

# Science Centre Enrichment Activity Grant: Consortia Projects January 2007 – March 2008

## 1. Executive Summary

In November 2006, DIUS and DCSF awarded Ecsite-uk £750,000 to demonstrate the impact of science centres, to encourage their effective collaboration and to maximize their future viability. This funding enabled Ecsite-uk to:

- Award grants totalling approximately £700,000 (including administration costs) to five consortia of 14 science centres
- Undertake a survey of the UK science centre sector and develop a future benchmarking framework
- Commission a review of science centre impact studies

This report describes the impacts of the grants awarded by Ecsite-uk to five science centre consortia as a result of a competitive bid process.

These projects aimed to engage children, parents and teachers with science, whilst enhancing and strengthening partnerships between centres, sharing best practice and allowing these centres to develop links with new and often hard-to-reach audiences.

The five projects and their consortia are listed below. The lead centre for each consortia is marked with an asterisk.

<b>Investigate-uk</b>	Developed a model for using interactive, hands-on, table-top exhibits in schools with accompanying CPD training for teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At-Bristol*</li> <li>• INTECH</li> <li>• Porthcurno Telegraph Museum</li> <li>• Science Learning Centre SW</li> <li>• Science Learning Centre SE</li> </ul>
<b>Projecting Science</b>	Developed three innovative shows that toured schools in inflatable domes, with accompanying resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinktank*</li> <li>• Inspire</li> <li>• TECHINQUEST@NEWI</li> </ul>
<b>Joining Forces</b>	Piloted a novel transition programme for Y6 and Y7 students (as they rise from primary to secondary school) including accompanying resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science Oxford*</li> <li>• INTECH</li> <li>• Techniquet</li> </ul>
<b>Science Explorers</b>	Recruited and trained volunteer presenters to deliver new science shows in hard-to-reach schools in North Wales and East Sussex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Techniquet*</li> <li>• The Science Museum</li> <li>• The Observatory Science Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Outreach</b>	Developed three new science shows delivered to over 20,000 students in hard-to-reach schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre for Life*</li> <li>• Eureka!</li> <li>• MOSI</li> <li>• Ryedale Folk Museum</li> </ul>

In total, 14 science centres and museums collaborated on projects, building on existing relationships and developing new partnerships. Each consortium included both large and small centres. The consortia also included DCMS-funded museums, two Science Learning Centres and two SETpoints. This enabled the consortia to draw on and share best practice across the STEM sector as well as between geographically distinct centres.

In addition, partnerships were forged with Science Learning Centres, Local Authorities, Job Centre Plus and other organisations as a result of this project. All five consortia report that they are keen to work together in the future. Projecting Science has already begun a spin-off project as a result of this funding.

All five projects have delivered on-time and on-budget. They reached a total of 26,678 KS2 and KS3 students, and worked with 977 teachers in 358 schools. Schools from Lands End to the North Yorkshire Moors and across to North Wales were involved, including the most remote school in England. In total, the projects delivered over 33,000 face-to-face contact hours with students and teachers attending CPD sessions.

All the sessions delivered during these pilot projects were offered free of charge to schools, enabling each consortium to achieve their aim of meeting the needs of hard-to-reach audiences. While the definition of hard-to-reach varied between projects, each project met this objective.

Although not the main aim of these projects, they have all in some way enhanced the financial sustainability of the centres. In this respect, the development of new audiences cannot be underestimated as it provides a new and ongoing market for the future. The families of the 26,678 pupils reached as a result of this project may well visit the centres and thus contribute to their future sustainability. In addition, by providing new updated schools resources, this project has enabled science centres to maintain a changing programme, something that is necessary if centres are to continue to meet the changing needs of students and teachers.

A further aim of the Science Centre Enrichment and Activity Grant was to enable science centres and museums to learn from one another. Each of the projects has provided evidence of this skill sharing, ranging from sharing fundraising expertise and sharing best practice on models of working with teachers, to sharing resources and knowledge for training courses and evaluation. This project has led to the development of strong relationships between many of the centres involved in the project that will continue long into the future and lead to ongoing collaborative partnerships.