

Marine House, Meadlake Place
Thorpe Lea Road
Egham, Surrey
TW20 8BF
Tel: 01784 223 770
Fax: 01784 223 775
e-mail: office@ssa.org.uk
website: www.ssa.org.uk

Director
N.W. Granger

Dear Sirs

LAMBERT REVIEW

We would be very interest in participating in your review.

Since we are running a LINK programme, I am attaching 3 files which will tell you a little more about industry/ HE involvement, how we manage the projects and what is being achieved. These are internal documents to be presented to our next Steering Group Meeting, but I am sure you will find them interesting.

Yours sincerely

Tom Dougherty

T.F. Dougherty
Assistant Director

ITMC LINK PROJECT
REPORT TO STEERING COMMITTEE
PROGRESS ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

1 At the 31 March 2003 meeting of the Steering Committee, SSA Secretariat was invited to submit a note to the Group to give:

- a) An overview of progress with the research and development activity stimulated by the funding made available from the LINK project.
- b) Direct benefits derived from the R&D projects funded.
- c) Indirect benefits.

2 ITMC LINK support was formally awarded to SSA in October 2000.

An open call for project proposals produced 51 submissions. Detailed evaluation was delegated by the Steering Committee (SC) to the User Led resource Group (ULR), which tendered advice to the SC on the projects to support.

3 The principal criteria against which the proposal were evaluated were relevance to, and likely commercial and/or competitive benefit to, UK shipyards. Every project selected had to demonstrate firm industry commitment, in terms of willingness to make a substantial in kind contribution through the life of the project.

4 The effect of applying these key criteria was to concentrate the R&D effort of the project into the relatively short and medium term R&D, as opposed to 'blue skies' activity. This is not to suggest that 'blue skies' research is not essential. It simply reflects that the LINK SC wanted to devote the limited available funding to R&D in which companies were willing to make significant investments of time and effort and from which they could see a prospect of deriving innovations leading, short to medium term, to improved business performance.

5 The project selection process is displayed in Annex A.

6 At Annex B is a matrix identifying all the R&D projects approved for support by the LINK SC. Industry commitment is identified in col.4 (Core Partners). Listed in col. 5 (Additional Partners) are those companies that have picked up on project dissemination, formal or informal, and asked to join the project. On the matrix, projects 1,2,&23 were short scoping or clarification projects intended to guide the Masterclass processs and to help understanding of supply chain issues before award of a full project in this area (project 48).

7 The project management process set in place by SSA for LINK is displayed at Annex C. At col. 6 of Annex B there is reference to 'Review Assessors'. Where appropriate, SSA appointed external experts to offer independent advice on the progress of individual projects. In some cases – col. 7 of Annex B – those assessors have become so enthusiastic about projects that they themselves have asked to become contributors as well as remaining with an assessment function.

Industry Benefits from LINK R&D.

8 Annex B, col.10, itemises those companies already known to be utilising R&D project results, in whole or in part. In some cases, this is happening in advance of the project's completion because the yards are so convinced of the value to them of what is emerging from the project.

9 An important point is that the companies seeking to secure immediate advantage from projects are not only – as might be expected – the largest and most sophisticated shipbuilding groups. Small yards, both builders and repairers, are involved too.

10 There is evidence of technology transfer. Corus wish to use in one of their rolling mills some of the software developed in project 29. In the context of project 13, specialist measurement companies from the construction and civil engineering sector are having their technology trialled in a number of yards to meet the yard need for better accuracy and dimensional control.

11 The value of the projects is spreading to the wider marine industries sector. Project 48 was always going to be of interest in the equipment supply sector. But note also the shipowner interest (Projects 42 & 51) and the classification society interest (Project 42). Project 42 has also engaged a specialist supplier to the leisure boat sector.

Requirement for further R&D.

12 The final column on Annex B lists the demand for further R&D work that has arisen from the first round of projects. All of the demand identified comes from industry, not from academia.

Innovation.

13 The DTI Innovation Review is still in progress. One element of that is the Lambert Review, concentrating on the relationship between the higher education community and industry. In this LINK project, and in its supporting actions, SSA believes it has successfully introduced structures, such as MAST, and developed linkages between the industry and a wide range of research and HE institutions.

14 Masterclass has proved to be an effective tool for delivering productivity improvement in companies. It could, with some modification, be similarly used as an innovation tool if DTI decides that it wishes to support innovation.

15 On indirect benefits, the following can be listed:-

- Ø It was expected that the first round of work would help with identification of new and complementary R&D projects, and this has proved so.
- Ø An unconsidered benefit has been establishing new R&D partnerships in industry. These could form the partnerships necessary to carry out future projects.

- Ø The idea of technical assessors was devised by SSA as an element in project management and control. We had not envisaged the extent of constructive involvement in projects of those technical assessors.
- Ø Participation in projects has contributed to the cultural change the industry needs, and part of this cultural change is the increasing willingness to collaborate and share experience to mutual benefit. This phenomenon has been remarked on by academics working with the sector, and by those in the industry. Networking with other sectors, particularly on supply chain, has been encouraged.
- Ø One of the Masterclasses for a supply chain company teased out from that company an innovation requirement. The company was introduced by SSA to the SMART scheme to secure support for a project to meet that requirement.
- Ø The existence and progress of the R&D programme is being regularly reported by SSA to MOD to assist them in their consideration of the industry capability to meet MOD's build programme.

June 2003.