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# Regional Tertiary Pathfinders Programme

## Project Overview: NE Energy Transition Skills

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The tables below provide insights into projects delivered through the Regional Tertiary Pathfinders Programme, which aimed to strengthen collaboration between colleges, universities, employers, and local authorities.

Each project includes two tables:

1. **Collaboration & Impact** – covering the history of partnerships, project focus, geographic reach, and target beneficiaries.
2. **Delivery & Leadership** – outlining governance structures, project characteristics, stakeholder involvement, and key aims.

These tables highlight the context in which projects tested new ways of working, enhanced learner pathways, and improved regional skills planning. For further details, please refer to the System-Level Report.

## Definitions of Project Characteristics

### History of Working Together

- **None** – individuals and teams had not worked together previously.
- **Emergent** – individuals and or teams and organisations had previously done some work together. Relationships existed which could be built on and developed.
- **Previous positive experience** – individuals, teams and organisations had a history of successfully working together, in some cases over many years. These existing relationships were an accepted part of ‘how work was done’ and could be built on and further developed and strengthened.

### Project Focus

- **Tight** – the project was tightly focussed on delivering specific products/pathways/outcomes.
- **Broad** – the project explored a broad range of topics or areas for improvement and developed associated products/pathways/approaches to deliver outcomes.
- **Multi-theme** – the project explores multiple themes which may be distinct or may intersect and overlap with each other, delivering products/pathways/outcomes related to the themes.

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## Target Beneficiaries

- **Providers** – colleges, universities and schools, benefit from the work done through the project e.g. increase student numbers, develop complementary provision which reduces competition etc.
- **Learners** – new products, pathways and provision are developed which improve the opportunities, experience and outcomes of learners.
- **Employers** – employers establish positive working relationships with the colleges and universities and become involved in the design of products/provision to meet their needs. Learners acquire the qualifications and skills needed by employers.

## Geographic Reach

- **Regional** – for the Pathfinder programme this means aligning to the boundaries of the Regional Economic Partnership (REP).
- **Sectoral** – aligned to the needs of a particular sector e.g. Health, Energy.
- **Local Authority/Community Planning Partnership/Local Employability Partnership** – working within a particular LA Boundary rather than across the REP.

## Starting Emphasis

- **Efficiencies** – cost saving as a result producing the desired outcome with little waste of time or resources.
- **Pre-considered improvement** – changes and improvements which had already been identified as needing to be made but which this programme gave the opportunity to catalyse and deliver with renewed focus and pace.
- **Innovation** – the development and delivery of a new method, idea or product to achieve desired outcomes.

## Leadership and Sponsorship

- **Diffused** – responsibilities are spread between organisations and groups.
- **Central individual** – a leader/coordinator acts as the main driver for change and delivery.
- **Small group** – a small number of people champion and lead the work acting as a guiding coalition.

## Who Was Involved at the Outset

- **Project beneficiaries** – learners, employers and organisations which would benefit from the outputs/outcomes from the project were involved from the outset.

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- **Frontline staff** – staff who would be developing/delivering products/courses were involved at the outset.
  - **Senior decision makers** – senior staff able to provide authorisation and create the conditions for project success were involved at the outset.

### Character of Project

- **Pragmatic** – projects were identified and developed based on practical considerations and a realistic view of what could be achieved.
- **Adaptive** – projects evolved to take account of changing contexts or as a result of gaining more understanding/information about what was needed/possible.
- **Radical** – project affecting fundamental/far-reaching change.

Table 1

Project: NE Energy Transition Skills			
History of working together	None	Emergent	Previous positive experience
			NESA is a collaborative initiative between the University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University and North East Scotland College (referred to collectively as the NESA institutions), supported by partners Skills Development Scotland and Energy Transition Zone Ltd. NESA was formed in 2021 and was fully operational before the Pathfinder.
Project focus	Tight	Broad	Multi-theme
	The project focused on building an online information resource, <i>EnergyCareerPathways.com</i> , to attract potential learners into specific energy job roles to address regional skills gaps in		Via the Just Transition Fund project, which ran simultaneously, NESA brought energy industry organisations together to assess future industry skills requirement. This

<b>Project: NE Energy Transition Skills</b>			
	the context of the transition to low-carbon energy.		informed the Pathfinder focus areas as part of a wider piece of work.
<b>Geographic reach</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>Sectoral</b>	<b>Local Authority/CPP</b>
	NESA's partners include regional education institutions and organisations with regional and national reach. The project is situated in NE Scotland, but learners from across the country can access and benefit from <i>EnergyCareerPathways.com</i> .	Energy sector	
<b>Target beneficiaries</b>	<b>Employers</b>	<b>Learners</b>	<b>Providers</b>
	Employers will benefit longer-term as learners are attracted to energy careers and understand the education pathways available.	The tool aims to demystify energy jobs and pathways. Learners benefit from clear and concise career information and a user-friendly tool to map routes through education and into low-carbon jobs.	The NESA institutions continue to benefit through the collaborative activity of NESA, and will benefit longer-term as learners are signposted to energy-related training courses.

Table 2

<b>Project: NE Energy Transition Skills</b>			
<b>Leadership sponsorship</b>	<b>Diffused</b>	<b>Central individual</b>	<b>Small group</b>
	The Pathfinder project built upon the existing NESA collaboration. The NESA Board agreed to establish the Pathfinder pilot, sharing responsibilities across the partners.	The project was led by the NESA Project Manager, at the direction of the NESA Board.	The NESA Board, made up of senior representatives from all the NESA partners.
<b>Who was involved at the outset</b>	<b>Senior decision-makers</b>	<b>Frontline staff</b>	<b>Project beneficiaries</b>
	The NESA Board, with senior representatives from all the NESA partner organisations.	The Project Manager, Project Officer, and NESA Delivery Group, with representatives from each of the NESA institutions.	NESA consulted with industry, education and community stakeholders throughout the project. The final deliverable benefited school pupils and careers advisers, those returning to work or education in energy, oil workforce looking to reskill, employers, the wider energy industry, and the NESA institutions.

<b>Project: NE Energy Transition Skills</b>			
<b>Character of project</b>	<b>Radical</b>	<b>Adaptive</b>	<b>Pragmatic</b>
	<i>EnergyCareerPathways.com</i> is a brand-new interactive tool with custom job profiles that allows learners to discover specialised pathways. It is tailored to the low-carbon energy sector and signposts to region skills provision but has scope for upscaling and could inform similar tools in other regions.	The tool design could be transferred across other sectors, and can be easily expanded to include more jobs and pathways.	The jobs selected for the pilot tool were informed by industry consultation, ensuring the most impactful careers and pathways were prioritised. In light of time and resource limitations, six roles were included in the pilot tool.
<b>Starting emphasis</b>	<b>Innovation</b>	<b>Pre-considered improvement</b>	<b>Efficiencies</b>
	The project sought to deliver an innovative new tool, delivered as <i>EnergyCareerPathways.com</i> .  The project demonstrates the advantages of collaboration by bringing together the region's leading academic institutions to	The existing NESAs collaboration enabled rapid start-up and accelerated deliver of the project.	The NESAs institutions worked together through the existing collaboration agreement, allowing efficient use of resources and leveraging expertise across three institutions whilst avoiding duplication. NESAs acts as a 'one stop shop' providing a single point of contact to access

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**Project: NE Energy Transition Skills**

	<p>develop a unique energy transition skills pathway.</p> <p>Complimentary work through the Just Transition Fund brought employers, industry organisations, and users, through local community groups and schools, on board.</p>		<p>expertise at all three NESA institutions.</p>
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