**HIGH TECH BRISTOL & BATH**

**Special Interest Groups**

**Introduction**

Special Interest Groups are an established mechanism for bringing together expertise. Starting with the Bluetooth industry SIG to develop a point to point wireless protocol, the concept has moved into many other areas. These focus on bringing together engineers and technologists to work on the technical issues to drive innovation.

Collaborating in a Special Interest Group helps speed up technology developments, build links within the ecosystem and strengthen the competitive position of a company. The aim is to provide these benefits locally focussed around the specialist high tech activities in the West of England.

**High Tech Sector Group**

The High Tech Sector group of the West of England Local Economic Partnership has set up a Community Interest Company (CIC) to act as the umbrella organisation to stimulate and administrate a group of high tech Special Interest Groups in the Bristol and Bath area using the same sustainable model that is used successfully Cambridge Wireless. This evolved out of the Cambridge Network and now has 18 SIGs with over 400 member companies paying a yearly subscription. A company or university joins and any of its engineers can attend any of the SIGs, making the subscription cost effective.

High Tech Bristol & Bath (HB2) is open to individual, corporate and university members anywhere in the world, bringing together expertise in a wide range of technologies for the benefit of the region. HB2 collaborates with Cambridge Wireless on events, but also has its own focus on areas where the region is strong, making use of the ‘Smart Specialization’.

The key lesson from Cambridge Wireless is that the SIGs are determined by the members, with two to three SIG champions running the groups with support from central administration to determine the frequency, location and content of meetings. These will focus on the electronics, silicon and software aspects of the challenges facing the different groups. If there is not the support for the SIG, the group will stop.

SIG champions are elected by the membership of the groups, and are also represented on the board of HB2 alongside representatives of the High Tech Sector group.

**SIG proposals**

HB2 is proposing a number of SIGs that map directly onto the smart specialisation of the region with a focus directly on the hardware and software development that is at the core of the high tech activity in the region.

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| **Proposed** HB2 Special Interest Groups with companies that have expressed interestIf a group does not have sufficient champions to drive it forwards, or champions are not replaced, then the group will close | **Technology SIGs** |
| Wireless | Blu Wireless TechnologyBroadcomNVIDIAToshiba |
| Multicore and high performance processing | ZenotechHPGnodal/CrayXMOSBroadcomNVIDIATVS |
| Embedded Software | Wittenstein XMOS SemiconductorBroadcomTVS |
| **Applications SIGs** |
| Digital Health | BRLAtlasHP Labs |
| Smart Home & Future Cities | Continuum BridgeenModusBAE Systems |
| Robotics | BRLGobotixOC RoboticsReach Robotics |
| Education & Careers | BroadcomZenotechFlaherty Publishing |
| High tech marketing  | Flaherty PublishingPublitekXMOSBroadcomNVIDIA |
| Intelligent Media | BBCILine TechnologiesUWEHP |

Horizontal technology SIGs would cover wireless technology development, multicore and high performance computing and embedded software

The applications SIGs bring together the underlying technology with potential application developers and users so that the technology is not developed in a vacuum. This provides a pipeline of capabilities for the region and also serves to identify potential gaps. These are dependent on champions driving the relevant topics, but having a wide range of SIGs offers benefits to companies joining HB2.

There may be other SIGs that are proposed by members as part of the high tech activity of HB that are also areas of smart specialisation for the region such as Quantum technologies or Interface Design.

**Subscriptions**

The subscription allows HB2 to fund a part-time network manager to arrange the meetings and handle the administration for the groups. The lesson from Cambridge Wireless is that having a number of groups allows the cost of the subscription to be spread over several activities, reducing the barrier to entry and enhancing the value for money. The subscription rates are set at the same level as Cambridge Wireless to avoid competing.

The subscription allows any member of the subscribing company to attend any of the SIGs, to stand as a champion in an existing SIG or propose a new SIG (with

The range of services will be expanded

In a difference to the Cambridge Wireless model, HB2 proposes to use the existing networking organisations such as SiliconSouthWest, the Assisted Living Network (ALAN) and the EngineShed to deliver the meetings and enhance and build on the existing activities.

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| Annual Membership of HB2* Members join HB2 and any staff or faculty member can attend any SIG meetings and vote for SIG champions
* SIG champions determine content and activity of groups with support from central admin
* Listing in website
* Business introductions
* Founders dinner
* Additional benefits to be developed to support members
 | Corporate or University membership: £4000  |
| Medium company or faculty up to 100 staff £2000 |
| Medium company or university faculty up to 50 staff £1000 |
| Small company member (up to 20 staff):£600 |
| Micro company (up to 5 staff) £300 |
| Individual member: £200 |
|  | All memberships are subject to VAT |

Sign up by contacting Nick Flaherty at nick@flaherty.co.uk or 07710 236368