

An Introduction to the *emda* Knowledge Bank

A description of the activities of the East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) and an overview of the Knowledge Bank's purpose and content

emda

June 2011

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An Introduction to the *emda* Knowledge Bank

1. Introduction

The East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) has established this 'Knowledge Bank' in conjunction with Nottingham Trent University in order to ensure that knowledge created through our activities continues to be made available to partners and successor bodies (following our closure). This narrative seeks to contextualise the content of the Knowledge Bank by summarising our role and remit over the past 12 years.

2. *emda*'s role in the region

We were one of nine Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in England, set up in 1999 with the aim of driving economic performance and growth in the English regions, through a range of prescribed statutory functions. Our primary goal was to *"increase the economic growth of the region while reducing disparities between the East Midlands and other English regions"*.

Achieving this goal encompassed a range of key duties including:

- A statutory function to develop a regional economic strategy on behalf of the region;
- Delivery of business support services, and active promotion of enterprise activity and business growth/competitiveness;
- Fostering innovation and scientific advance;
- Attracting inward investment and promoting the region as a tourist destination;
- Supporting regional employment, learning and skills needs;
- Delivering regeneration activities including physical infrastructure;
- Monitoring the region's economic performance and responding to economic shocks;
- Promoting environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation; and
- Delivery of programmes with a sub-regional impact delivered through the Single Regeneration Budget and through Sub-Regional Strategic Partnerships.

Although one of the smaller RDAs, at our peak we had an annual Single Programme Budget of £178m. When combined with other funding streams that we managed (including the National Coalfields Programme and European Programmes) this rose to about a quarter of a billion pounds. We were, therefore, a significant business operation in our own right. However, with a regional economy of some £70bn, a significant part of our role was to influence public, private and third sector organisations to align their activities and spending – ensuring that we were all working together in support of an agreed regional economic strategy.

The RDAs' remit progressively expanded as part of the then Government's policy to put in place regional architecture and to coordinate policies and actions at national, regional and local levels in order to promote growth in the regions. A chronological summary overview of the RDAs' expanding role and responsibilities is provided at Annex 1.

3. *emda*'s impact and achievements

In 2005, we became the first RDA to commission a comprehensive and independent programme of impact evaluation. This three-year programme assessed the impact of our work from April 1999 to March 2007 on companies, communities and the economy of the East Midlands and was undertaken by a consortium led by ECOTEC Research and Consulting.

This evaluation found that **for every £1 spent by emda, between £9 and £15 was put back into the regional economy.** Projects were assessed as having been effective and delivered good value for money.

These evaluation findings, along with other reviews carried out by the Government and the National Audit Office, confirmed that:

- We had substantial positive and ongoing impacts on the performance of the East Midlands economy;
- We provided strategic economic leadership, drawing together the partnerships required to deliver the region's economic aspirations set out in the Regional Economic Strategy;
- We had a strong track record in developing unique and innovative solutions, helping turn places that the market had failed into economic success stories;
- Our business-led approach meant that we were flexible, fleet of foot and able to make difficult decisions in responding to economic opportunities and challenges;
- We tailored successful emergency help to local companies and their workers hit by unexpected economic shocks;
- We provided excellent value for money, delivering efficient and effective programmes and initiatives; and
- We consistently achieved our goals – against a backdrop of ongoing efficiency savings.

Further information on our headline achievements and areas of activity are captured in the accompanying “Over a Decade of Achievements” document, which is also available in the Knowledge Bank.

4. Knowledge Bank content

As part of our knowledge legacy activities, we are producing a suite of Legacy Handbooks, across a range of policy and delivery areas:

- Business Support
- Enterprise
- Innovation
- International Investment
- Low Carbon
- Manufacturing
- Partnership Approach to Physical Regeneration (showcasing the Coalfields)
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Activities
- Tourism

Individual Legacy Handbooks will be transferred to the Knowledge Bank when they are finalised. They set out how the agenda has evolved over the past decade along with *emda's* activities and achievements. In addition, there is a real focus on evaluation findings and ‘lessons learnt’, which we hope will be helpful to future policy makers and delivery bodies.

The bulk of the Knowledge Bank is made up of strategies, policies, research studies and toolkits that we are keen to ensure remain in the public domain and available for use by partners. In addition, we have included a number of reports focused on our progressive approach to economic impact evaluation, including the Agency's overall impact report and a selection of reports that highlight how the economic impact of different types of activities or interventions can be assessed. Again, we hope that these will be of interest to partners.

JP Moore
Chief Executive
June 2011

Overview of the RDAs' expanding role

1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDAs established
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Innovation Fund • Market Towns Initiative
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Selective Assistance transferred from the Government Offices • RDAs tasked with establishing a Manufacturing Advisory Service in the regions
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New responsibilities on transport, planning and housing • Statutory planning consultee role • New strategic leadership role in regional tourism • RDAs tasked with setting up and leading Regional Skills Partnerships • Some RDAs to pilot dual key approach of LSC and RDA budgets for adult learning • Some RDAs to pilot new approach to co-ordinating business support services • RDAs given role to ensure that universities' proposals for the Higher Education Innovation Fund are aligned with regional business needs
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDAs take over delivery of Business Link services • Greater RDA involvement in signing off local trade development service plans • New responsibility for delivery of Research and Development grants and funding for enterprise in disadvantaged areas • RDAs given an enhanced role in supporting business-university collaboration • RDAs responsible for delivering DEFRA's Business Resource Efficiency and Waste Programme • RDAs take over delivery of rural development funding from the Countryside Agency
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New responsibilities for RDAs under the National Social Enterprise Action Plan • New RDA strategic and delivery function set out in the Energy White Paper • RDAs responsible for delivery of socio economic programmes under the Rural Development Programme for England
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDAs take on responsibility for the management of the European Regional Development Fund
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDAs take on joint responsibility (with the Local Authority Leaders' Boards) for the Integrated Regional Strategies • RDAs take on responsibility for the Regional Skills Priorities Statements