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Regional Development in Yorkshire and the Humber (E)

Press release of the UK Department of Development for Business, Innovation and Skills (National)¹, March 24th 2010

Minister for Business, Ian Lucas, tonight presented the UK's first-ever "Cluster Marks"- a new award recognizing the best of Britain's manufacturing clusters and their valuable contribution to the country's economic growth.

Clusters are regional concentrations of related companies and organizations that compete, but also collaborate to share knowledge, increase innovation and drive growth within the sector.

The Cluster Mark was established to raise the profile of UK manufacturers involved in cluster activity and to help promote their local strengths internationally. The awards also aim to boost the reputation of the manufacturing sector as a whole and highlight its importance to the British economy.

The winners were chosen by an Independent Judging Panel, chaired by Ian Lucas and made up of representatives from industry and academia.

Speaking at the Gala Ceremony in London's Lancaster House, Ian Lucas said:

"Historically, manufacturing has helped to shape the identity of communities up and down the country and it is still vital to our economy today, accounting for 12.4 per cent of GDP. But in order to succeed globally in a low carbon future, the sector must keep evolving and innovating. This is where collaboration can make a huge difference."

That is why the Government set up the Cluster Mark Awards - to encourage the growth of British clusters and to celebrate the benefits they bring.

¹ This is the press released published in March 24th 2010. More information about Cluster Marks can be obtained from: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/regional-economic-development/clusters-in-the-uk/cluster-mark>

This case was prepared by Amy Cogan Wares on 2011 based on a real experience at the Yorkshire and the Humber Region (England), as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate the effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation. Some situations, characters and companies have been disguised to preserve confidentiality.
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"All over the UK, clusters are taking root across a diverse range of industries, as the list of nominees demonstrates. The whole panel was struck by the high standard of the entries and I would like to say huge congratulations to each of the winners."

Cluster Marks were awarded to the best four clusters out of 15 nominees from across Britain. The winners were chosen for the outstanding level of co-operation they demonstrated and the benefits achieved as a result.

Humber Seafood Processing Cluster was named Best Overall Cluster for its exceptional entrepreneurial dynamism, innovation, skills base and level of internationalization.

Cluster Marks were also awarded to the North West Aerospace Cluster, North West Biomedical Cluster and the East of England Health & Life Sciences Cluster.

In addition to the main winners, the South East's Cryogenics and West Midlands Niche Vehicle Clusters received commendations from the judging panel for their work to date and future growth potential, while the Wales Opto-electronics and Scotland Food & Drink clusters were acknowledged as excellent examples of best practice.

The winners

Overall winner: Humber Seafood Processing Cluster

This well-established cluster grew out of the area's declining fishing industry and now holds 70% of UK market in its sector. It also has a strong geographical focus and makes a significant contribution to the regional economy.

The cluster's strategic direction is steered by the board of Humber Seafood Ltd, which brings together key stakeholders from businesses, trade associations and education. As such it has developed a bespoke infrastructure to support the cluster's activity; covering research facilities skills training and physical infrastructure. All of which ensure it can continue to expand and compete globally.

The cluster dominates the UK market and is actively looking to expand internationally. It was selected as the overall winner for its proven ability to exploit international markets when opportunities arise. The cluster also demonstrated a clear vision for the future, directed by both the needs of the cluster members and those of their customers.

Representing the judging panel, Minister for Business, Ian Lucas said:

"It was not our intention to have an overall winner of this competition but the strength of support from the panel for the Humber Seafood Processing Cluster was so strong that we wanted to reflect this. So I'm very pleased to name it 'Best in Show' at these inaugural Cluster Mark Awards."

Minister for Yorkshire & the Humber, Rosie Winterton said:

"I'm delighted that the Humber Seafood Processing Cluster has been recognized for work it is doing and the benefits it delivers - not just for the region but to the British economy as a whole. I hope this award inspires other manufacturers to collaborate and spread best practice, and to promote our local strengths on a global stage."