

ONE NORTHEAST AND THE FBC: A GROWING PARTNERSHIP

Investments by French companies in the North East of England are of prime importance for the Region. Forty French companies, employing over 13,000 people, have chosen the North East of England as the location for their business. This makes it one of the largest international group of investors and a major contributor to the Regional economy. Major French investors include Sanofi Synthelabo, Rhodia Pharma Solutions, Électricité de France (London Electricity), Faurecia, AXA Insurance and Renault (Nissan).

Since 2002, the FBC team has been working closely with One NorthEast's European Inward Investment Team to promote the North East at key business events in France and to attract further investment from across the Channel. Recent events have included 'Sitef', a major aerospace and new technologies fair in Toulouse, 'CeBIT', the world's largest ICT event in Hannover, and 'Biosquare', an international biotechnology partnering event in Lyon. The FBC undertook desk research for each of these events and arranged a series of meetings with French companies and key support organisations. Sylvie Larocque, Project Manager at the FBC, attended each event representing One NorthEast's inward investment team and has been active in the follow-up activities.

The relationship is strengthening and moving into the German market. Through a new joint initiative between the FBC and the German-British Chamber of Commerce in the North East, Wibke Baumann, a German national, is now also supporting One NorthEast's inward investment activities. Together with Clare Copsey, Senior Executive for Europe at One NorthEast, Wibke visited 'CeBIT' in March and the 'Hannover Fair' in April. The German team met with a number of companies looking to develop business in the UK.

Steve Wilson, Inward Investment Manager – Europe at One NorthEast, said: "I have been very pleased with the partnership. The knowledge and expertise of the FBC staff

has enabled us to achieve much more than we would have done trying to do everything ourselves.”

Sylvie and Wibke are now talking with One NorthEast to develop further initiatives to identify and encourage French and German companies to set up in the North East.