



6 January 2012

PRESS RELEASE

With pics 2: Sandra Matthews-Marsh; Kevin Lynes

£3.5 MILLION EUROPEAN FUNDING TO BOOST COASTAL BUSINESS

The Kent coast and its many tourism, leisure and hospitality businesses are to benefit from a £3,523,606 European fund to boost regeneration and provide training and marketing support to SMEs.

The cash for the three-year Seaconomics programme, supported by the European Development Fund, is the result of a successful bid by the county's tourism champions Visit Kent backed by Kent County Council (KCC).

They will be working with partners facing similar coastal challenges in Worthing, Essex, Westtoer, Veere, Neufchatel Hardelot, Le Touquet, Blankenberge, De Panne, Middelkerke and Ostend – sharing best practice and seeking opportunities to cross-promote tourism and business development opportunities.

The Seaconomics funding will also help continue work already in progress in Kent as a result of previous successful European funding bids. These include £3 million for Visit Kent's Sustainable Tourism Research Intelligence Partnership (SusTRIP) launched in 2009 and £4.2m for its Coastal Actions for Sustainable

Tourism (CAST) initiative. In 2010 Visit Kent also launched a £4.2 million European Union Interreg IVA-funded Greet the World campaign promoting Kent and the Nord Pas De Calais in the run-up to the London Games and to create a lasting legacy for the tourism industry.

Sandra Matthews-Marsh, Chief Executive at Visit Kent, said: “Competition for European funding is extremely strong and there were more than 40 areas bidding for Seaconomics support. I believe it was the strength of our case, and the achievements we have delivered from previous funding initiatives, that led to our success.

“This new funding will ensure Visit Kent can continue actively supporting all the regeneration projects across the Kent coast which are just beginning to reap dividends. Furthermore, we will be able to offer even more support to our many SMEs and entrepreneurs determined to help boost the local economy and create more jobs.”

Kevin Lynes, KCC Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise said, “This is a great achievement by the team at Visit Kent. The team has built up powerful working relationships with businesses and local authorities in Kent, which they will now be able to extend to mainland Europe to the benefit of local SMEs.”

Ends

For further media information, please contact Delphine Houlton or Andrew Metcalf, at Maxim, tel: 01892 513033, email: Delphine@maxim-pr.co.uk; or Julie Edwards, at Visit Kent, tel: 01227 812900, email: Julie.edwards@visitkent.co.uk. For images of Kent, go to <http://www.flickr.com/photos/visitkent/>

Notes to Editors

- Visit Kent Limited is a public/private sector partnership supported by Kent County Council, Medway Council, the district and borough councils, and the

leading sector tourism businesses in Kent. Visit Kent champions Kent's £3.2 billion tourism industry by targeting UK and overseas markets, improving quality and skills, and growing investment in the tourism product. For further information, go to www.visitkent.co.uk or www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk.

- Interreg IVA is an EU funding programme which aims to promote joint working and cross-border co-operation between partner organisations on either side of a European land or maritime border. Interreg is part of the European Regional Development Fund.

The '2 Seas' Interreg IVA programme is one of two programmes involving Kent. European partners in this programme are France, Flanders and The Netherlands.

For further information, go to www.interreg4a-2mers.eu

