

Midlands Consortium Delighted to be Chosen to Host 1 Billion Pound Energy Institute

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Representatives from the Midlands Consortium say they are absolutely delighted by today's announcement that the group has been chosen to host a new £1 billion national institute to develop cleaner energies.

The Midlands Consortium is comprised of the universities of Birmingham, Loughborough and Nottingham – three world-class partners, all with extensive and complementary energy related research activities. Generous financial support has been provided, in a unique cross-border arrangement, by both Advantage West Midlands and the East Midlands Development Agency (emda).

The Energy Technologies Institute (ETI) is being established to speed up the deployment of new low-carbon energy technologies, including the efficient production and use of energy, in support of the UK's energy and climate change goals. It will also increase funding and provide a national strategic focus for research and development in this area and promote international technology collaboration.

Jointly funded by Government and industry, the ETI brings together some of the world's biggest companies – BP, Caterpillar, EDF Energy, E.ON UK, Rolls-Royce and Shell. Their funding contribution, along with that of the Government, provides the Institute with a potential budget of more than £600 million over 10 years. The involvement of other private companies could boost the cash pot up to £1 billion.

Professor Michael Sterling, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Birmingham, said: "We are delighted that the Midlands Consortium has won the bid to host the Energy Technologies Institute. At Birmingham we have a proud heritage in science and engineering and our large scale Institute for Energy Research and Policy will make a real contribution to the work of the consortium."

Professor Sir Colin Campbell, Vice Chancellor of the University of Nottingham, added: "British higher education and research is one of the UK economy's greatest success stories. Today's news offers an outstanding opportunity for three distinguished universities to demonstrate the extent to which the United Kingdom is a significant force in the international market for knowledge and research excellence.

"The choice of the Midlands Consortium is a measure of the quality and attractiveness of our intellectual capital at The University of Nottingham, and at Birmingham and Loughborough. It also recognises our many successful collaborations, and our close and hugely-valued partnerships with those leading regional economic development. Most importantly, it will allow us to make the most of our shared determination to help secure the well-being of future generations through our science and innovation."

The hub of the ETI will be based at Loughborough University, on the Holywell Park area of the campus, at the heart of the University's Science and Enterprise Park, and brings with it up to 50 new jobs in the region.

Professor Shirley Pearce, Loughborough University's Vice Chancellor, said the hub will be ideally situated at Holywell Park. "We already have a concentration of low-carbon and energy research and development activities based at the University's Science and Enterprise Park. Locating the hub on this site will allow the Consortium to maximise the effective working of the ETI."

Advantage West Midlands' Director of Innovation, Dr Philip Exance, added: "Advantage West Midlands is delighted to support this strong collaboration of the three universities across the East and West Midlands. The location of the ETI hub in the Midlands pays testament not only to their research strength but also to the potential strength of firms in the regions to exploit the technology that is developed."

Dr Bryan Jackson OBE, Chairman of emda, commented: "emda is delighted that ETI has recognised the industrial strengths in this region with companies such as E.ON UK, Caterpillar, Rolls-Royce, Toyota, Alstom, Siemens and EDF who all have a significant presence here. This strong proposition of global business at the forefront of the global energy sector combined with the international success of our universities is a winning combination."

Bids to host the Institute were judged on energy research capability, reputation and culture; space, facilities and accessibility; and commitment to the ETI.

Five bids, from 28 applicants, were initially short-listed in May 2007. A reduced shortlist of three, comprising the Midlands Consortium and groups based in the North East and Scotland, was then announced in August.

The ETI is expected to be fully operational by 2008.

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For media enquiries contact:

Kate Chapple, Press Officer, University of Birmingham, tel 0121 414 2772 or 07789 921164.

Notes to editors

The other university consortia short-listed for the ETI were

North East Consortium – University of Newcastle with Durham, Northumbria, NaREC (New and Renewable Energy Centre) and the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI)

Energy Technology Partnership from Scotland – Universities of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, St Andrews and Heriot-Watt

University of Birmingham

The University of Birmingham has around 27,000 students and 6,000 members of staff and a turnover of £360 million. Birmingham ranks 5th in the UK for research excellence; in the most recent Research Assessment Exercise, seven areas of the university's research achieved the six star rating.

Energy-related research at Birmingham includes projects on hydrogen and fuel cells, future engines and future fuels for vehicles, energy efficiency in the built environment, and a wide range of materials work. The Institute for Energy Research and Policy was established in 2005 to coordinate energy research across the university, and to highlight the wider implications of technological developments.

Loughborough University

Loughborough University has an international reputation for excellence in teaching and research, strong links with industry and unrivalled sporting achievement. It ranked in the top 15 of UK universities in national league tables and has been awarded five Queen's Anniversary Prizes – an achievement bettered by no other university.

The University has established partnerships in low carbon and fuel cells technologies. It is home to the Rolls-Royce fuel cells facility and has a research school in sustainability. It is also one of four partner universities in a £10m research programme, sponsored by EPSRC and E.ON UK, looking at the next generation of low carbon

energy solutions.

University of Nottingham

The University of Nottingham is Britain's 'University of the Year' (The Times Higher Awards 2006/7). It undertakes world-changing research, provides innovative teaching, and a student experience of the highest quality. Ranked by Newsweek in the world's Top 75 universities, its academics have won two Nobel Prizes since 2003. The University is an international institution, with campuses in the United Kingdom, Malaysia and China.

The University of Nottingham enjoys a reputation for excellence in a broad range of energy technology research. Its Energy Technologies Research Institute draws together engineers, chemists, physicists, bioscientists and social scientists to find innovative solutions to sustainable and secure energy supplies, and new technologies aimed at mitigating global warming. Collaborative research areas include: clean fossil fuels and carbon abatement technologies; hydrogen and fuel cells; renewable energy production; infrastructure technologies for green energy; energy-efficient technology in the built environment; and the environmental, economic and social impact of energy use and the carbon economy. The University is building a major research centre in Sustainable Energy Technology at its pioneering campus in the People's Republic of China, and recently announced plans also to construct research houses at the China campus, which will complement 'eco houses' built at University Park Campus in Nottingham UK. The 'Creative Energy Homes' project is stimulating sustainable design ideas and promoting new ways of providing affordable, environmentally sustainable housing which is innovative in design. Several large companies including Stoneguard, Roger Bullivant, E-On and BASF are supporting the venture.

East Midlands Development Agency

East Midlands Development Agency (emda) is one of nine Regional Development Agencies in England, set up in 1999 to bring a regional focus to economic development.

Working in partnership with public, private and voluntary organisations the aim is to deliver the 2006 Regional Economic Strategy (RES) 'A Flourishing Region', which sets out regional priorities until 2020. The RES, coordinated by emda, highlights the themes of productivity, sustainability and equality and builds on the previous two strategies; 'Prosperity Through People' and 'Destination 2010'.

In early 2007 the National Audit Office announced emda had received the highest possible grade of 'performing strongly' in an independent assessment of our work - scoring 22 out of 24. For more details visit www.emda.org.uk (<http://www.emda.org.uk>)

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