs of the sector (both 69%) are the activities that partners are most aware of. Producing a periodic newsletter, identifying sector training needs and working with sub-regional / regional / national / public sector support agencies to increase understanding of sector skills needs (all 66%) are also activities that a high proportion of partners are aware of. It was expected that awareness levels would be low for some activities because they are focused on a small number of partners or they are delivered in specific sub-regions.

With regard to success, all activities could be deemed successful with no activities described as not successful at all. Only four activities are described as not very successful and in each case only one partner described them as not very successful. The most successful activities are the HR Forum in Hampshire (100% of those aware of it describing it as very successful), good practice events (62%), skill strategy development (57%), identifying sector training needs (50%), providing information and intelligence about the sector (48%), producing a newsletter (45%) and training needs analysis (43%).

**Figure 6-3: Partner's Awareness and Rating of Network Activities**

Activity/product	Very successful	Successful	Not very successful	Not successful at all	Not aware of activity/product	No answer
Training Needs Analysis	20	27	0	0	23	30
Employer Engagement	20	30	3	0	27	20
Good Practice Events	27	16	0	0	20	36
Promotional Events	20	36	0	0	16	27
HR Forum (Hampshire)	7	0	0	0	50	43
Working with sub-regional / regional / national / public sector support agencies to increase understanding of sector skills needs	27	37	3	0	17	17
Working with local colleges and training providers to identify appropriate provision	27	30	3	0	20	20
Identifying sector training needs	34	33	0	0	10	23
Initiating new training programmes for the sector	23	40	0	0	20	16
Brokerage and signposting role for partners and employers	23	30	3	0	20	23
Working with schools and careers to promote positive image of sector	10	23	0	0	40	27
Working with new entrants to the sector e.g. disadvantaged adults	13	20	0	0	40	27
Skill strategy development	40	30	0	0	16	14
Providing information and intelligence about the skills and workforce development needs of the sector	33	37	0	0	16	14
Producing a periodic newsletter	30	36	0	0	13	20

We asked partners why they identified particular activities as successful. Key elements in the success of activities included:

- The high quality level of service provided by the Network including good communication and responsiveness

- The involvement and expertise of the regional and sub-regional co-ordinators. For example, one partner noted the success of activities was due to the “enthusiasm & professionalism of Tourism Skills Network SE employees - their ability to engage and motivate providers and trainees”. Another contributor noted that “The Co-ordinator made excellent links with agencies and partners, and communicated effectively. The Co-ordinator drove and helped implement changes and skills development.”
- The appropriateness of the training being delivered via the Network and the funding they have secured e.g. based on an understanding of the needs of the sector
- The quality of the training and the trainers
- Well produced and relevant information produced
- Engagement with relevant partners and buy in at sub-regional, regional and national level
- Success in engaging employers

We also asked partners why they identified particular activities as unsuccessful. Of course, very few partners described activities as unsuccessful so only a small number of comments were provided. In one instance an activity was described as unsuccessful because of a lack of funding and a second partner mentions a “failure of third parties/other teaching establishments to recognise opportunities”. In effect, where a lack of success is identified it is, at least in part, beyond the control of the Network.

## **6.8 Main Achievements and Impact**

Partners were asked to identify what they think has been the most outstanding achievement of the Network. They reflect, to some extent, the reasons for success mentioned above. Common themes include:

- Employer engagement, bring employers together and understanding their needs
- Improving awareness of SME's training needs and opportunities
- Promoting tourism as a career opportunity
- Funding, supporting and delivering relevant training to the sector
- Engaging with partners and having a strategic impact e.g. through the Regional Strategy
- Provision of sector specific brokerage

The fact that the Network has continuation funding is seen as a sign of its success.

Partners' views of the Network's impact are reinforced by the table below. Acting as a broker between tourism businesses and training providers (33% of partners) is seen as the main impact whilst engaging employers and developing initiatives (both 27%) are also important. Lower rated impacts reflect the smaller number of partners involved in those activities (e.g. influencing decision makers).

**Figure 6-4: Partner’s Perception of Main Impact of Network**

	No.	%
Engaging employers	8	27
Identifying industry needs	7	23
Liaising with training providers	5	17
Addressing industry needs	6	20
Developing initiatives	8	27
Co-ordinating events	3	10
Influencing decision makers	1	3
Developing networks	4	13
Acting as a broker between tourism businesses and training providers	10	33
Other	1	3
Total (multiple response)	53	177
Base	30	100

### 6.9 Gaps in Provision

Partners were asked if there were any activities the Network could have delivered but didn't. There are only three suggestions (listed below):

- One to one training at perhaps a less basic level
- More involved and supportive of the “Steps” programme
- More events / activities to promote careers

The partners mentioning the first two activities acknowledge that resources meant that delivering such activities was difficult.

### 6.10 Beneficiaries

Partners were asked which people or organisations had benefited from their involvement with the Network. Partners identify tourism businesses (60%) as the main beneficiaries of the Network’s activities. Tourism employees (50%) and student learners (47%) are also major beneficiaries.

**Figure 6-5: Beneficiaries of Partners Involvement with Network**

	No.	%
Tourism businesses	18	60
Tourism employees	15	50
Students/learners	14	47
Entrants to the tourism sector	11	37
Job seekers	8	27
Partner/stakeholder organisations	10	33
Policy makers	9	30
Networks	11	37
Educational establishments	11	37
Other	1	3
Total (multiple response)	108	360
Base	30	100

### 6.11 Future Priorities

Partners were asked to identify their main priorities for future activities for the Network at a regional level. Undoubtedly, the key activity identified by partners is **employer engagement**. Other main activities identified by partners include:

- Understanding and identifying employer training needs.
- Addressing industry needs including provision of appropriate training courses.
- Attracting new entrants into the tourism sector.
- Promoting careers and job opportunities through addressing particular skills including customer service, management and leadership, chef skills, craft skills and IT skills.
- Developing partnership working e.g. with CoVEs, Business Links and Skills South East.
- Developing the brokerage and advocacy roles and providing a strategic lead with, for example, People 1st and DCMS.
- Preparing relevant and focussed training for the tourism sector for the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

In effect, priorities identified at a regional level by partners reflect existing Network priorities and it appears that there is synergy between what is demanded by partners and what the Network plans to do in the future.

Partners were also asked to identify main priorities for future activities for the Network at a sub-regional level. A number of partners did not feel that there should be any distinction between regional and sub-regional priorities. At a sub-regional level **employer engagement** was also seen as the biggest priority. Other future priorities included:

- Understanding employer needs including identifying training needs.
- Addressing industry needs including provision of appropriate training courses, liaising with training providers and promoting training opportunities.
- Promoting careers and job opportunities.
- Running good practice events.
- Facilitating and developing networking opportunities.
- Providing specific training e.g. customer service.

As we might have expected, there is much less emphasis on activities that might be considered strategic and more emphasis on delivery of practical and tangible activities.

## **6.12 Future Support for Co-ordinators and Their Activities**

17 Partners (57%) will continue to fund or support skills and workforce development activities in the tourism sector in the future. Some of them identify activities they will be funding or their priorities. In particular, partners who are providers or fund training identify a variety of activity including skills for life, customer service, leadership & management, IT skills, legal requirements, marketing skills and Welcome Host. Other priorities include part time People Development Advisers, encouraging unemployed people back into the workplace, the SSA and the NSS.

We also asked if partners would be able to fund or support activities of the sub-regional skills co-ordinators. Four partners said they would continue to support the Network but none would be able to provide any funding.

**7. Appendix I – Glossary**

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BBO	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire
CoVE	Centre of Vocational Excellence
DCMS	Department for Media, Culture and Sport (lead Government department for tourism)
ESF	European Social Fund
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
HLTT	Hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism
HR	Human Resource(s)
IOW	Isle of Wight
LA	Local Authority
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MKOB	Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire
NSS	National Skills Strategy
PBA	Personal Business Advisor
PDA	People Development Advisors
People 1 <sup>st</sup>	Sector Skills Council for hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism
RBAT	Rural Business Advice and Training
RDA	Regional Development Agency
SE	Sussex Enterprise
SE	South East
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency (the Regional Development Agency)
SME	Small or Medium Sized Enterprise (small business)
SSA	Sector Skills Agreement
SSC	Sector Skills Council
TBBS	Tourism Better Business Scheme
TIC	Tourist Information Centre
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
TSE	Tourism South East (the regional Tourist Board)
TSNSE	Tourism Skills Network South East
USP	Unique Selling Point
WSTI	West Sussex Tourism Initiative

## 8. Appendix 2 – Partner Survey Questionnaire

### Tourism Skills Network South East Evaluation Partner Questionnaire

Over the last two years your organisation has had some involvement with the Tourism Skills Network South East. This may have taken the form of funding the Network, being funded by it, accessing information or guidance from it, attending Network events or acting as a delivery partner. You may have worked with the Network on a sub-regional basis and remember working with the project team members Debbie Rouget, Gill Heighington, Cat Carkeet, Farah Miri-Meziane, Kerstin Beeching, Carrie Tripp, Martin Brunner and Sue Gill. Alternatively you may remember working with team members under the name of key partners such as Tourism Better Business Scheme (in Berks, Bucks and Oxon), Sussex Enterprise, Tourism South East, Isle of Wight Tourism, Kent Tourism Academy or Sussex Enterprise.

We would like to invite you to help us measure the success and impact of the Network's activities. We would be very grateful if you could spare a few moments of your time to respond to these questions. Please submit your survey no later than **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> July**.

1. Please enter your personal details below

Name	
Job Title	
Organisation	
Main Location (tick all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Berks, Bucks and Oxon <input type="checkbox"/> Hampshire <input type="checkbox"/> Isle of Wight <input type="checkbox"/> Kent <input type="checkbox"/> Surrey <input type="checkbox"/> Sussex <input type="checkbox"/> SE Regional <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
E-mail	

2. How would you describe your organisation's involvement with Tourism Skills Network South East? (**Please tick all that apply**)

- Funded network activities     Delivery partner     Used network services.  
 Taken part in network events     Received network information  
e.g. newsletter, strategy  
 Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which of the Tourism Skills Network South East's sub-regions or team members did you work with? **Please tick all that apply**

- Berks, Bucks and Oxon - Debbie Rouget     Hampshire - Gill Heighington  
 Isle of Wight – Cat Carkeet     Kent - Farah Miri-Meziane or Kerstin Beeching  
 Surrey – Carrie Tripp     Sussex – Martin Brunner  
 South East Region – Sue Gill  
 Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

### Your Organisation's Involvement with Tourism Skills Network South East

4. What were the main benefits of your organisation's involvement with the Network?

5. Could your partnership/involvement with Network have been improved in any way?

**Overall Success of Tourism Skills Network South East**

6. Below is a list of some of the activities of Tourism Skills Network South East. Please indicate how successful you feel they were?

Activity/product	Very successful	Successful	Not very successful	Not successful at all	Not aware of activity/product
Training Needs Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good Practice Events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promotional Events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HR Forum (Hampshire)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with sub-regional / regional / national / public sector support agencies to increase understanding of sector skills needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with local colleges and training providers to identify appropriate provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifying sector training needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiating new training programmes for the sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brokerage and signposting role for partners and employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with schools and careers to promote positive image of sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with new entrants to the sector e.g. disadvantaged adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skill strategy development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing information and intelligence about the skills and workforce development needs of the sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Producing a periodic newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Thinking about those activities you identified as successful in Q6, why do you think they were successful?

8. Thinking about those activities you identified as unsuccessful in Q6, why do you think they were unsuccessful?

9. What do you think has been the most outstanding achievement of the Network?

**Evaluation of the Tourism Skills Network South East Activities 2004-2006**

10. What do you think has been the main impact of Tourism Skills Network South East over the past 2 years? **(Please tick one only)**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging employers          | <input type="checkbox"/> Identifying industry needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Liaising with training providers                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addressing industry needs   | <input type="checkbox"/> Developing initiatives     | <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ordinating events   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Influencing decision makers | <input type="checkbox"/> Developing networks        | <input type="checkbox"/> Acting as a broker between tourism businesses and training providers |
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Were there any other activities you feel the Network could have delivered but didn't?

--

12. Which of the following people or organisations have benefited from your involvement with the network? **(Please tick all that apply)**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism businesses             | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Students/learners                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entrants to the tourism sector | <input type="checkbox"/> Job seekers       | <input type="checkbox"/> Partner/stakeholder organisations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy makers                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Networks          | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational establishments        |
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**Sustaining the Activities of Tourism Skills Network South East**

13. Thinking about the future activities of the Network at regional level, what do you feel their top **three** priorities should be?

Priority 1	
Priority 2	
Priority 3	

14. Thinking about the future activities of the Network at sub-regional level, what do you feel the top **three** priorities for sub-regional co-ordinators should be?

Priority 1	
Priority 2	
Priority 3	

15. Will your organisation be funding or supporting skills and workforce development activities in the tourism sector in the future?

- Yes    What type of activities will you be funding or what are your priorities? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be able to fund or support the activities of the sub-regional skills co-ordinators and which ones? \_\_\_\_\_

- No \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you have any additional comments about the work of the Tourism Skills Network South East or future skills and workforce development activity in the tourism sector in the region?