GLEbulletin

May 2005

GLE looks East with the European Learning Network

LNet Dissemination Conference in Prague

The arrival of ten new countries to the European Union has brought with it many exciting opportunities to build new partnerships with Central and Eastern Europe.

To mark the first anniversary of EU enlargement GLE worked with the LDA to organise a conference in Prague on 29th April, focusing on the opportunities and benefits for working between regions.

The projects showcased by representatives of several European countries highlighted the common challenges faced by urban areas in relation to SME and economic cluster support and development. The event was attended by 130 delegates from 14 countries including Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Romania, Slovenia and Poland. The conference was supported by the UK Embassy in Prague and the Central European Initiative.

The first day of the two-day event focused on the European Learning Network (LNet), a successful European project led by GLE in partnership with the LDA. LNet brings together regeneration professionals and policy makers from across Europe to develop new approaches to promoting enterprise in deprived urban areas and achieving sustainable economic and social change in these neighbourhoods.

LNet's partner cities (Amsterdam, Hamburg, London, Milan and Prague) presented practical examples of their experience in this field, sharing case studies and building upon best practice and lessons from past experience. On the basis of this, LNet will develop a toolkit over the next two years to support practitioners and policy makers in their local economic development decisions, taking stock of existing experience to develop practical solutions to common challenges.

To find out more about LNet, please visit the website www.thelearningnetwork.net

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GLE sponsors BBAA award

GLE is helping the British Business Angel Association (BBAA) celebrate angel investment and SME growth by sponsoring the Most Promising Angel Sponsored Business award at this year's BBAA Awards dinner on the 6th June.

The event will provide the opportunity to recognise investors, practitioners and businesses that have made a significant contribution to the development of the angel investment market and SME growth in the past year. The awards dinner will come at the end of the first day of the BBAA's first annual conference.

The GLE-sponsored award is open to innovative entrepreneurs who are driven by their vision and a strong will to succeed. Nominee businesses should be able to demonstrate strong trading figures and be in the third or fourth year of trading.

GLE's Chief Executive, Martin Large, said, "The awards and the conference provide an exciting opportunity to raise the profile of business angels as a source of funding for SMEs."

GLE has been supporting BBAA for the past nine months by providing interim management support whilst BBAA has been restructured to become the new trade body for business angel groups and their associates in the UK.

For more information about BBAA and the awards visit www.bbaa.org.uk or email info@bbaa.org.uk

City leaders targeted for enterprise investment

*one*London's ambitious campaign to raise a £10m fund for London's disadvantaged entrepreneurs was launched to city investors at Guildhall on Monday 25th April.

GLE has pledged a cornerstone investment of £0.5m to the fund and *one*London is seeking to attract private investment of up to £5m this year. The fund will provide finance to locally-run small business loan funds across the capital's 33 boroughs.

The launch of the London Wholesale Business Loan Company was hosted by Michael Snyder, Chairman of the Corporation of London's Policy and Resources Committee, attracting directors and partners from the city's legal, investment and property development community.

They were told that, with their support, the new Wholesale Business Loan Company would offer support to thousands of entrepreneurs across London currently unable to access mainstream finance.

"The Wholesale Business Loan Company has a remit to support enterprise development in urban areas," Michael Snyder commented. "We are very pleased to host the first of a number of high level discussions, drawing on the support from our outstanding corporate sector partners, to support the establishment and delivery of this exciting initiative."

*one*London is sponsoring the creation of the Wholesale Business Loan Company, which offers investors a special incentive known as Community Investment Tax Relief, worth 5%pa. It aims to raise £10m and lend £16m over its first five years.

photo: www.third-avenue.co.uk

Peter Thackwray, Managing Director of *one*London, speaking after the breakfast, said, "As one of the largest UK lenders to SMEs, each day *one*London sees both the need and benefit of providing finance to support entrepreneurs. The Wholesale Business Loan Company will facilitate a major expansion of this service across London through local partners where the need is most acute."

For more information contact Andy Menary at andy.menary@one-london.com or call 020 7940 1543

Living/Learning grants

GLE's Adult Learning Adviser, Michele Harding, discussing project plans with a client

GLE has been commissioned by the five London Learning and Skills Councils to manage the Widening Adult Participation Action Fund (WAPAF) to provide grants for community-based learning which will reach people who are not engaged in other training or learning opportunities.

The London ESF Global Grants Programme, under which Living/Learning joins Fast Forward grants, provided a ready mechanism for managing the programme, instead of setting up something new.

Forty organisations have already been awarded a Living/Learning grant, funded by the LSCs and the European Social Fund.

ESF allows not only more grants but funds additional support, much of which will be provided by GLE's Adult Learning Adviser. A workshop programme has been set up which will include support on ways of recognising and recording learning achievement under a scheme which will be adopted nationally by the LSC in September, already piloted under the auspices of the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education which is advising on the grants programme.

Innovation taster workshops

BME food businesses are getting a taste of how to grow their business through innovation as part of *one*London's new programme "Inspiring Innovation".

At the first event, on 11th April, they met experts from London South Bank University (LSBU), Central St Martins, Greenwich University and Kingston University to explore how creative ideas can help grow a business.

The "Be innovative and open doors to the retail sector" event on 10th May heard speakers from Asda, DEFRA and LSBU address the opportunities and challenges facing BME food businesses when breaking into large chain stores. Mark Dalgety of Dalgety Teas & Herbs spoke of his personal experiences in growing his business and expanding into TESCO, Asda and other high street retailers.

Funded by the LDA under the Jumpstart Programme, the INSPIRE programme is a partnership with the African Caribbean Business Network, the Caribbean Food Emporium, Southall Regeneration Partnership and Park Royal Partnership and with London South Bank University's London Food Centre.

The project's innovation tasters on marketing, scaling up, ingredients, packaging, labelling, waste management, innovation finance and creative design will be delivered over the next 12 months, together with mentoring and business advice.

Future workshops will take place on a monthly basis. "Manufacturing for the retail sector" will be on May 10th (London South Bank) followed by "Marketing for growth" on June 7th (Park Royal Partnership).

For more information on future events and to register for the INSPIRE programme please contact jeannette.langi@one-london.com or telephone Jeannette Langi on 020 7940 1527.

Mark Dalgety from Dalgety Teas & Herbs speaking at the INSPIRE workshop

Successful launch of a new LBA EIS Tracker Fund

GLE's London Business Angels (LBA) are pleased to announce the launch of the new FSA regulated Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) Tracker Fund, managed on behalf of its members by Larpent Newton & Co with The Share Centre as Administrators.

Fourteen members of the LBA Network were attracted to this new innovative Fund by its transparent investment strategy and low cost management fees, investing sums between £5,000 and £200,000.

The Fund mirrors or tracks investments made by GLE's London Seed Capital Fund in companies that present at the LBA presentation events. After deducting just 3% for set up costs the Fund will fully invest the balance – there are no further management or administration fees. The investors receive their EIS tax breaks for the 04/05 tax year despite the fact that the Fund invests the proceeds in the current 05/06 tax year.

Under present Inland Revenue rules the Fund has a six month period to invest the proceeds in a minimum of four companies. LSC currently has two pending deals in the pipeline and is confident of identifying two further exciting opportunities well within the six month window.

For further information contact mark@londonseedcapital.com regarding the forthcoming EIS2 Fund.

GLE group expansion

This month marks the beginning of *one*London Trade and Investment Ltd, created to manage the UK Trade & Investment London Region, International Trade Team delivery contract.

GLE welcomed 33 new staff to the Group, expanding its support to London's small businesses engaging in international trade.

The London International Trade Team, who transferred to GLE from Business Link for London on May 1st, deliver government-funded support to UK companies trading internationally by providing expert advice and assistance to new and established exporters. UK Trade & Investment and GLE have an established relationship which was strengthened last year by the launch of GlobalGateway2Trade (GG2T). The venture helps BME owned businesses to explore and develop their business potential in global markets, by providing relevant information, advice and access to expert services for international trade. GG2T is led by GLE subsidiary *one*London and has been funded by UKTI and the European Region Development Fund (ERDF).

*one*London Trade & Investment Ltd allows the joined-up working between GLE and UK Trade & Investment to focus on the most effective delivery of clients' needs.

*one*London Trade and Investment

Profitable trade sale for UK Explorer

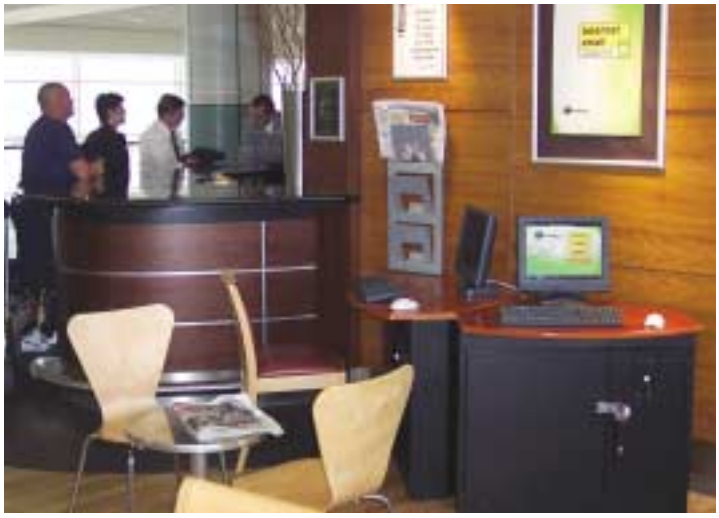
GLE's London Business Angels (LBA) client, UK Explorer, recently achieved a profitable trade sale to Spectrum Interactive UK.

UK Explorer started in May 1998 providing wired and wireless internet access solutions for hotels and airports with an impressive list of blue chip clients and locations.

The creative company was launched with initial capital of £20,000 by two widely travelled young entrepreneurs. In 1999 a further £50,000 was invested in the business comprising £20,000 management funds and a £30,000 loan under the Government's Small Firms Loan Guarantee Scheme.

The idea of convenient internet access facilities stemmed from their frustration in finding only sporadic outlets from which to surf the web while on business trips abroad. Their first idea was of a coin operated vending machine and on conducting research the team discovered that a model already existed in Germany. Technological improvements were made to the model and only equity funding was needed.

UK Explorer first approached LBA in 2000, seeking to raise £300,000 from the Network. The team successfully secured the full amount from only one LBA investor, Jonathon Harrison who said "The triggers to this investment were the two founders whom I found very reasonable, open and honest; one existing contract, a proven business model, close proximity to my home and I felt I could help them through my own business contacts in the hospitality industry." He later made a further equity investment of £30,000.



Wireless internet connections at UK airport lounge

Before approaching LBA in 2000, the team received an attractive Venture Capital equity offer but they turned it down as they preferred to work with an experienced business angel. In early 2005, the management team were deciding on whether to expand or make a trade sale when Spectrum Interactive heard of their plans.

Anthony Clarke, Managing Director of LBA, said, "The resounding success of UK Explorer's profitable exit demonstrates the versatility and resilience of the LBA model."

For more information call 020 7089 2317.

*one*London's Channel 4 debut

***one*London client Carla Campbell will feature in an upcoming Channel 4 programme examining business start-up.**

Carla successfully entered the world of self-employment in 2004 by fulfilling her creative aspirations and establishing Instant Melodies, a community-based recording studio.

The Juniper TV production team interviewed *one*London's Business Adviser Laurence Sofowora due to his close involvement with Carla for its upcoming series of business programmes.

Carla started out with the idea of offering aspiring musicians an economic method for them to produce top quality music tracks at an affordable price. She sought business advice from Laurence in April 2003 in order to establish her own business and participated in a number of *one*London programmes to access finance, business advice and mentoring. She freely admits without this help she would not be where she is today.

Her Kennington-based enterprise, Instant Melodies, is the first ever pay-as-you-go accessible studio-to-house software-based music and multimedia suite. Clients are able to create an instant product on site by using the facilities available on the state of the art, industry standard equipment.

Juniper film crew with Laurence Sofowora and Carla Campbell

Juniper is an independent television production company specialising in current affairs, history, science, arts and popular culture. The programme will be aired on Channel 4 over the coming months – so watch this space!

To contact Carla please call 020 7091 9009.

GLE supporting successful project delivery

Are you an ESF project with claims looming? Systems you have put in place do not deliver the information required? The person who has set up the systems and designed the project is sick or has moved on? You cannot recruit beneficiaries? You have difficulties with cash flow or delivering outputs?

How we can help

GLE is seeking to address these issues through working with projects funded through the London Development Agency European Social Fund Co-financing programme. The GLE "supporting successful delivery" project will provide practical project management support to 30 pan-London organisations to enable them to deliver their projects successfully.

Available services include:

- professional advice on systems and financial processes from qualified auditors
- a tailored long-term action plan, support package and programme of workshops
- a programme manual outlining transferable project management guidance, templates and procedures
- one-to-one customised training and site visits
- telephone helpline support
- exit strategy guidance
- a dedicated website

The projects receiving this support are funded under ESF Objective 3, (measures 2.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1 and capacity building) assisting those at risk of exclusion from the labour market.

GLE has a dedicated team of three to lead these services: Clare Sharpen, Kam Dhenjan and Heather Slater.

photo: www.third-avenue.co.uk

If you are interested in using this innovative approach for other funded projects, or would like further information, please contact the team on 020 7940 1516.

IGF's dynamic acquisition

"It's not business as usual – it's bigger and better!" That is the message from GLE's Independent Growth Finance (IGF) as it joined forces with Dynamic Commercial Finance from the 1st April.

The new company, which retains the IGF name and brand and expands its national operations, serves the financing needs of a wide range of businesses varying in size from start-ups to companies of around £20 million turnover.

With a 90-strong team, including a sales force of nine, IGF delivers its services from regional offices in Birmingham, Haywards Heath, Leeds, Leicester, Manchester, Newcastle and Northampton, as well as its head office in West Malling, Kent.

The new executive team of IGF. Left to right: Mark O'Neil, Commercial Director; Phil Woodward, Risk and Operations Director; Jeff Longhurst, Chief Executive; John Benner, Financial Director

Jeff Longhurst, CEO of IGF, said, "This is such an exciting time for IGF. The acquisition demonstrates our drive to become a significant, yet independent, player in the asset finance industry, through a business built on solid foundations of people, products and service commitments to our clients."

IGF has strong foundations on which to grow and is now a formidable presence in the factoring and invoice discounting market with annual client turnover of nearly £750 million.

The decision to create a business under a single brand follows a review of both operations after the acquisition of Dynamic Commercial Finance by IGF's parent, GLE.

GLE's wider redevelopment of Greater London

The Redlands Centre, Coulsdon

GLE Properties has added a further investment to its portfolio of small business accommodation within the Greater London area.

In late March, this 19 unit two storey industrial investment comprising a total of 31,000 sq ft was acquired at Coulsdon in South London.

Chris Rushton, Managing Director of GLE Properties commented: "Apart from having secured an increasingly sought-after investment opportunity, this purchase offers the potential to enhance value through concentrated estate management. Furthermore, this property broadens GLE's offering of small business accommodation in an area of London where we are currently under represented."

For further information please contact Chris Rushton on 020 7089 2323 or email chris.r@gle-properties.co.uk

Jeffrey's Road, Enfield

A 3.1 acre industrial development scheme at Jeffrey's Road, Enfield, is the first of a number of small business developments to take place under GLE's Joint Venture with the London Development Agency (LDA).

As part of the agreements, GLE is to procure the construction of an access road servicing a wider eight acre site together with a new river wall, to enable a much wider redevelopment scheme.

Colin Compton, Director of GLE Properties, commented: "We are delighted that the LDA have chosen GLE as their development partner in what we hope is the first of many such regeneration schemes for the Joint Venture. The partnership is strengthened by our respective organisations sharing many common regeneration-based objectives within the Greater London area."

The first phase of the scheme is scheduled for completion in spring 2006, producing a range of units of between 1,400 and 3,000 sq ft. It is anticipated that a second phase of physical regeneration will commence in early 2006.

This development is similar to the GLE schemes currently taking place at Tom Cribb Road in Plumstead and Chessington Trade Park at Cox Lane in Kingston.

For further information, please contact Colin Compton on 020 7089 2324 or email colin.c@gle-properties.co.uk

Jet Stream Cuisine

A tenant of GLE's Waterfront Studios presented an unusual request to staff to transform the office space into a working kitchen, to run Jet Stream Cuisine – a catering business providing high quality meals for private company jets.

As an elite provider of bespoke cuisine for the private jet industry, Bernie Carling needed his business to be pivotally based within a short ride of City Airport. In February 2005 Bernie approached Waterfront Studios primarily because of the ideal location – just seven minutes' drive from the airport.

Drawing on his long experience of working in this select industry Bernie worked out how to convert the units with the help of James Moir, Waterfront Studios Manager. In a short space of time the office was transformed into a working kitchen complete with sink space, water heaters and pumps, specialist flooring and enough "juice" to run several large fridges and freezers.

James admitted "Our client base is made up predominantly of agents working in suits so the thought of Bernie in a chef's uniform wielding kitchen knives did not immediately mesh well but together we rose to the challenge."

Jet Stream Cuisine is now the sole caterer for City Airport's corporate jets, serving up anything from champagne breakfasts to three course evening meals to a range of CEOs, directors, bankers, footballers, and most recently Prime Minister Tony Blair.

For more information contact Bernie@jetstreamcuisine.com or 020 7476 1022 or visit www.waterfrontstudios.biz

Bernie hard at work in his fully-equipped kitchen at the Waterfront Studios