

Promoting the North East Region and its sectors of expertise

The FBC is working closely with the Inward Investment Team of One NorthEast to promote the North East at key international business events to attract further investment to the Region. Both Sylvie Larocque and Wibke Baumann are attending two major fairs in March 2004, Biosquare in Switzerland and CeBIT in Germany. The objective is to introduce the North East to companies looking to establish a business in the UK and to promote commercial and research partnerships with local companies and organisations.

In preparation for Biosquare 2004, a major international biotechnology partnering event, the FBC and ONE are working with the Centre of Excellence for Life Sciences (CELS) in identifying and targeting businesses and organisations in other regions or countries that have compatible interests in commercialising biotechnology-based research. Some of the key areas of interest include: cell therapy, stem cells, systems biology, bio-processing, plant biotechnology, and aging and health.

Last year, the FBC and ONE targeted Biotechnica 2003, another biotechnology event in Germany. Fred Wright, Chief Executive of CELS, attended the event as part of the North East delegation and concluded that "Biotechnica was a fantastic event. I was struck by the marvellous range of laboratory automation equipment on show."

For CeBIT, the North East delegation will include Simon King and Sophie Lee, from Codeworks Connect, as well as experts from the University of Durham and North East companies such as Arjuna Technologies Ltd, a supplier of standards-based middleware technology for reliable distributed computing systems.

In partnership with ONE, the FBC is also developing stronger regional links with French and German Chambers of Commerce. Wibke recently completed a highly successful visit to German Chambers of Commerce in Cottbus (East Germany) and Augsburg (Bavaria) in November 2003 and met with German companies from different sectors.

Steve Wilson, Inward Investment Manager for Europe at ONE is keen to build up the network of European contacts "It is important for us to continue to promote the North East and encourage more European companies to look at our Region. We believe we have a lot to offer and we must spread the message. The expertise of the FBC is helping us with this task."