



Manufacturing in the East of England: 2007-2012

A Summary of the Strategic Framework

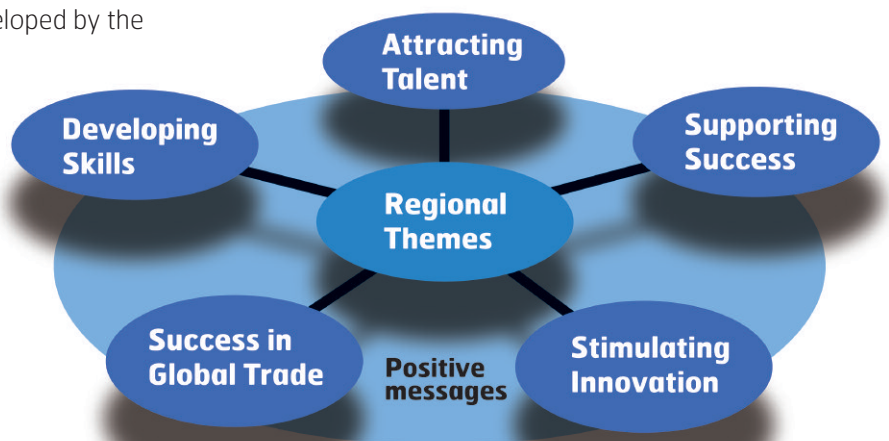
Manufacturing is an important contributor to the wealth of the East of England. The region is home to more than 18,000 manufacturing businesses, whose combined output is expected to grow rapidly during the next five years. Already, these businesses directly employ more than a quarter of a million people – and they have indirectly created at least a further quarter of a million jobs in the service sector.

So manufacturing is vital to the region's economy. But it is being transformed by new technology, specialisation and investment in research and development. This transformation demands new skills and greater access to information, and it demands that the region changes its use of energy resources and its infrastructure, so that it can support the shift towards emerging and higher value sectors.

This document summarises the East of England's Strategic Framework for Manufacturing, which was developed by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and a range of partners. It is designed to drive the growth of the manufacturing sector between now and 2012 – helping it to meet or exceed its predicted growth rates by targeting support where it is needed most. The Framework was developed in line with 'Better for Business', the regional business support strategy, and complements its priority actions.

Supporting manufacturers

After interviewing businesses, representative organisations, public agencies and professional institutes during the second half of 2006, EEDA and its partners identified a series of activities that the region should concentrate upon to enable the manufacturing sector to meet or exceed its growth targets. These have been grouped into six areas of priority:



1. Attracting talent: the manufacturing sector struggles to attract and retain talented and motivated people. It needs to do more to strengthen its links with schools and to show that it offers a broad range of careers. To support it, the region will:

- develop a promotional programme based on existing activities and the work of Enterprise Insight, SETNet and others in the region
- support the National Manufacturing Media Centre (NMMC) by co-ordinating regional communications programmes that will help improve the image of manufacturing

2. Developing skills: manufacturers depend on the work of skilled people at all levels. They need strong leadership and management, and they need to teach their employees new skills. To help them, the region will:

- aim to implement a Strategic Skills Development Programme that will enhance the ability of business leaders to think strategically
- work with National Skills Academies, which are designed by employers to teach the skills their industry requires, and ensure that their work complements that of the regional Manufacturing Advisory Service

3. Supporting success: a range of public and private-sector organisations provide support to manufacturers, but it is often difficult for businesses to gain access to them or work out which ones could help them most. To support them, the region will:

- set up a Regional Manufacturing Council that will coordinate the activities of all organisations that offer support to manufacturers
- develop a Regional Toolkit in the form of a website that will allow manufacturers to see in one place all the different kinds of support that are available to them

4. Stimulating innovation: there are opportunities for manufacturers to develop new products and services, but to make the most of them the sector needs to be more innovative. So the region will:

- use its “Enterprise Hubs”, which are support networks, to help manufacturers obtain knowledge from various sources, help them form joint ventures for tendering, and source expertise to enable them to develop new products and services quickly

5. Success in global trade: regional manufacturers face increasing competition from overseas but this also presents enormous opportunities. To support its manufacturers, the region will:

- create a Supplier Matching/Partnering Service, which will ensure that manufacturers have access to information about the best suppliers
- continue to support the “Passport to Export” as the main vehicle for ensuring that manufacturers gain access to international markets

6. Positive messages: the manufacturing sector needs to create a positive and accurate image of itself in order to attract the best talent and promote best practice. So the region will:

- identify a number of Regional Exemplar companies that are leaders in a variety of fields – to inspire regional manufacturers to make improvements

Actions, not just words

EEDA developed the Manufacturing Framework with help from many other organisations and implementation is underway (summaries of the latest implementation developments can be downloaded from EEDA’s website). However, the Framework will only succeed if everyone with a stake in manufacturing grabs the initiative and takes part in the activities that the Framework describes. If every organisation – public and private – gets involved, the East of England can maintain its outstanding record of success in manufacturing.

