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For immediate release

New programme to create jobs in the East of England and help the environment

A £2.25m business support programme for start-ups and small and medium-sized (SMEs) manufacturing companies is launched in Cambridge today with two key aims: to create more than 140 new jobs and safeguard many more **and** to help companies take a sustainable approach to all aspects of their business.

IfM Education and Consultancy Services Ltd (IfM ECS), the dissemination arm of the Institute for Manufacturing (IfM), University of Cambridge is launching its 'Practical and Innovative Solutions for Manufacturing Sustainability' programme (PrISMS) for which it has received funding from the European Development Fund (ERDF). The programme will run until 30 June 2015 and will provide fully-funded support for 50 start-ups and 70 manufacturing SMEs throughout the East of England to help them increase their profits, reduce their costs and minimise their impact on the environment.

IfM ECS is working with a number of partners to deliver the PrISMS programme:

The EPSRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Industrial Sustainability will help companies understand how to become more environmentally friendly in all aspects of their products and processes.

ideaSpace Enterprise Accelerator will be working with start-ups to grow their businesses and helping to find participants for the programme.

11 Local Authorities in the region will be actively recruiting start-ups and SMEs who could benefit from the programme.

IfM ECS is running the programme and will provide expertise based on research carried out at the IfM, translated into structured approaches and practical tools that help companies improve their businesses. IfM ECS has been doing this successfully for the last ten years; in the last three years alone it has worked with more than 400 SMEs, mainly in the East of England and the Midlands.

Dr Derek Ford, who heads the IfM ECS's team supporting SMEs and start-up companies, said: "We have worked with hundreds of small and medium-sized manufacturers over the last ten years, developing practical ways to help them improve their businesses and develop the capabilities they need to grow and achieve their goals. We are delighted to have been awarded funding from ERDF and are looking forward to working on the new project".

The PrISMS programme will also feedback into the research process by providing the EPSRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Industrial Sustainability with case studies which will inform its work on reducing the resource and energy requirements of existing production processes and looking at options for a radical, low-carbon redesign of the industrial system.

There are fully-funded places available on the PRISMS programme for:

- 70 companies with up to 250 employees
- 50 product or technology-based start-ups

Participants must be based within six counties of the East of England region (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk) or in the unitary authority of Thurrock, Luton or Peterborough. Companies interested in taking part should contact Anna Rowntree T: 01223 766141 E: prisms-enquiries@eng.cam.ac.uk

Notes for Editors

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The Institute for Manufacturing (IfM) is a division of the University of Cambridge's Department of Engineering. The IfM brings together expertise in management, economics and technology to address the full spectrum of industrial issues. Its activities integrate research and education with practical application in companies, providing a unique environment for the creation of new ideas and approaches to modern industrial practice.
www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk

ideaSpace Enterprise Accelerator

University of Cambridge's ideaSpace was established to support the coordination, development, acceleration and widening of entrepreneurial activity across the Eastern Region.

<http://www.ideaspace.cam.ac.uk>

The ESPRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Industrial Sustainability aims to support industry's move towards a more sustainable society. The Centre operates out of four universities with a track record of success in the core elements needed in sustainable manufacturing: University of Cambridge, Loughborough University, Cranfield University and Imperial College, London.

<http://www.industrialsustainability.org>

European Regional Development Fund

The PrISMS project is part financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2007 to 2013. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is a seven-year, EUR308bn programme of European Structural Funds across European Union member states. The ERDF programme for the East of England (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk) supports low carbon economic growth until 2013. The ERDF has allocated approximately EUR95 million for use in the East of England.

www.communities.gov.uk/erdf