

AIDC: An intermediary's view

The Automatic Identification and Data Capture (AIDC) centre helps organisations find and use technology to improve the way they work.

Supported by Yorkshire Forward the centre is a source of independent, non commercial expert advice. Through seminars, meetings and a 1,000sqm living demonstration area, AIDC is able to provide business support from its base in Halifax and a satellite centre in Sheffield.

Paula Perks is the centre's business support manager and directs the successful Yorkshire and Humber Business Assist Programme by working closely with South Yorkshire Investment Fund.

The AIDC Centre promotes rather than sells established and emerging technologies such as Barcoding, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), Smartcards and Biometrics. These are

used in almost every area of business life.

From the supermarket checkout to tracking delivery goods and important office documents, all key areas to ensure the success of any organisation.

Paula explained: "Our emphasis is on helping companies achieve greater efficiencies and process improvement. If AIDC is not right as a solution at that time we will say so.

"AIDC can be used to track, trace, secure and manage almost anything in almost every business and organisation, but it is often implemented as part of a broader project involving other technologies and processes.

"Our Business Assist Programme is designed to be flexible and easy to access. A great deal of effort has gone into simplifying the way businesses interact with it. We also keep in touch to monitor progress and help develop systems further."

AIDC provide specialist help alongside other business support organisations, such as Business Link, the Manufacturing Advisory Service, Business Crime Reduction Centre and SYIF.

The centre is informed by SYIF of a project they are looking to invest which requires successful data capture. Both parties can then work alongside each other to identify the most effective possibilities for the use of AIDC and help that part of the project succeed.

AIDC currently has funding of up to £10,000 available to small and medium sized enterprises to support the cost of the initiative and is paid once the equipment and software has been bought and implemented.

For more information about AIDC please contact Paula.Perks@aidc.org



Pictured: Paula Perks from AIDC.

SYIF goes green with investment

An eco-friendly company from Sheffield is revolutionising the way the global healthcare industry manages its waste, with a range of innovative products designed to reduce carbon emissions.

Econix Ltd, based in Parkwood, Sheffield, designs and distributes pioneering eco-friendly waste disposal solutions for the healthcare industry.

The company's revolutionary paper based clinical waste container - 'Bio-bin', reduces costs and CO₂ emissions when disposing of non-sharp infectious waste in hospitals, laboratories and dental surgeries.

Nic Wood, managing director of Econix, said: "Our Bio-bin is to be used in every hospital around the country.

"Because it is so space efficient, light and transportable, it reduces costs for our customers. Also, because the Bio-bin is made from paper, not



Pictured: Nic Woods managing director at Econix and David Livesley investment manager for SYIF.

plastic, it reduces CO₂ emissions when the bin is incinerated."

Econix recently received a £150,000 equity linked investment from South Yorkshire Investment Fund to help pay for the lease of new premises and product development.

The money formed part of a wider investment strategy including the Yorkshire and Humber Equity Fund - which provided an additional £150,000 investment for the company.

Nic Wood said: "The combined funding from both parties has helped us secure a new warehouse location in Sheffield and helped minimise delays between the placement of orders and delivery.

"The majority of our products are manufactured in China, so there can sometimes be a slight delay in delivery due to shipping etc. But thanks to the funding we have received, we can now hold stock here in Sheffield. This way we can significantly reduce waiting times."

David Livesley, investment manager at SYIF, added: "Econix is a pioneering company, which is producing eco-friendly solutions for the healthcare industry. Their innovative thinking is helping to reduce the carbon footprint of health professionals all over the country and further afield."

South Yorkshire Investment Fund

...profile

Investing in Business in South Yorkshire

Spring 2009 Issue 22



Pictured: John and Simon Dunkley from Atomising Systems with Andy Chaffer, business director at South Yorkshire Investment Fund.

Sheffield company completes £1million deal

A growing Sheffield company has been able to complete a £1million deal thanks to its long-standing relationship with South Yorkshire Investment Fund.

Atomising Systems Ltd, who are based at Meadowhall, required financial support to enable them to build and ship their product to a client in Germany.

SYIF provided the company with a £100,000 loan in December and within three months Atomising Systems repaid the money back on completion of the work with the European firm.

Family company Atomising Systems Ltd, which was established by John Dunkley in 1992, offers a range of technologies for the manufacture of metal powders, primarily for use within the automotive industry.

It has seen annual turnover increase from £500,000 five years ago to more than £3million and the company has become the leading supplier of atomising technology and equipment to the global metal powder industry.

The money provided by SYIF was their second £100,000 investment in Atomising Systems after initially providing financial backing in 2002.

John's son Simon Dunkley is financial director at Atomising Systems and he says the support from SYIF was essential to the delivery of the project.

Simon added: "Due to a great deal of development work needing to be done here in Sheffield prior to the shipment of the project, it was vital for Atomising Systems to be able to find some short-term funding to help finance the required working capital.

"SYIF has had a long established relationship with the company and they were keen to step in to support us. Now that the project is complete we have been able to re-pay the loan back in very quick time."

Andy Chaffer, business director at South Yorkshire Investment Fund, said: "The loan highlights how flexible SYIF can be when South Yorkshire companies quickly need additional working capital to support the growth of the business."

Martin Weatherall, from Hawsons Sheffield has been a mentor for Atomising Systems, and the company received additional funding from NatWest Sheffield in a deal led by Martin Gorman.

South Yorkshire boost after Fund announcement

South Yorkshire businesses have received a £7 million boost.

The region will have access to the money, through South Yorkshire Investment Fund, after it was made available by Yorkshire Forward.

The Regional Development Agency recently announced it is providing almost £10 million to support business growth in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Funding from Yorkshire Forward will enable SYIF to continue to invest in businesses until a new regional fund is developed in the autumn. It is hoped this new fund will be worth up to £120 million.

SYIF was established in 2001 and has invested almost £50 million in South Yorkshire businesses (including money with management), created and safeguarded 8,000 jobs and helped to generate more than £450 million worth of additional sales.

Tony Goulbourn, chief executive of South Yorkshire Investment Fund, said: "We are delighted by the announcement from Yorkshire Forward as this will help continue the success SYIF has already achieved.

"It is very much business as usual and we urge any company within South Yorkshire to speak to us about how we can provide the funds required to assist their growth.

"We will continue to work closely with the financial intermediaries in South Yorkshire to help make the Fund available to as many businesses as possible whilst continuing to maintain rigorous investment criteria in these difficult economic times."

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Welcome...



...to the 22nd edition of Profile.

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2009 which highlights the many business successes which are taking place across South Yorkshire.

We were pleased that Yorkshire Forward began the New Year by making available an additional £7 million to support business growth in South Yorkshire in the build-up to the regional Successor Fund in the autumn of 2009. It is hoped the new fund will be worth up to £120 million.

The additional funding provided by Yorkshire Forward will help plug the gap between the current and future Funds to ensure business continues as usual. At a time when banks are becoming more stringent in providing capital for small and medium sized enterprises, it is very important we maintain the momentum and that businesses in South Yorkshire are able to access finance when they need it. This edition of Profile is packed with a number of features on companies who have benefited from SYIF investments.

Some of the ones highlighted are businesses receiving their first funding package from us, while others are taking up the opportunity for further investment. Both of which are important to the continued regeneration of business growth in the region.

Also, SYIF is pleased to pass on to businesses a further reduction in interest rates and more information about this is included in the opposite page.

Remember SYIF provide seedcorn, loan and equity linked investments, ranging from £15,000 to £2.5m, specifically to help small and medium businesses meet the gaps in funding they need for growth and development.

It is very much business as usual and we urge any company within South Yorkshire to speak to us about how we can provide the funds required to assist their growth.

If your company is requiring financial assistance, please give us a ring on 01709 386377 or email us at info@syif.com and we can explain how we can help you.

Tony Goulbourn

Tony Goulbourn
Chief Executive
South Yorkshire Investment Fund



Pictured: Darren Walker, managing director of DCP Systems with David Ward, investment manager at SYIF.

Specialist printing company receives investment

A leading digital printing company has received a £30,000 investment from South Yorkshire Investment Fund.

DCP Systems Ltd specialise in producing wide format print and design solutions for some of the world's biggest computing names, such as Hewlett Packard, Canon and Epson.

Based in Chapeltown, Sheffield, the company have used the funding to purchase a piece of demonstration equipment, called a 'flatboard printer', capable of printing high quality graphics onto large, flat surfaces.

Darren Walker, managing director of DCP Systems, said: "At DCP we produce wide format print and design solutions to meet the needs of a variety of end-users, ranging from retailers to graphic designers and advertisers.

"We produce high quality solutions for the market place, from wide-format printers and laminators to canvas rolls for artists and Photoshop plugins.

"The investment from SYIF has helped us purchase a flatboard printer for demonstrating purposes, which will allow us to show potential clients what we can do, and in turn, expand the business with new contracts."

The £30,000 investment is the company's fifth from SYIF, since DCP Systems was founded in 2000.

Darren added: "SYIF have been a great support to us over the years. They've helped us develop into new areas in the market place, drawing in new clients and helping DCP Systems to grow as a company."

David Ward, investment manager at SYIF, said: "We're delighted to have contributed to the growth and success of DCP Systems.

"Their high profile clientele has assured the company a place at the forefront of the digital printing sector and we look forward to watching DCP Systems' success continue."

Assessment company gets top marks

A ground-breaking assessment company has received top marks from South Yorkshire Investment Fund.

Assessment21, based in Arundel Street, Sheffield, has developed revolutionary software technology designed to mark exam papers electronically.

Originally developed in response to the University of Manchester's need to reduce the costs of setting, administering and marking traditional paper exams, Assessment21 tests students online and is capable of assessing a variety of question types, such as multiple choice, written responses, diagrams and mathematical answers.

SYIF has helped Assessment21 develop and expand its business by providing seedcorn investments totalling £150,000 to the company.

Gerard Lennox, director of Assessment21, said: "Our innovative software allows a range of exam papers to be marked electronically. In comparison to paper marking, this increases consistency and accuracy in results, as well as providing significant cost savings to academic institutions."

Assessment21, a spin-out company from the University of Manchester, relocated to Sheffield after hearing about SYIF and the funding opportunities available in the region.

Gerard added: "We were attracted to the funding opportunities available in South Yorkshire as well as the good transport and communication links between Sheffield and Manchester. All of our management team live on the train line between the two cities, so we can be at the Sheffield office or the University in less than two hours.

"SYIF's investments have really helped the business to grow. Their funding has given us a real boost and assisted us in taking our products to market.

"Our software is now being used in educational institutions around the country and we've had substantial interest from the USA."

Tony Goulbourn, chief executive at SYIF, says: "This is a great example of South Yorkshire attracting forward-thinking businesses. Assessment21 is a very exciting concept that has the potential to revolutionise the academic marking system. We're delighted to have played a part in bringing such innovation to the region."

Building a solid future with SYIF

A Sheffield-based construction company is expanding thanks to a £300,000 investment from South Yorkshire Investment Fund.

TASC Group Construction Ltd, based on the Dore Industrial Estate, Sheffield, specialises in diamond drilling and fire protection solutions.

The company is currently involved in a number of high profile projects across the country, such as the £200m St Stephens retail development in Hull, where it provided diamond drilling and thermal insulation services.

Steve Copley, managing director of TASC, said: "We began as a diamond drilling company in 1998, but since then we have expanded our business to specialise in fire protection solutions too.

"We provide steel coatings and seals that prevent fire and smoke from causing damage to a building and its occupants. For example, our Curtain Walling Closure Seal is capable of stopping a fire spreading from floor to floor – ensuring the safety of the people in there."

The investment from SYIF is TASC's second loan, after the company received £385,000 from SYIF in 2006 to assist a management buy out.

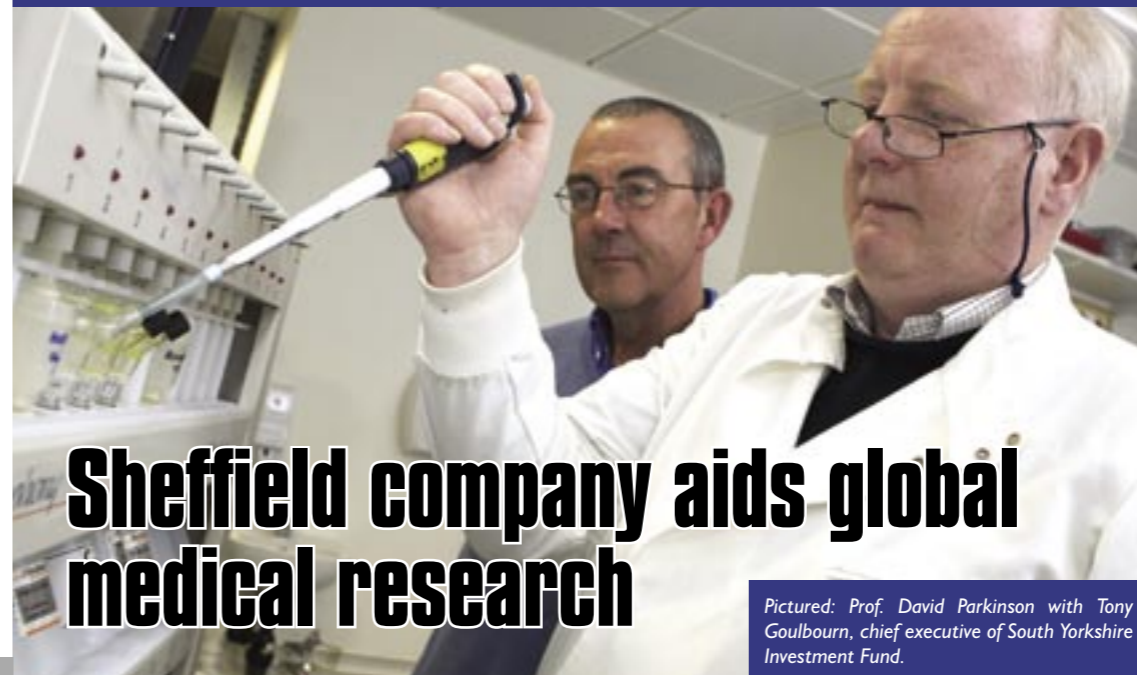
Steve added: "This latest investment of £300,000 is a wonderful boost for the business - it's helping us to move into bigger premises on the industrial estate and in turn, expand our target market.

"SYIF have always been there to help us, they've been brilliant. They are always positive with us and I think that during these difficult economic times that's a huge asset. SYIF give longevity to companies across the region.

Debbie Sorby, portfolio manager at SYIF, says: "TASC is a well established and well managed business with a strong reputation in the industry for good quality and service. The business has a good customer base together with a strong sales pipeline for the coming year."



Pictured: Debbie Sorby, portfolio manager at SYIF with Steve Copley, managing director of TASC.



Sheffield company aids global medical research

Pictured: Prof. David Parkinson with Tony Goulbourn, chief executive of South Yorkshire Investment Fund.

A new Sheffield company is aiding research into developing treatments for some of the world's major health problems, including cancer and Alzheimer's.

SIBiologics will use the platform technology developed by Prof. David Parkinson at the Biomedical Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, to create antibodies for use by medical research institutes and pharmaceutical companies around the world.

Antibodies are automatically produced by the body as a defence against disease. The technology that SIBiologics will use allows antibodies to be produced more quickly and at lower cost than other methods, helping to provide valuable new research tools to speed biomedical research.

SIBiologics has received Seedcorn investments from South Yorkshire Investment Fund totalling £50,000. This has assisted SIBiologics to establish a laboratory at the Sheffield Bioincubator and develop a catalogue of antibodies.

David said: "SIBiologics has created the means to now manufacture and sell antibodies for biomedical research. Universities, research institutes and pharmaceutical companies require an extensive supply and we have the expertise to make antibodies to support a specific research, such as the study into what causes Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's.

"If we don't have the required antibodies, we can use our technology to create them to meet that need, adding to our range of products for researchers to use.

"This will help increase knowledge of diseases and support the development of new treatments against them. We already have licensees in the UK and US who distribute the products worldwide."

SIBiologics now has a business plan in place, where it aims to add additional staff by the end of its first year of trading.

Tony Goulbourn, chief executive at South Yorkshire Investment Fund, added: "SYIF are delighted to participate in the funding of SIBiologics, a spinout business from Sheffield Hallam University, who are committed to the development of new technologies.

"The support provided by the Seedcorn Fund is a good example of how SYIF can make an important contribution to the long term prospects for growth in the region's economy by backing new technologies at an early stage of their commercial development."

SYIF announce latest interest rate cut

South Yorkshire Investment Fund has reduced its interest rates on small business loans for the second time in two months, following the latest reduction in the Bank of England base rate.

The new rates have been set in line with European State Aids which limit the minimum net rates which SYIF can charge.

The changes for new lending begin with immediate effect to demonstrate SYIF's responsibility to meet the needs of local businesses.

SYIF provide loan and equity linked investments, ranging from £15,000 to £2.5m, specifically to help small and medium businesses meet the gaps in funding they need for growth and development.

SYIF's Small Business Fund gross interest rate charged on all loans remains unchanged at 12% fixed, but rebates have been increased by 1%.

The rates below apply depending on the stage of development the business is in:

- Established and profitable business with three years profitable trading, forecasts and commensurate with the proposed debt levels - net 6%
- Established business with three years trading - net 8%
- Early stage businesses trading for less than three years – net 10%

The rebates are subject to certain conditions, including the provision of management accounts and compliance with the terms of the loan agreement.

If anyone has any questions on this or any other issue please contact a SYIF investment manager or phone the enquiry line on **01709 386377**.