

Project is making worldwide connections

THE newly-launched DEVICES project, aiming to help people to run small businesses and social enterprises from home, is already forging links across the globe.

From its base at Luton, the DEVICES Telework Centre has connected regionally with the St John's Innovation Centre in Cambridge, as well as internationally with its new tenants Your Property in Poland and Tiscover from Austria.

Help and advice comes from the specially-trained DEVICES team at the Telework Centre and a DEVICES Support Pack includes aids for a rapid business start-up: a web camera, microphone and i-key. Teleworkers can see and talk to each other and link up to professional advisers and business support organisations.

Information technology consultant Dr Tim Rowsell not only helps DEVICES with IT support and development but also uses its links to help his own home-based business Rowsell Research. "I have links with the Innovation Centre in Cambridge and they will be getting the benefits of DEVICES in their aim to link innovation centres across the region," he says.

"Working from home can be quite an isolating experience. Linking up with DEVICES gives you good opportuni-

ties both socially and financially. It is like extended networking. If you are someone working in rural Suffolk, you may be able to access some skills and advice locally, but linking with DEVICES means you extend your reach.

"You can access the specialised business services that the proactive Luton Innovation Centre has to offer and beyond. The contacts you make are also more like personal recommendations, so it gives you confidence in the advice you're getting."

CASE STUDY 1

RENATA Ray is looking forward to a long relationship with the Innovation Centre and its DEVICES project. Her new company Your Property in Poland sells Polish property to buyers both in Britain and internationally.

"We work from home and are part-time tenants of the Innovation Centre," she explains. "We are impressed with the centre's innovative technologies which we will be able to use as our e-commerce business grows.

"We are currently setting up our database and we will be relying on photographs and detailed descriptions to sell our estate agency services. But

with the DEVICES project I can see that we could make very good use of the webcam as well as gaining good business advice from their great links. Communication is the key to our success.

"We are confident that with the interactive IT resources available, rapid increase in networking, selective advertising and the imminent launch of our new book, the first English language detailed guide to buying property in Poland, we will go a long way very quickly."

For more information visit www.yourpropertyinpoland.co.uk

CASE STUDY 2

TISCOVER was looking to set up in the UK and, with East of England Tourist Board being a key customer, the Innovation Centre gave them the perfect location and opportunity.

As a leading destination management system provider, Tiscover supplies the web presence for East of England Tourist Board's entire region, covering the counties of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk.

Since launching in the UK earlier this year, Tiscover has also announced agreements with numerous destinations including Plymouth Tourist



■ **DEVICES team members Lillian Iruene (left) and Dimitra Vitsa are ready to help you link up at the Innovation Centre, at the Spires building in Luton.**

The DEVICES project, run by the Luton and Dunstable Innovation Centre, at The Spires, 2 Adelaide Street, Luton, is funded by the Department of Trade and Industry's Phoenix Fund and a Building On The Best Award. For more information visit www.innovationcentre.co.uk/projects

Published in association with



University of Luton



**PHOENIX
FUND**

Board, Bournemouth Tourism, Isles of Scilly and Jedburgh in Scotland in addition to contracts spanning the rest of the world.

Michelle O'Connell, from Tiscover UK Ltd, says: "Through DEVICES, I look forward to being able to set up good working relationships with other organisations so that Tiscover can continue to work well on a local as well as international level."

The Tiscover group of companies, headquartered in Austria, has wholly-owned subsidiaries in England, Germany and Italy, and operates one of the top ten most visited travel websites in central Europe (www.tiscover.com).