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Article

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BUSINESS POST

Marine firms join US aces



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by David R. Jones, Daily Post

A MARINE science cluster of businesses in north west Wales is to work closely with a top North American consultancy group.

The move could lead to extra work around the world for small and medium sized firms within the Bridge Marine Science Group.

The Menai Bridge-based cluster signed a memorandum of understanding with Woods Hole Group during a visit to North Wales by the Massachusetts-based group's chief executive David Aubrey.

Bridge Marine's managing director John Goold said it was hoped the two groups would be able to co-operate on certain projects with each supplying expertise to complement the other's skills and knowledge.

He said the Woods Hole group was currently bidding for environmental impact assessment work in Saudi Arabia and that could provide the first opportunity, possibly as early as next year, for the two groups to work together.

Dr Goold said it was very difficult to predict how much the co-operation could be worth in cash terms to businesses with the Welsh cluster.

He added: "It was a very positive and successful visit. There is substantial potential there."

Sixty per cent of Bridge Marine's workload is currently overseas as governments, the UN, oil companies and other customers commission environmental impact assessments, climate change studies and other work.

Dr Aubrey visited a number of businesses within the Bridge Marine Science Group during a three-day visit to Anglesey and Gwynedd.

They included the Blue Water Flatfish project at Penmon, a major commercial fish farm venture on Anglesey, where further investment is under way to set up a sea bass production facility.

He also paid a visit to the CAST Technium at Parc Menai, Bangor, where he was given a demonstration of the centre's 3D visualisation techniques which have application in the marine sector, Bangor University's School of Ocean Sciences and Myti Mussels at Port Penrhyn.

Dr Goold said that at the moment the memorandum of agreement with Woods Hole was the only one its kind entered into by the Menai Bridge cluster but he did not rule out other collaborative agreements being struck in due course with other organisations around the world.

The independent, not-for-profit corporation has 70 members in Wales employing in excess of 250 specialists in marine and environmental services.

It has launched a recruitment drive which it expects will see the number of associate member companies rise sharply over coming months.

Part of its work involves creating capacity within the marine science business sector locally to allow member SMEs to pool their talents to work on bigger contracts.

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