



## North East of England Role Model Platform for Innovative Women



This new initiative is funded under the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Grants and is in the light of the Science City Initiative, commencing February 2007 to develop and establish the 'North East of England Role Model Platform for Innovative Women'. This initiative will provide an opportunity to implement the findings of an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Science in Society Programme project awarded to Professor Pooran Wynarczyk, Director of the Small Enterprise Research (SERU), Newcastle University, which clearly demonstrated that women are hugely under-represented in scientific activities in the North East and face personal and professional barriers, such as access to local female role models and mentors, career development opportunities, and lack of awareness of innovation initiatives, bodies, funds and bursaries. The platform will focus on promoting scientific activities and discoveries amongst women and young girls in the North East of England to aid their entry and career progression beyond the glass ceiling in the scientific fields. The project will be undertaken through a number of measures, including identification of role models/mentors and coaches, creation of a web-based directory of local innovative female role models and establishment of a platform for women scientists/ innovators, upon which successful local women role models can act as mentors and coaches.

A comprehensive package of workshops will be designed and delivered in conjunction with the Business and Innovation Centre (BIC) which will include a virtual directory of role models, presentations by 'role models', analysis of their experiences in R&D, innovation, career progression, confidence building, solutions to personal and professional barriers, practical introduction to IPR issues such as patent searching and design, and the subsequent 'ownership', investigation of the unique challenges of developing a business for a new product, flexibility in the workplace, equal opportunity (EO) policies, skills and training needs, and sources of science and technology funding opportunities. The workshops will also include sessions on major EU, UK and regional SET and innovation related initiatives, bursaries, and awards.

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