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# University turns TiDE on the Humber to create all round 'wins'

16 November 2011

New ways of managing the Humber estuary for the benefit of industry, local communities and the environment will come under the spotlight at a major international meeting later this month.



The University of Hull's Institute of Estuarine & Coastal Studies is hosting the four-day event as part of TiDE, an EU-funded research initiative that is examining new integrated techniques for managing estuaries in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK.

<Professor Mike Elliott

Director of the institute, Professor Mike Elliott, said: "The TiDE meeting is bringing together some of Europe's leading experts on estuarine science with port authorities and environmental agencies.

"The aim is to create new tools for managing estuaries so that the needs of industry, the natural environment and local communities can all be met."

Estuaries, such as the Humber, are partially enclosed coastal waterways linking the open sea to internal waterways. Combining marine and freshwater habitats, they support many important, protected natural ecosystems.

These habitats also provide 'services' to local communities, for example by buffering against the risk of flooding from storm surges and sea-level rise and by creating amenity value for recreational activities, such as fishing. At the same time, they support major cities and their position makes them economically significant for ports, shipping, fisheries and manufacturing industries.

"With the construction of several large-scale renewable energy port infrastructure projects planned for the Humber, the need for an integrated approach to the estuary's management has never been more important," said Professor Elliott.

"The Humber is commercially very important to the whole region, particularly in the current economic climate, when investment is so crucial for creating and protecting jobs.

"However, the economic benefits must be set against the needs of the communities and the environment. The main message is ensuring we get 'wins' for ecology, economy and public safety."

One of the achievements of the TiDE project is in creating a toolkit of sustainable management methods for estuaries, such as 'off-setting', which creates new habitats where wildlife can flourish, in order to compensate for the extension of ports.

Professor Elliott said the four estuaries that are the main focus of the study – The Elbe and Weser in Germany, The Schelde in Belgium and the Humber – have many issues in

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### Notes to Editors

#### About TiDE

TiDE is funded through the European Union's INTERREG fund. For further information, please visit the project web site at: <http://www.tide-project.eu/>

Conference delegates will also attend the Humber Standing Conference, an annual event, which brings together a wide range of stakeholders, interested in the management of the estuary.

common.

"Each area has a specific management plan to deal with their own issues around the use of ports, infrastructure, flood protection and erosion but we all need to fulfil the same EU legislation," he said. "The problems we face on this side of the North Sea are very similar to those faced on mainland Europe so we all have things to teach each other."

During the meeting, which runs from 22-25 November, delegates will visit various sites on the Humber to see at first-hand the impact of new developments and the management measures that are being put in place to reduce their effect on the environment.

The Institute of Estuarine & Coastal Studies has played a pioneering role in creating new tools for sustainable economic growth, carrying out environmental impact assessments for port developments in the UK, Europe and Africa.

"We have always worked to develop the links between natural and social sciences," said Professor Elliott. "Our role has been to ensure that the environment is protected and legislation adhered to, while at the same time allowing industry to flourish in a sustainable manner."

Ends.

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