

North East Local Enterprise Partnership

Job Description

Job Title: Energy Innovation Partnership Manager

Service: North East Local Enterprise Partnership (North East LEP)

Responsible To: Energy Programme Lead, North East Local Enterprise Partnership

Host Employer: North East Combined Authority

Salary: £40,760-£45,591

Initially fixed term contract to March 2021, with the possibility of extension subject to funding.

Background

The North East LEP leads on the development and delivery of the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), aiming to foster economic growth and the creation of more and better jobs. We are seeking a high calibre Energy Innovation Partnership Manager to take forward an exciting new regional partnership, working with the Innovation SuperNetwork and part-funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The North East is home to a unique and wide-ranging set of energy innovation and demonstration capabilities, with regional organisations responsible for a range of assets of regional, national and international importance. These include the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult, Blyth; the National Centre of Energy Systems Integration, Newcastle University; the Durham Energy Institute, Durham University; and the InTEGReL site led by Northern Gas Networks in partnership with Northern Powergrid, Northumbrian Water and Newcastle University. These sit within a wider innovation eco-system across our key sectors. The region is also home to 'real-world' delivery opportunities for new energy technologies and solutions, from rural communities and coastline, three cities and an extended urban geography.

The North East therefore offers the ability to innovate, demonstrate and deliver across a comprehensive range of energy challenges, including societal, policy, technology and integrated systems challenges at all scales, both onshore and offshore. This presents an opportunity to drive regional growth, play a strong and unique role delivering on national energy policy, and showcase solutions to global energy challenges.

This new role will coordinate and drive an exciting new regional partnership, which brings together leading cross-sector partners to co-ordinate our energy innovation, demonstration and delivery ecosystem. This includes world-leading academic institutions, national centres, business networks, innovation organisations, private sector businesses (particularly small and medium-sized businesses) and public sector organisations.

This partnership will mobilise our integrated energy ecosystem for the benefit of local businesses, accelerating delivery of new solutions within the region, and facilitating a pathway through our comprehensive range of leading energy innovation, demonstration & commercialisation opportunities for both research and development and commercial partners. It will aim to develop and showcase solutions to national and global energy challenges, via delivery of energy research and innovation within the North East context.

Purpose of the role

You will develop and drive this new regional partnership, working closely with the members of the partnership through the partnership board and a variety of cross-sector organisations. With our partners, you will define and coordinate an ambitious collaborative pipeline of energy research, innovation, demonstration and delivery projects, which will be aimed at attracting new engagements, new partners and investment, and increased utilisation of regional assets.

Through these projects, and wider activities, you will develop new business engagement and support activities, developing a business cluster and connecting cross-sector businesses and SMEs with the region's energy innovation asset base. This will deliver opportunities to achieve growth in the energy sector, e.g. developing new products, service and processes.

You will also identify opportunities to accelerate progress towards regional energy and decarbonisation goals, and deployment of innovative projects, technologies and solutions, utilising the North East as a real-world delivery showcase for energy innovations.

You will work to secure appropriate investment in projects, either private investment or by supporting public sector funding bids e.g. the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, Clean Growth Grand Challenge, Sector Deals or UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

You will connect and network with innovation professionals in other sectors, via the Innovation SuperNetwork, a unique regional programme of innovation support which includes support through cluster organisations. You will use this network to transfer innovations across sectors and support opportunities for SME diversification and growth.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate a broad understanding and up to date knowledge of the energy and decarbonisation agendas. This will include the future directions and business drivers within the industry, key challenges and emerging areas of policy, research, business models and technology. You will have a track record of working with organisations in both the public and private sector and will have strong relationship management skills, the capacity to engage with businesses, network and influence at senior levels. You will be confident establishing relationships with large corporate organisations and SMEs and have the ability and experience to spot opportunities for collaborative working and business case development.

The post may be suitable for a secondment.

Deadline for applications: Monday 15 July 2019

Shortlisting: Wednesday 17 July 2019

Interview: Thursday 25 July 2019

Main Responsibilities

- Drive development of the regional partnership, ensuring partners are actively engaged in shaping its strategic direction, goals, and in identifying and progressing collaborative opportunities involving businesses

- Establish regular partner board meetings, and other support activities such as planning a programme of collaborative work, to develop the partnership and deliver on its objectives
- Fully map and maintain an understanding of the North East's energy innovation and demonstration assets, and associated delivery opportunities. This will include identifying key stakeholders and specialisms, and the current role of the region in wider UK and international policy goals
- Build and maintain relationships across key regional partners, developing an understanding of their priorities and objectives, and facilitating conversations on collaborative opportunities
- Develop and co-ordinate an ambitious pipeline of collaborative energy research, innovation and demonstration projects centred on delivery. These will be based on the shared ambition and capability of partners and will lead to development of public and/or private investment proposals.
- Develop and deliver activities to connect energy innovation and demonstration assets and projects to the North East's cross-sector business base including SMEs. This may include innovation challenges and workshops which foster growth opportunities, e.g. developing new products, services and processes, and demonstrate the potential of the assets within the partnership nationally and internationally
- Establish networks and communities of regional energy SMEs and other businesses with an interest in the energy sector, fostering the development of a functioning cluster. Identify and secure involvement of suitable businesses in projects, and facilitate discussions between partners for collaborative innovation projects
- Build and maintain relationships with national stakeholders in central government, national innovation organisations, funding bodies and research agencies. Raise the profile of the North East's business and asset base to reach national and international audiences, and gather intelligence to inform partners, regional projects and activities
- Maintain an understanding of the national funding landscape for innovation projects, identifying and progressing opportunities to secure private or public investment for projects, such as through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, Strength in Places Fund, or Shared Prosperity Fund
- Develop an offer, narrative and communications programme for the partnership and energy innovation, demonstration and delivery ecosystem. Raise the profile of the partnership and attract new engagement to drive utilisation of assets and deployment.
- Develop a clear narrative about the North East's role and competitive advantage in furthering the decarbonisation of the UK's economy, the Clean Growth Grand Challenge, and other relevant goals within the UK's Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Strategy
- To undertake other duties commensurate with this grade as directed by the LEP Senior Management team.

Person specification:

The ideal candidate will demonstrate a broad understanding and up to date knowledge of the energy and decarbonisation agendas. This will include the future directions and business drivers within the industry, and key challenges and emerging areas of policy, research, business models and technology innovation. You will understand key innovation concepts and practice, and the role of different organisations in contributing to innovation delivery. You will

have strong relationship management skills, the capacity to network and influence at senior levels in public and private sectors, and an ability and experience in spotting and taking opportunities for collaborative working and business case development.

Experience and knowledge:

- Strong and up to date knowledge of the energy and decarbonisation agendas, emerging trends, innovations and policy, developed from current or recent career experience
- Strong understanding of future directions and business drivers across the energy sector
- Clear understanding of key innovation concepts and practice, and the role of different organisations in contributing to innovation delivery
- Experience in the design or delivery of innovation projects
- An understanding of the role of a public sector body in supporting research and development, innovation and business growth
- High level of educational attainment, a good first degree in relevant subject, or equivalent experience in the industry
- Demonstrable experience of developing and delivering projects, and managing relationships, across multiple stakeholders
- Experience of creating and writing strong business cases for investment, or raising funding and/or bid writing

Personal skills & abilities:

- Highly motivated team orientation, able to work closely with the partner board, and draw from the expertise of partner organisations and internal North East LEP teams
- Able to think strategically and develop and articulate coherent rationales for action, based on evidence and the views of multiple stakeholders
- Able to think innovatively, finding new solutions and links between partners or within projects, which add value and meet mutual objectives
- Ability to work effectively in a complex, multi-stakeholder environment, managing relationships and outputs between multiple organisations.
- Excellent interpersonal and political skills, including the ability to network, build working relationships and influence with a range of partners
- Strong presentation skills, including the capacity to develop and deliver a compelling presentation about regional energy innovation, demonstration and delivery opportunities
- Excellent organisational skills, and the ability to plan projects working with others, and to coordinate the partner board effectively
- Developed financial skills including budgeting and financial management. An understanding of the regulatory framework surrounding public investment.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to work across technical and commercial functions
- Good team working skills, the ability to work effectively within the North East LEP team
- Ability to operate effectively with a high-volume and flexible workload, and to prioritise effectively

Personal Attributes:

- Entrepreneurial outlook, seeking out new relationships and opportunities
- Ambitious approach to innovative projects, identifying and maximising opportunities and managing risks

- Delivery focused, with a high level of drive and motivation
- Open style that engages and inspires others
- Committed to working collaboratively – within the organisation and externally
- Commitment to equality of opportunity in all aspects of the role with partners
- Outcome and achievement focused