

## **Big Green Challenge**

Following the success of the Big Green Challenge renewable energy debating competition held in the Highlands and Islands in 2007, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is pleased to invite tenders for the delivery of another secondary schools competition in 2008. The aim of the competition is to raise awareness and understanding of renewable energy and energy efficiency, and to give young people the opportunity to research and debate the issues surrounding these topics.

## **Introduction**

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is the development agency for the north of Scotland and its remit is to stimulate sustainable economic and community development across the Highlands and Islands. Renewable energy is one of a number of priority sectors which have been identified as being of key strategic importance to the development of the region's economy.

HIE is committed to encouraging growth and development across a range of technologies which will contribute to the overall renewable energy targets set by the Scottish and UK Governments, and which will also provide local economic benefit. Home to an abundance of natural energy resources, the Highlands and Islands is strategically well placed to take advantage of the opportunities created by the development of renewable energy and HIE has an aspiration to establish the area as a leading centre of excellence.

The Highlands and Islands has a long history in the development of renewable energy, going back to the 1950s when large-scale hydro schemes were built. However, it is fair to describe renewables, as it currently exists, as relatively new to the UK. It is only over the last decade that wind energy has developed in this country and the momentum that is currently being experienced is as a result of Government targets and incentives established during this period. Therefore, in effect, the UK is in the early stages of creating a renewable energy industry and, given the Highlands and Islands unique selling point - namely its extensive natural resource, the area is aiming to be at the forefront of this emerging sector.

As the Highlands and Islands is blessed with a substantial forestry resource and some of the best wind, wave and tidal regimes in the world, HIE's aim is to build a diverse, sustainable renewable energy sector which is based on a solid foundation of research and development expertise and manufacturing capability. A technology mix is vital, with immediate opportunities in onshore wind and emerging potential in marine, biomass, hydrogen and offshore wind.

As part of its 'strengthening communities' remit, HIE is also pioneering the development of community renewables through the *Highlands and Islands Community Energy Company (HICEC)* – a not-for-profit organisation which has been established to help communities take forward renewables projects for local benefit.

## **Background**

This tender follows on from the communications campaign that HIE undertook during 2007. HIE believes that the renewable energy sector offers an unprecedented opportunity for the region and it is important that the general public have access to accurate, unbiased information that can help inform their opinion of renewable

energy. The Big Green Challenge was part of the larger campaign aimed at raising awareness and understanding of renewable energy across the Highlands and Islands.

The target audience for the campaign was the general public of the Highlands and Islands, but there were two elements specifically aimed at young people. Workshops were held in primary schools, targeting P6-P7 pupils. In total, 2184 pupils from 115 schools benefited directly through interactive workshops and toolkits. The Big Green Challenge debating competition was aimed at S1-S3 pupils. All 65 secondary schools were invited to participate, resulting in 38 teams from 20 schools competing.

### **Big Green Challenge**

The aim of the competition is to encourage participating students to research renewable energy, and find supporting evidence to support their case. The competition fitted the 'debating' theme of the wider campaign. In order that the students researched both sides of the argument, they were expected to debate both for and against the motions. This format could be used again, however it will be the responsibility for the successful bidder to consider the best format in consultation with HIE. In addition to learning about renewable energy, the students gained invaluable experience of public speaking, researching and building credible cases.

The areas that the students are expected to research and consider will include:

- what is renewable energy (the various types and technologies);
- why is there a drive for more renewable energy developments (climate change and security of supply);
- the Highlands and Islands' position as a leader in the renewable energy sector;
- the role the Highlands and Islands could have in helping meet national energy targets due to its extensive natural resources;
- energy efficiency, and why it is so important;
- issues and constraints to development (e.g. grid-related) and opportunities the sector could offer the region.

In addition to raising awareness of the bigger renewable energy picture, the project, along with other PR activity, should aim to convey a message of pride in the role the Highlands and Islands could play in a green, sustainable future. The area has the potential to foster its natural resources and become recognised as a dynamic 'green' region, and world leader in renewable energy.

### **Contract**

All secondary schools across the Highlands and Islands should be given the opportunity to take part in the competition tackling the theme of renewable energy. It would be expected that a minimum of 20 schools would take part, like last year, but an increase in the number would be desirable. As with last year, a number of local heats would need to be organised and judged, before the competition reaches a semi final with eight teams, culminating in a grand final of four teams at a high profile location.

The successful candidate will be expected to:

- Liaise with local authority (Argyll and Bute, Highland, Moray, Western Isles, Orkney, Shetland) education departments and schools;
- Prepare information packs for the schools and pupils on the format of the competition;
- Ensure that the dedicated BGC website (<http://www.thebiggreenchallenge.co.uk/>) is up-to-date at all times;
- Organise the local heats, judging format and judges,
- Liaise with the PR contractor to arrange marketing of the events and media relations as well as the organisation of the semi and grand finals. The PR activity will be subject to a separate contract.

Bidders are asked to outline the costs of running these elements of the competition across the HIE region in their proposals.

All participating teams should receive a prize, and the winner and runner up at the grand final should win a substantial prize. Last year the participation prizes included mugs, pens, MP3 players, etc. The winning prize was a fact-finding trip to Navarre in Spain for the three winning team members and their teacher. The winning school also won £1000 towards a renewable energy or energy efficiency technology. The runners up won a trip to the Eden project in Cornwall. Bidders are expected to factor the costs of their suggested prizes when submitting bids.

As well as a high profile grand final, consideration should be given to a prominent launch event. It is vital that all promotional material, literature and speakers are knowledgeable about renewable energy, as the aim of the campaign is to provide accurate and factual information to members of the public, allowing them to reach an informed view on renewable energy.

As this will be part of a wider programme of PR activity, it is likely that the successful candidate will have to liaise with another/other contractor(s) to ensure maximum impact and to avoid duplication. A separate PR contract will be tendered, which will include PR for the Big Green Challenge, including media releases and events management for the regional and grand finals. The successful candidate will be expected to work closely with the PR and marketing manager within HIE's renewable energy team, providing regular updates and progress reports and consulting a steering group made up of HIE and various partner agencies, such as SNH, Scottish Government, RSPB and Careers Scotland.

### **Timescale**

It is proposed that the contract will be awarded by the end of February 2008, with work beginning in March. A suggested timetable should be included in the proposal, with the grand final taking place no later than March 2009.

### **Tender process**

Proposals are invited from suitably qualified businesses, organisations or individuals. Anyone involved in the running of the project and who will be working with students will be required to undergo disclosure by Disclosure Scotland. A suitable disclosure will be a condition of the contract.

Any interested parties are liable for their own costs relating to the tender process.

You should be aware that, as a public sector authority in Scotland, HIE is subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOI). It is HIE's policy to consult with third parties who have a direct interest in information that has been requested prior to any disclosure being made. For further information about FOI, please see <http://www.itspublicknowledge.info>

Tenders are invited up to the sum of **£65,000**. The deadline for receipt of proposals, proposed timetable for delivery of the project and itemised costs is **Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008**.

We require **three copies** of your proposal, to be delivered on or before the due date. If you have any queries in relation to the tender brief, please contact:

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