

ADEPT President's Awards 2024

Entry form

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Award category Delivering Clean Growth

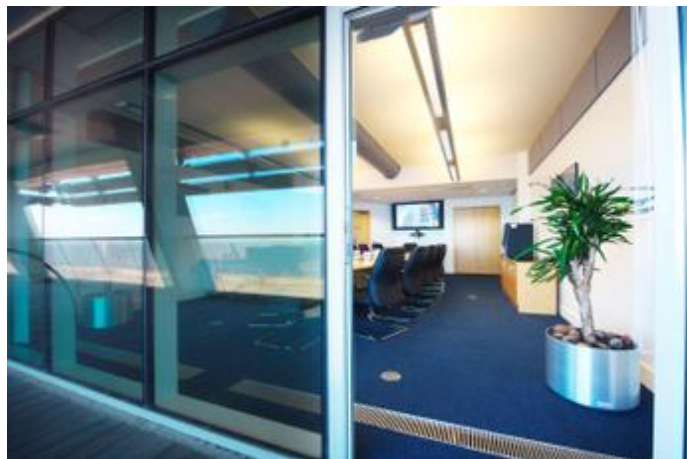
Project Title OrbisEnergy

Local authority entrant Suffolk County Council

Headline summary (150 characters max.)

An innovation and incubation hub in coastal town Lowestoft, driving economic regeneration through offshore wind and clean growth sector development

Please note we need at least one supporting image per award submission. Upload your image/s below.





Video - please paste links to any video evidence here. (Leave blank if not relevant.)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_DQm9P7t00

Delivering clean growth: How is this project delivering clean growth, not just now but into the future – demonstrating ambition and vision, anticipating future challenges and future proofing growth including developing the workforce for the future? (150 words max)

OrbisEnergy was established soon after the UK's first commercial scale offshore wind farm was commissioned in 2004, when Suffolk County Council (SCC) recognised the economic benefits a clean growth cluster could bring to Lowestoft and the region. OrbisEnergy provides a unique, business-focussed base for start-up companies, SME's and clean energy developers to operate from.

Since opening in 2008, OrbisEnergy has supported over 225 businesses in the clean growth sector, creating new opportunities to collaborate, grow, and most importantly, create long-term sustainable jobs for local communities.

SCC is acutely aware of the impending skills challenge facing the clean growth sector and through OrbisEnergy, is working with regional initiatives like Skills for Energy and national charity Redstart Educate, to bring together clean growth businesses and local schools, colleges, and universities to educate and inform students and teachers about clean growth career pathways, inspiring young minds and building the future workforce.

Delivering clean growth: How is this project working across boundaries and with different partners to achieve long lasting clean growth? (150 words max)

Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils and New Anglia LEP developed an MoU with Virginia Beach in recognition of the significant clean growth trade opportunities that exist between the two areas. A programme of activity, driven by OrbisEnergy, has led to collaborations between businesses in the East of England and the State of Virginia, keen to learn from the East of England's offshore wind supply chain experience and creating new export opportunities between the UK and US.

Virginia Beach recently established an international incubator based on the OrbisEnergy template and the

MoU is being expanded to reflect synergies across clean growth, agri-foods and digital, whilst expanding its geography to include Essex.

OrbisEnergy is a founder of the Connected Innovation partnership, bringing together 25 innovation hubs across Norfolk and Suffolk. It is also a steering group member of the Space East cluster, part of a national network of regional space sector clusters.

Delivering clean growth: How is this project proactively engaging with business to tackle problems and find solutions, stimulating the clean growth sector at the same time? (150 words max.)

To tackle historically low take-up of innovation grants compared to other UK areas, OrbisEnergy worked extensively with New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and businesses from the sector to establish a base for the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult in the East of England.

By providing a dedicated space and co-funding a Regional Innovation Manager post, ORE Catapult was able to establish a base at OrbisEnergy. This has enabled the introduction of new clean growth supply chain initiatives including an East of England specific Fit-4-Offshore Renewables (F4OR) programme for 15 SMEs, and an East of England 'Launch Academy' programme for 9 SMEs.

Co-funded by RWE Renewables, Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex County Councils with pro-bono support from Birketts LLP and Lovewell Blake Accountants, the Launch Academy programme has already leveraged £2.5m of private investment, £586,000 of innovation grants, 9FTE headcount growth and launched 13 new products into the clean growth sector.

Delivering clean growth: How is this project going beyond the 3-5 year budget cycle to prepare for future challenges including the use or consideration of innovative funding solutions? (150 words max.)

Suffolk County Council has made a long-term commitment to clean growth through its initial investment and ongoing stewardship of OrbisEnergy. The project's build was achieved by a combination of ERDF, local government and regional development agency funding and it is now revenue self-sufficient through consistently high levels of occupancy by businesses who have chosen OrbisEnergy as their base in the region. Income is further supplemented by revenue derived from the hire of its unique facilities to stakeholders across the wider Suffolk business, public and voluntary sectors.

Reflecting the changing nature of Suffolk's clean growth sector, OrbisEnergy is transitioning its own focus from an original remit of offshore renewables, to now encompass the wider clean growth sector. This is evident by the recent proliferation of businesses joining the OrbisEnergy eco-system from the nuclear new-build and energy infrastructure sectors, ensuring the projects ongoing sustainability in an increasingly challenging local authority funding landscape.

All categories: please add anything else that supports your award entry

"Happy Birthday OrbisEnergy and thank you to the team for making the transition into the building so painless. VGC Group thank you for making this the easiest of all our office openings this year to support our phenomenal growth within UK critical infrastructure support" LinkedIn comment from a new business to OrbisEnergy - December 2023