Guidance Note

Country Networks – Models of Collaboration

This document describes very briefly approaches to developing and operating country networks which have been used by different countries.

1 Recognise and complement strong existing initiatives (especially government-led)
In the UK, much like most European countries, there are very many interested groups all trying to address science education. The government in the UK has taken a strong lead in setting out a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) strategy and plan. A coordinated collaboration across companies is welcomed by government within the framework it has set out in STEMNET.

2 Work closely with an Industry Association
Many industry associations place great emphasis on education outreach. Some will have programmes of their own. Others will encourage their members through communications. Others will play at a policy level. In Ireland STEPS to Engineering, which is the education outreach arm of the main engineering association, Engineers Ireland, and which represents many companies, is co-leading the Science in Schools network together with IBM.

3 Build out from a company-specific approach
In Germany, Volkswagen's Autostadt co-leads the Science In Schools network. The Autostadt has a significant investment in an educational facility for the public and schools and has a close collaboration with the Ministry of Lower Saxony. Volkswagen's Autostadt working with IBM are using the existing reputation with education stakeholders and the Science In Schools overall aims and approach to attract wider participation from a broad range of stakeholders.

4 Formalised organisation with funding from members and government
JetNet in NL has been running for several years. It has a very small staff to administer and run the programme of activities. JetNet is funded by contributions from the 70 participating organisations, and managed through a coordinating committee. It has developed a strong reputation and a high profile amongst schools and education stakeholders in NL and beyond. A primary principle of JetNet is that its programme of activities are organised tightly between companies and schools.

5 Partner with government-funded science centres
For example, in Portugal BP, IBM, Xerox and Somague have collaborated in the organisation and running of an event around eWeek in 2008. The intention is to grow from that successful base. At the same time, other stakeholders have been enlisted, these include the national network of Science Centres and representatives from the Ministry of Education. The aim now is to coordinate further to grow the network and the programme of activities.

6 Start with a specific project activity and grow
Under the ENGAGE* programme, in France, a number of companies have come together over the last academic year in a full year educational project for more than 100 children. The project, called mobi3, used real-life scenarios to engage students in the full life-cycle of a mobile phone, and the relevance of science, not just to the core technology, but also to the other important functions such as Finance, Marketing and Supply Chain.
*(*ENGAGE is an international business-led campaign that aims to increase the quality and extent of employee engagement in the development of healthy and sustainable communities.)*