
**IDELE YEAR 1 REPORT – Identification,
Dissemination and Exchange of Good
Practice in the Field of Local Employment
Development and Promoting Better
Governance**

**Invitation to Tender No. VT/2003/039
Contract No. VC/2003/0208**

Report for 2003-04, submitted to the Employment, Social Affairs
and Equal Opportunities DG of the European Commission

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

IDELE is a key element of the European Commission's programme to encourage the **I**dentification, **D**issemination and **E**xchange of good practice in the field of **L**ocal **E**mployment development and promoting better governance. It is a three-year project implemented by ECOTEC Research and Consulting on behalf of the European Commission Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

Activity within IDELE aims to highlight and enhance the contribution of local employment development to the objectives of the European Employment Strategy (EES) and thus to the EU's strategic goal: *to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*. This activity is based on key principles regarding best practice in local employment development and the best means to identify, disseminate and exchange it. These principles are set out in the overarching *Conceptual Framework*, which is guiding the IDELE process.

This report sets out the IDELE Conceptual Framework and describes activities undertaken and lessons emerging in Year 1 (2003/04).

Conceptual Framework to IDELE

Background to IDELE

The local level has gained increasing importance in European policy since the first official Communication in 1984 and since the creation of the EES in 1997. At the end of two decades of experimentation and significant funding both for pilot actions and under Structural Funds measures, IDELE sets out to review what has been learned and disseminate and exchange the lessons from practice.

IDELE comes at an opportune moment in a more general sense. Local actors seem, with or without external exhortation, to be becoming more involved in trying to capture employment and development for their regions. While the European Commission programmes have been a significant spur to action, we are also witnessing a much wider social movement.

There is no one model or policy approach for local employment development (or certainly of best practice). Different models and trajectories are the norm and, in the end, the only realistic measuring rod is whether local employment development has the capability to add significant value in particular local circumstances. The basis of the IDELE project is that people working in all sorts of different circumstances will experience different opportunities and constraints in working locally. This sense of *actions in context* and of having structured conversations between active players is vital in transferring lessons from place to place in determining where the added value lies.

The Essence of the Local Employment Development Concept

In setting out to *Identify, Disseminate and Exchange* best practice on *Local Employment* development during Year One we have been developing the essence of the concept. Local employment development implies a number of things about which we now can be relatively clear:

- Actions conceived, managed or delivered at *local* level can permit the opening up of new *development* opportunities and new sources of *employment* that can generate additional wealth, well-being and social cohesion.
- In the absence of a local approach, development and employment would be *sub-optimal* – missing significant added value.
- Acting locally can also open up the possibility that these new development opportunities and jobs can be more *equitably distributed* – giving better prospects for the inclusion of the young, minority ethnic groups, the unemployed, and the socially excluded generally.
- These local actions have to be seen as *one component* within the full package of activities that make economic development and employment possible.
- Local employment development can only be properly understood and evaluated in the context of a complex set of *geographical, social and economic variables*, and against the background of actions at other, wider, levels - regional, national or European.
- There is a clear role for policy intervention to initiate and support local employment development where it does not happen.

Issues of Definition and Scale for Local Development

One of the difficulties of the local as a policy domain is the problem of definition. One person's definition of "local" may for another be sub-regional or even regional and we have to be able to take on board a range of local conditions and interpretations. We have to include, for example, everything from the tiny Hebridean island of Eigg (UK), through the "local" sub-region containing the entire City of Leipzig (Germany) to the sparsely populated arctic emptiness of Lapland (Finland). An important consideration for the design of policy for local development is an understanding that the language of the "local" is culturally and contextually variable and a can be trap for the unwary.

Critically, however, assigning a precise meaning to what is meant by "local" is not of overriding importance. The processes that give the added value to the local approach are not dependent on our coming to a precise definition (even if that were possible). By accepting that people's understanding of the local varies and by teasing this variation out, we are able to extract the transferable lessons and concepts and reveal the essence of the value added from acting locally.

The Importance of Context

IDELE is all about seeing things in context. We have given attention to cultural and linguistic context in our discussion of the problems of defining what local means but what is done in local economic development varies in relation to two other key considerations. The economic context – demand deficiency or skills shortage, a context of growth or of restructuring, for example – sets the parameters of the possible, whilst the political and administrative (governance) system in which a local action operates has a profound influence on the “policy weight” that it can achieve. All these things come together under particular specific *geographical circumstances*. It makes a fundamental difference across these economic and governance variables whether we are talking about local action in, for example, the neighbourhoods of a major metropolitan city, a declining industrial conurbation or a remote rural region.

One of the most important contributions of IDELE is to bring local employment development out of a context that restricts it only to finding “best practice” ways to help *poor* local people and *deprived* local places. One of the more powerful critiques of the local approach is that it can be seen as an invitation to poor people and poor areas to “pull on their own bootstraps” to tackle the local problems they confront. The ambition for IDELE and the local approach generally needs to be wider and more comprehensive, acting across rich areas and poor, and a standard feature within a mature multi-level policy environment.

Local Development as a Component in the Mainstream

IDELE is also about provoking a quantum step forward in policy thinking. This starts from the proposition that actions *conceived, managed or delivered at local level* can permit the opening up of new development opportunities and new sources of jobs that can generate additional wealth, well being and social cohesion. What can start the process of “thinking out of the box”, however, is to accept that it is not necessary *simultaneously* to demand that all three (conception, management, implementation) have to be done locally to find the “true” approach. The important thing here is that the *local* has a real place in mainstream policy across the board and that its position comes from the fact that both functionally and politically *acting locally* brings real added value. There are, in fact, many combinations of ways in which acting locally can be part of the policy process.

Local players and partnerships need to be more persuaded of the need to look for appropriate solutions for their problems – even if the logic of efficient and effective action means they might be best managed or delivered by those outside. There is a need for them to be more proactive in the regional, national and EU context in broadening the understanding of others that are needed to facilitate local actions.

Demonstrating and Extracting the Value Added of Local Employment Development

Regardless of where *acting locally* sits in a multi-level system of governance, it is the task of IDELE to establish some of the key features of the real value added of the local approach. At root, this comes from the empowerment of local actors - either because they decide to *adopt*

their own stance on a particular issue or because some act of policy sets out to *endow them with a space in which to act* and some powers to make a difference. Naturally, the two are not mutually exclusive.

More specifically, what we are demonstrating through IDELE is as follows.

- How locally influenced action can help to create and enhance a *spirit of entrepreneurship and enterprise* not just in economic activity but in finding and developing new ways to do a variety of things from delivering services to building social and civil capital to making public administration more creative;
- How to *overcome those barriers* that stop people capturing the benefits of local action under different kinds of geographical, economic and political circumstances– sometimes this will be by local action itself but often the blockages that need to be removed will be at other higher levels in the hierarchy of government and public administration;
- How creating a clearer *space for local action* in both public programmes and private sector management strategies can help to generate new sorts of sustainable jobs and offer employment opportunities to a wider segment of the both of the economically active and the inactive population;
- How *local strategies* can be most effective in giving focus, purpose and integration to policy actions of all kinds;
- How local activities can be persuaded to move from short-term grant-based funding to *active measures to ensure sustainable development*;

The Particular Value of Local Partnerships and Some Key Parameters of Success

The special features underpinning the advantages local partnerships can bring to employment and development can be summarised as their ability to do a number of things such as:

- establishing a shared vision and strategy across a variety of stakeholders;
- using trust as a way to lower transaction costs;
- getting stakeholders to see the importance of their common purpose as the basis for a fair distribution of costs, risks and benefits;
- raising the confidence of all their participants by a deliberate strategy of empowerment; and
- gaining from sharing learning as the partners grow to understand each other and the needs of the venture over time.

In practical terms IDELE has been able to identify the following as having a significant bearing on the prospects for success:

- A need to achieve a degree of clarity about the problem to be addressed and to devise an appropriate strategy.
- A need to secure the necessary resources, leaders and people to act upon the strategy.
- A need to think long term and include a strategic focus on the sustainability of actions and structures, in particular avoiding dependence on short term external funding.

- A need to see what others have done in similar situations and to learn from their experience.
- A need to set realistic ambitions about what can be achieved.
- A need to establish where local players can fit their activity into those of others already in place and where they can best influence the system of local governance.

One of the clearest insights from IDELE thus far is that the nature of the existing governance system as a restrictive or permissive force should not be underestimated at the outset. It is vital for local actors to learn to work within this to their best advantage.

The Search for Long Run Sustainability

Over the last decade or so, there has been a plethora of funding programmes for local employment development made available by the EU and national governments. Whilst this has, as intended, stimulated an extensive and diverse pattern of local activity and partnerships, it does not guarantee the long-term sustainability of such actions. Indeed, many partnerships may have become overly dependent on continued public subsidy from the EU or national level, rather than using such subsidy to create long-term benefit. With a greater emphasis on the open method of co-ordination, rather than pilot funding programmes, future funding opportunities from the EU are likely to be fewer than in recent years.

In this situation, the prospects for future sustainability will best come from exploring two pathways. The first involves taking active steps to ensure that the value added that arises from local partnership action is rigorously measured and documented and presented to the mainstream national, regional and European authorities with a view to having funds applied to it more actively. The second requires that new routeways to investment and finance be sought out – not simply within the domain of public subsidy but also within the sphere of private and mixed public-private finance – assembling and capturing resources from those “double bottom line” funds that offer the opportunity to pursue commercial and social welfare investments in tandem.

Conversation, Shared Learning and Benchmarking

It follows from all this that there can be no simple and easily transcribed prescriptions for “best practice” (except of the most generic and obvious kind) for local employment development. The best way to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local actions in the face of the contextual variety that surrounds them is by *conversation and shared learning* and by *benchmarking*. By informed and structured conversations and a regular process of “open co-ordination”, the actors – local and non-local – involved in local approaches can learn how best to navigate the complexities of the policy environment. This, in essence, is what the IDELE process is seeking to achieve.

Year 1 activity

Being guided by the IDELE Conceptual Framework, activity in the first year has facilitated *conversations and shared learning* between stakeholders in local employment development and *benchmarking* (in an informal sense) of best practice. The conversations, shared learning and benchmarking have been facilitated through various means, including research, one-to-one discussions, seminars and on-line dissemination.

Specific activities have included:

- developing ways for identifying and selecting good practice examples of local and regional employment policies and better governance;
- organising four one-day seminars;
- production of thematic papers based on the subject matter of the seminars (see page viii);
- the launch of the IDELE web site featuring information about the seminars, programme background material, useful links, etc.; and
- production of this final Year 1 report.

Lessons from the four themes of Year 1

The first year of IDELE has considered four key themes in local employment development. These themes reflect a key tenet of IDELE – the importance of context in identifying and exchanging good practice principles and examples. Each theme formed the basis of research and the identification of good practice examples, leading to an international seminar and culminating in a thematic report.

Whilst each seminar produced its own conclusions specific to the theme, some common lessons have emerged with relevance to local employment development more generally. These have build on and develop the conceptual background to IDELE set out above. They also confirm the value of a local approach.

- The Lisbon process, with its grand aspirations for sustainable economic growth, while vital in its own terms, must eventually deal with the specificity and context that is found at the local level.
- Local partnership approaches provide the opportunity for Lisbon to deal with such specificity and context. But such partnerships require good leadership and effective links to all levels of government – regional, national and European – if they are to have such an influence on Lisbon.
- Specificity and context are integral to local competitiveness. Indeed, local competitiveness is based only in part on relative factor costs. The wider ‘milieu’ is of equal importance, for example in attracting and retaining individuals and companies, (especially those in high-skills, hi-tech, high value added sectors or occupations). Milieu encompasses the wider attributes of a locality such as quality of life, leisure and educational opportunities, heritage and the natural environment, community, family, civic society and culture.
- Linked to this, localities need to develop a wider ‘message’ based on people, lifestyle, civic and cultural factors and expressed through local ‘branding’ and ‘place-marketing’. In

old industrial areas where the main industry has waned, this may need to be a ‘new story’; in rural areas, the ‘message’ can emerge more naturally, for example from local heritage or an attractive environment.

- A key benefit of local approaches is that they can more easily generate trust; indeed, in some localities, particularly rural ones, the trust relationships built on strong ties of family and community can enable enterprising or joint activities to be developed more easily; in metropolitan areas, trusted local partners can act as a bridge between minority ethnic groups or immigrants and employers or training providers; trusted partners can also encourage those in the informal sector to regularise their activity.
- Local approaches add value by identifying and meeting the specific local needs of employers and workers or particular groups. This can be by customising mainstream national programmes, or by creating additional activities that work alongside or ‘upstream’ of such programmes.
- Access to land, property and finance remains vital to local employment development and can be supported by local partnership approaches. Partnerships can improve the access of SMEs to finance, as well as providing communal resources, thus reducing costs. They can also devise and generate new forms of land and property ownership that encourage enterprising and entrepreneurial communities.

Theme	Key Lessons
<p><i>Old Industrial and Mining Areas: The Added Value of Local Employment Development</i></p> <p>(Seminar in Lille, France, 2 July 2004)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customised local approaches are needed to complement centrally-driven approaches. • Keeping factor costs of production low and attracting inward investment remains important but localities cannot compete solely on cost. • Local approaches should create a positive ‘message’ based on people, lifestyle, civic and cultural factors. • New forms of governance can be built on the rich traditions of civil society, strong sense of community and local loyalty. • Areas with a proliferation of local initiatives should co-ordinate or rationalise delivery mechanisms. Areas with little experience should build capacity for local development. • Areas dominated by a single industry need to create a culture of enterprise. • Partnership approaches can encourage SMEs to cooperate for mutual advantage, even when in some circumstances they are direct competitors. • Local approaches should offer routes into employment with work experience in intermediate labour markets or social enterprises.
<p><i>The Metropolitan City: Seeking Competitive Advantage through Local Actions to Integrate Immigrants and Minority Groups</i></p> <p>(Seminar in Berlin, Germany, 16 July 2004)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority ethnic groups and immigrants are a part of the comparative advantage of cities. • Cities have employment opportunities to offer these groups, and skills and service gaps that can be filled. • Local approaches can identify the skills of minority groups and immigrants as well as barriers to employment. • Local approaches can generate trust and act as a bridge to employers or training providers. • Local schemes can give people the right support to convert their qualifications to local requirements and ensure that their experience, skills and qualifications are recognised by employers. • Regularising employment within the informal economy can be achieved at the local level. • Local approaches can support people to build businesses from family-based un-regularised entrepreneurship.
<p><i>Remote Rural Areas: Stimulating and Managing New Firm Creation and Entrepreneurship through Local</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local cultures, heritage and the natural environment are a key feature of the comparative advantage of rural communities. • A regional strategic approach may be more appropriate, where activities need to operate at a greater scale. But flexibility should be retained to enable local people to participate.

Theme	Key Lessons
<p><i>Action</i></p> <p>(Seminar in Rovaniemi, Finland, 16 September 2004)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time jobs can be combined into full-time jobs through job-matching schemes and thus expand the activity of SMEs. • New and/or community forms of land and property ownership can increase entrepreneurial and creative activity. • Strong trust relationships in rural communities can lever in voluntary labour and skills and encourage entrepreneurial risk taking. • A lack of action by government agencies creates significant scope for local partnerships to develop. • Policymakers can support rural partnerships in campaigning for or making improvements in infrastructure such as broadband access.
<p><i>Successful Local Milieux and the Lisbon Process</i></p> <p>(Seminar in Cork, Ireland, 8 October 2004)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and collective vision, local branding or place-marketing and gathering intelligence to understand the marketplace are all essential as a means to staying ahead. • International recognition of a locality offers networking possibilities and can deliver <i>free-rider benefits in marketing opportunities</i> for constituent firms. • The local <i>milieu</i> is a key factor determining an area’s ability to sustain a successful economy. It is fundamental in attracting a critical mass of high quality workers and companies. • Being adaptable and flexible is essential for a place to respond to change. Change management is a vital function for local partnerships. With these characteristics, local partnerships can operate exclusively in the open marketplace, with limited public subsidy. • While the public purse can and does offer assistance, it is essential for these places to attract investment capital from the open financial marketplace. • <i>Benchmarking methods</i> are useful, for example seeking examples of successful local milieux for the knowledge based industries, finding out how they operate and raising performance and quality to that of the best. • The most successful local milieux are adept at extending their influence across all levels of government

1.0 INTRODUCTION

IDELE is a key element of the European Commission's programme to encourage the **I**dentification, **D**issemination and **E**xchange of good practice in the field of **L**ocal **E**mployment development and promoting better governance. It is a three-year project implemented by ECOTEC Research and Consulting on behalf of the European Commission, Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs.

Activity within IDELE aims to highlight and enhance the contribution of local employment development to the objectives of the European Employment Strategy (EES) and thus to the EU's strategic goal: *to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*. This activity is based on key principles regarding best practice in local employment development and the best means to identify, disseminate and exchange it. These principles are outlined in an overarching *Conceptual Framework*, which is guiding the IDELE process.

ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd is pleased to present this report for the first year of the IDELE project, *Identification, Dissemination and Exchange of good practice in the field of Local Employment development and promoting better governance*. The report sets out the IDELE Conceptual Framework, describes activities undertaken and presents lessons emerging in Year 1 (2003-04). It fulfils the requirements of ECOTEC's contract with the European Commission VC/2003/0208 (Accounting Number SI2.364732).

The report sets out:

- The overall conceptual framework of IDELE (section 2);
- Summary of activity in Year 1 (section 3);
- Activity undertaken in the Identification phase (section 4);
- Activity undertaken in the Exchange phase (section 5);
- Activity undertaken in the Dissemination phase (section 6);
- Details of the seminars (annexes I to IV); and
- Outcomes of research into the four themes (annexes V to VIII).

2.0 IDELE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction: The Growth of Interest in the Local Approach

2.1.1 The increasing engagement of local actors

IDELE forms part of an ongoing process by the European Commission to encourage the exchange of good practice and networking in Local Employment Development (LED). The local level has gained increasing importance in European policy since the first official Communication in 1984 and since the creation of the European Employment Strategy (EES)¹ in 1997. At the end of two decades of experimentation and significant funding both for pilot actions and under Structural Funds measures there is a need to review what has been learned and disseminate and exchange the lessons from practice. IDELE comes at an opportune moment in a more general sense, however. Local actors seem, with or without external exhortation, to be becoming more involved in trying to capture employment and development for their regions and it is important to recognise this. While the European Commission programmes have been a significant spur to action, we also have the opportunity in IDELE to capture learning from a much wider social movement.

Globalisation and the free play of market forces are producing strong social and territorial inequalities. The armoury of available tools and resources at the national level appears to be shrinking, or at least becoming less effective, in avoiding these inequalities - despite being constantly adapted to meet the new circumstances. An alternative that sees people coming together in some defined geographical setting below the region (the local) is growing in attractiveness to local players, as well as to policy makers at 'higher' levels – at least in some places. For some, the ambition is to mobilise local forces more effectively to compete with other places and interests to gain commercial or development advantage. For others, the focus of acting locally may lie with those things less easily subject to the forces of the market – home, family, friends, community, culture, environment – essentially to preserve and enhance the essence of local life. Both seem to offer a very human way of responding to, what seems to most to be a loss of control in the face of global forces and their unidirectional trends.

2.1.2 The stimulus of intractable unemployment

While the full range of this emergent drive toward local action is huge and potentially far-reaching, the European Commission's promotion of local employment development has offered a very practical point of entry. What brought local approaches to prominence was their potential to offer new ways to tackle *intractable unemployment*. New sources of jobs were needed as well as measures to get unemployed and excluded people into them. There was (and still is) an immediate coming together of interest here by Member State governments threatened by the social and political consequences of unemployment and social exclusion. The European Commission, through a series of pioneering actions, offered its intellectual leadership to launch a major policy thrust to promote local action as a significant

¹ http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_strategy/index_en.htm

part of the remedy. While policies at other levels – macro-economic, structural and regional/sectoral – continued to address the broader competitiveness and cohesion agenda at the level of the economic system as a whole, a policy that proposed to use local actors to seek out local solutions had (and continues to have) strong appeal.

The local approach came to play an increasing role in the policy frameworks of the EU and a number of Member States during the 1980s and 1990s. It was chiefly envisioned as an instrument of *unemployment policy* and this has determined its development pathway. From the perspective of economic analysis it is seen to work on both the supply and the demand side. On the supply side, it offers a means to mobilise labour to adapt to new work opportunities and to acquire relevant skills by drawing the unemployed and socially excluded along “pathways to integration” with strongly local points of entry. On the demand side, it is a means to prospect for new sources of jobs at the local level – particularly by identifying those service gaps and market failures that were unfilled by private enterprise or public provision as service demands changed faster than orthodox responses. With a re-awakening of interest in social enterprise and the social economy, another demand side option has been to stimulate alternative forms of enterprise within local communities that gave both the prospect of addressing gaps in “proximity services”² and the chance that the locally unemployed could “cut themselves tailor-made jobs”³ by acting as social entrepreneurs.

2.1.3 Local employment development and “market failure”

Another entry point to the possibilities of action at the local level has come from the orthodox perspective of market economics and from the logic of arguments about *market failure*. Indeed, the essence of the highly influential Local Development and Employment Initiatives (LDEI) that emanated from the European Commission’s Cellule de Prospective in 1996 was to position local action as an instrument to address existing and emergent market failures in a fast moving economy. This is, of course, entirely appropriate and much excellent progress in developing the local approach has come as a result of this insight.

One of the effects of this was, however, to drive another version of the debate on local approaches down a track that saw local action and local partnership as providing a source of “new” business and institutional forms that were not so closely attached to the orthodox market with its focus on owner/shareholder returns. These sorts of *social enterprise* organisations are in some sense “led” by the market but “driven” by their over-riding ambition to recover wider social benefits. These are seen as being able to offer “double bottom line” solutions that could offer a social gain while simultaneously filling a product, or most often, service gap that purely commercial interests were unwilling to enter. In the most marginalised areas, for example, low incomes combined with inaccessibility (physical or perhaps cultural) may offer too small a market to tempt fully commercial firms into a supplier role. Social enterprises can, however, meet these sorts of needs (home care services,

² Services where closeness to the customer is at a premium such as domiciliary care or kindergartens.

³ Activities where local people set up their own organisations in circumstances where formal employment is hard to find. See: The Era of Tailor Made Jobs; Second Report on Local Development and Employment Initiatives, European Commission, SEC (98).

local transport, maintenance and repair, landscape improvement and so on) by virtue of their willingness to offset a full commercial return against the provision of a worthwhile local service. In the United States “double bottom line investing” is gaining ground as a way of drawing private investment into such marginal areas. The role of the State in this case is to provide incentives that bend the open commercial market to deliver wider community benefits.

This identification of the local approach with the Third Sector/System, with the interests of the NGOs and with the social economy and social enterprise has been gathering pace in some Member States. The European Commission has tended to proceed more cautiously in relation to the social economy (whether locally applied or not) since exploring the sector through its Third System and Employment Programme⁴.

For our purposes in IDELE, this approach is clearly ruled *in* but needs to be seen as *one component* within a wider project that sees local actions as not the preserve of one sector or of one view of the political economy of Europe. The local approach being explored in IDELE has the capacity and range to cover all sectors. Its starting point is the local area, which is the place where all the different social and economic factors come together to impact on individuals in the most direct sense.

2.1.4 A broad agenda of exploring local actions in context

By virtue of these two entry points to policy – tackling unemployment by local actions and creating new enterprise forms to tackle market failure – local employment development has become *de facto* strongly attached to the geography of deprived local places across Europe. This has, in turn, strongly coloured the debate about its effectiveness. Whilst the local approach does, as we pointed out earlier, have a wider more general role in maintaining solidarity and common purpose in economic and social life in a turbulent world, the debate concerning its effectiveness is framed very largely within the context of its value added role as an instrument to address unemployment, social exclusion and market failure in particular geographical settings. The IDELE process and the Theme Papers generated by it are clearly located within this policy framework but the key lessons for practice should not be restricted only to deprived local places and their people.

There is clearly no one model or policy approach for local employment development (or certainly of best practice). Different models and trajectories are inevitable – indeed that is its very strength. In the end, the only realistic measuring rod is whether local employment development has the capability to add value in particular local circumstances – not just under the circumstances of deprivation but in general terms. From this starting point, the basis of the IDELE project is that people working in all sorts of different circumstances will experience different opportunities and constraints in working locally. In transferring lessons

⁴ http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/local_employment/pilot_en.htm. For a review of the Third System in relation to EU policy see; Lloyd P E (2004)

from place to place this sense of *actions in context* and of having structured conversations between active players is regarded as vital.

2.2 Key Concepts and Definitions

2.2.1 Local Employment Development

In setting out to *Identify, Disseminate and Exchange* best practice on *Local Employment* development during Year One we have been developing what the essence of the concept. For the purposes of our approach local employment development implies a number of things, including the following.

- Actions conceived, managed or delivered at *local* level can permit the opening up of new *development* opportunities and new sources of *employment* that can generate additional wealth, well-being and social cohesion.
- In the absence of a local approach, development and employment would be *sub-optimal* – missing significant added value.
- Acting locally can also open up the possibility that these new development opportunities and jobs can be more *equitably distributed* – giving better prospects for the inclusion of the young, minority ethnic groups, the unemployed, and the socially excluded generally.
- These local actions have to be seen as *one component* within the full package of activities that make economic development and employment possible.
- Local employment development can only be properly understood and evaluated in the context of a complex set of *geographical, social and economic variables*, and against the background of actions at other, wider, levels – regional, national or European.
- There is a clear role for *policy intervention* to initiate and support Local Employment Development where it does not happen, and to identify and remove the barriers that stand in the way - even though many elements of the local development process take place spontaneously as a product of market forces or out of evolving civil society.

2.2.2 Defining the local as socially and culturally constructed

One of the difficulties for the local as a policy domain is what we might call the “curse of the definition”. People tend instinctively to know what is meant by the phrase “taking a local approach” but when the question is asked; “what precisely do you mean by *local*?” the debate quickly runs amok and the instinctive clarity that all start with immediately evaporates.

We can, however, be clear about two things. First, the “local” is better understood if it is not regarded as a discrete and clearly bounded invariable entity. Second, it is set at a level below

that of the nation and also below that of the region. While the local is, in general, *sub-regional*, there can be great variety over a range from the neighbourhood to the sub-region.

While, for the purposes of administering local employment development programmes, some Member States and regions apply a formal definition to local entities (Neighbourhood Renewal Areas or Local Strategic Partnership areas in the UK, for example) these tend to be mapped on to local spaces that are better understood as having some intrinsic existence that is more *socially defined and fluid*. Defining them formally as some local unit of government is a device that serves an administrative need but the processes we are exploring in IDELE, while needing to understand these formal definitions, have to deal with definitions of the local that are *much less tangible*. In IDELE we are often dealing with local spaces that are socially, culturally and politically defined in relation to particular contextual circumstances.

Given that, in IDELE, one person's definition of "local" may for another be sub-regional or even regional, we have to be able to take on board a range of local conditions. We have included, for example, everything from the tiny Hebridean island of Eigg (UK) – population 87 - through the "local" sub-region containing the entire City of Leipzig (Germany) to the sparsely populated arctic emptiness of Lapland (Finland). The language of the "local" is culturally and contextually variable and a trap for the unwary.

Rather than forcing strict definitions on such diversity, the IDELE process recognises and works with these different understandings about the local approach across Europe. What people and governments regard as "local" cannot be abstracted from history, culture, and place identity, language and power relations. Sometimes, however, the way administrative boundaries are determined by different governments for their own purposes gives a more fixed reality to the meaning of "local" and we need also to take this into account.

While this avoids the need to create precise definitions, it also highlights the potential *scope for misunderstanding* when people share ideas about "a local approach". The "pictures" they have in their minds in using the phrase are socially and culturally constructed and are likely to be fundamentally different. In practical terms it is essential in IDELE to have people reveal the different meanings that they bring with them.

Critically, however, assigning a precise meaning to what is meant by "local" is not of overriding importance. The processes that give the added value to the local approach and that IDELE is designed to identify and disseminate are not dependent on our coming to a precise definition (even if that were possible). By accepting that people's understanding of the local varies and by teasing this variation out, we are able to extract the transferable lessons and concepts and reveal the essence of the value added from acting locally.

2.2.3 The local as part of a multi-level system

One of the most important contributions of IDELE is to bring local employment development out of a ghetto that restricts it only to finding "best practice" ways to have local people do those things that can be done better with local action. This narrow view is even more limiting as a framework where (as we pointed out earlier) it has also tended to be closely associated

with finding ways to help *poor* local people and *deprived* local places. One of the more powerful critiques of the local approach is that it can be seen as an invitation to poor people and poor areas to “pull on their own bootstraps” to tackle the local problems they confront. The ambition for IDELE and the local approach generally needs to be wider and more comprehensive.

IDELE is really about provoking a quantum step forward in policy thinking. This starts from the proposition that actions *conceived, managed or delivered at local level* can permit the opening up of new development opportunities and new sources of jobs that can generate additional wealth, well being and social cohesion. What can start the process of “thinking out of the box”, however, is to accept that it is not necessary *simultaneously* to demand that all three (conception, management, implementation) all have to be done locally to find the “true” approach.

From this more open approach, acting locally can encompass a much wider variety of things. For example, it is possible to have things *conceived and managed locally* but delivered at greater scale efficiency by regional or national level agencies (for example job insertion programmes for unemployed young people that arise out of local initiatives and have local management but are adopted and implemented formally and run as regional labour office policies). Similarly, the local approach can also encompass things *conceived and managed centrally* but delivered (more sensitively perhaps) at a local scale using local agents (for example national programmes for neighbourhood management or community safety). There will, of course, still be the full range of actions already identified as *conceived, managed and implemented* locally.

The important thing here is that the *local* has a real place in mainstream policy across the board and that its position comes from the fact that both functionally and politically *acting locally* brings real added value. There are, in fact, many combinations of ways in which acting locally can be part of the policy process. Figure 1 offers a simplified view of just some of them. The “action possibilities” we have just described are shown on the vertical scale while the horizontal scale shows a selection of levels (national, regional, local) at which each could be carried out.

The left-hand column of Figure 1 shows the case where all the actions are carried out simultaneously at the local level. IDELE case studies from this group include examples from Roubaix (France), the Betet Skara project in Antwerp (Belgium), Trångsviksbolaget (Sweden) and the Isle of Eigg in Scotland (UK). The middle column of the diagram shows a situation where the action is conceived and managed regionally but handed down to local actors for delivery. IDELE case studies covering this group include Flanders DC (Belgium), Project SENDA (Galicia) and Networking for Innovators (Finland). The right-hand column sets out a third possibility where the actions are conceived and managed at national level and then handed down directly for local implementation. IDELE examples here cover such activities as Missions Locales (through the Lille (France) example) and the Lapland Centre of Expertise for the Experience Industry (Finland). Many other combinations involving a local dimension on one or other scale are clearly possible – opening the scope of this kind of activity far more widely.

What this conceptual viewpoint enables us to do is to work towards a possible hierarchy of local actions with a wider range of possibilities. The important finding for IDELE and its wider purpose is that *simultaneously local* conception, management and implementation represents by no means the only interesting possibility for policy development. In IDELE, however, we are also strongly focused on the ways these actions (of whatever kind) are created and put into place *in given local contexts*. This is essential not just to enhance our understanding of the value of local development but also to guide us to what is meant by “best practice”.

Figure 1: Combinations of Actions with a Local Component

	Local	Regional	National
Initiated & Designed			
Managed & Facilitated			
Activated & Delivered			

2.3 The Essence of IDELE: Capturing and Disseminating Lessons from Different Contexts

2.3.1 Introduction

The essence of IDELE is, then, to distinguish from among these experimental projects and the wider universe of local actions those that are *well founded, sustainable and can usefully be transferred from place to place* (not necessarily wholesale but as individual ideas and practical actions or just key principles and concepts). We make no distinction as to whether the suppliers and recipients are from poor places or rich places. We are looking at both⁵.

What we are demonstrating through IDELE is:

- How locally influenced action can help to create and enhance a *spirit of entrepreneurship and enterprise* not just in economic activity but in finding and developing new ways to do a variety of things from delivering services to building social and civil capital to making public administration more creative;
- How to *overcome those barriers* that stop people capturing the benefits of local action under different kinds of geographical, economic and political circumstances—sometimes this will be by local action itself but often the blockages that need to be

⁵ Though IDELE rejects the limiting notion that local actions for employment and development are simply about helping residents and stakeholders in *deprived localities*, many of the projects available to us for scrutiny have, of course, emerged from European programmes designed to experiment with ways to address local problems in deprived areas.

removed will be at other higher levels in the hierarchy of government and public administration;

- How creating a clearer *space for local action* in both public programmes and private sector management strategies can help to generate new sorts of sustainable jobs and offer employment opportunities to a wider segment of the both of the economically active and the inactive population;
- How *local strategies* can be most effective in giving focus, purpose and integration to policy actions of all kinds;
- How local activities can be persuaded to move from short-term grant-based funding to *active measures to ensure sustainable development*;

In essence, IDELE is a *learning driven* process designed to explore these key questions. Consistent with its design, the objectives are to Identify the most important lessons that can be drawn from more than a decade of actions for local employment development and having recovered the lessons to Disseminate them and Exchange informed views about them.

On the basis of this rolling programme of desk research, seminars and discussions and web-based interaction a second objective for IDELE is to help in making the local dimension of policy more fully understood and, as a result, better positioned across European Commission and Member State programmes. This is likely to be best achieved by building on and developing further its clearly defined and understood place in the European Employment Strategy⁶, thus bringing the local firmly within the ambit of the Lisbon Process⁷.

2.3.2 IDELE and the European Employment Strategy

Local inputs to productivity, creativity and adaptability in the workforce

The overall aim of the European Employment Strategy for the *workforce* of the EU is to focus attention on how its productivity, creativity and adaptability can be enhanced while the quality of jobs is sustained and there is equality of opportunity and an appropriate degree of security for workers. Most of the actions to achieve these objectives are workplace-based and will come from the internal organisation of work by employers in the context of those legislative frameworks that stem from national and European agreements about the relationships between flexibility and security. IDELE, however, has the capacity to look at how the overall aim of the EES is being achieved by actions in the wider local setting.

Since the effective actions to foster greater productivity, creativity and adaptability in real workplace situations take place *locally somewhere* the wider features of the local labour

⁶ Employment Guideline 10 (2003) states that ‘*The potential for job creation at the local level, including in the social economy, should be supported and partnerships between all relevant actors should be encouraged.*’

⁷ The ‘Lisbon’ process is based on the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of 23-24 March 2000: http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm

market and labour relations ethos can have a profound effect on outcomes. There is, then, a local milieu component to be taken into account here. Whether the local labour market is tight or slack, open or closed, or whether attitudes are flexible or rigid can make more than a marginal difference. Further, in a changed world of work where the work-life balance is a prime determinant of job satisfaction and where the effective knowledge base stems as much from outside influences as those in the workplace itself the wider effect of the *local milieu* has a power that has yet to be fully recognised. We have yet to enter this key area of interest in the context of the IDELE seminars but it is a topic to be explored during Year Two.

Horizontal themes and the unemployed and inactive

The IDELE process will also address a number of ‘horizontal themes’, some of which are set out in the European Employment Strategy as:

- providing adequate incentives for all those willing to take up work;
- promoting social cohesion and social progress;
- encouraging lifelong learning; and
- finding ways to engage the social partners.

For the *unemployed and the inactive* in relation to these themes, IDELE has a critical role in helping to capture and transfer ideas about the ways acting locally can create new sources of jobs in labour markets where there is demand deficiency. In those regions that benefit from the Structural Funds, the search for new ways to revitalise old economies or to encourage enterprise creation in new ones has been a feature of the way local action has found its way into policy frameworks. Indeed, the best examples of acting locally are often to be found in places where unemployment and social exclusion have mobilised local groups, employer coalitions, politicians and administrators, small firms’ consortia and the like to take steps to deal with the problems confronting them (the Refugees into Work project in London (UK) provides a prime example as does Betet Skara in Antwerp (Belgium) and the Paul Partnership in Limerick (Ireland)).

In the “stories” that IDELE finds to tell through its seminar events these places and the motivation that drove them to take local action figure strongly. They are invariably stories of committed local interests that see little hope of the promised “trickle down” from success elsewhere and that move to take action on their own account. Policy at higher levels has tended to follow rather than lead this movement for bottom up and local approaches. The IDELE process, through applying a systematic methodology, recovers these lessons and assembles them in a coherent way to inform policy at all levels about both the power and the limitations of the local approach. While the local is beginning to capture a more clearly defined place in the EES⁸, IDELE is designed to build on progress to date by offering the opportunity for the wider policy community to clarify its thinking about acting locally.

⁸ for example Guideline 10 of the 2003 Revision and the chapter on ensuring better governance; see http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_strategy/guidelines_en.htm

2.3.3 IDELE: The importance of geography as context

IDELE is all about seeing things in context. We have given attention to cultural and linguistic context in our discussion of the problems of defining what local means. We have referred to the political and administrative (governance) context as being a critical contextual variable for understanding why some things can and cannot be done locally in certain situations. We have indicated that what is done varies in relation to the economic context – demand deficiency or skills shortage, a context of growth or of restructuring but of course all these things come together under particular specific *geographical circumstances*. It makes a fundamental difference whether we are talking about local action in, for example, the neighbourhoods of a major metropolitan city, a declining industrial conurbation or a remote rural region.

“Friction of distance” effects by themselves - stripped of any other features that characterise places and their connections - have a profound bearing on what is possible locally and what is not. While the economic effects of this are well recognised – transport costs for goods, worker mobility and the constraints on information flows - it is critical to the IDELE enterprise that the geographical constraints of bringing people and groups into contact with each other make a real difference to how partnerships can be created and sustained.

In the urban and metropolitan contexts we can point to what have been called “crowded platform” effects where constellations of groups and partnerships vie with each other for recognition and resources. In rural areas (with varying degrees of population and settlement density) the possibilities are both quantitatively and qualitatively different. One way for IDELE to approach different local approaches in context is through what, for simplicity, we have categorised as metropolitan, urban-industrial, ex-urban and free-standing rural town and remote rural settings.

Sensitising *general policy* to the additional possibilities and value added of local approaches – appropriate for different issues in different contexts – is, then, the contribution that the IDELE process is making. To put it more simply, European and national approaches need to be more responsive to local opportunities and know-how, in order to capture the maximum added value.

The other side of this is that local players and partnerships need to be more persuaded of the need to “think out of the (local) box” and to look for appropriate solutions for their local problems – even if the logic of efficient and effective action means they might be best managed or delivered by those outside. There is a need for them to be more proactive in the regional, national and EU context in broadening the understanding of others that are needed to facilitate local actions.

2.4 The Essential Added Value of Acting Locally: Trust, Risk Management and Conflict Resolution

2.4.1 Acting Locally as the Empowerment of Local Actors

Regardless of where *acting locally* sits in a multi-level system of governance, it is the task of IDELE to establish some of the key features of the real value added of the local approach. At root, this can come from the empowerment of local actors - either because they decide to *adopt their own stance* on a particular issue or because some act of policy sets out to *endow them with a space in which to act* and some powers to make a difference. Naturally, the two are not exclusive.

This empowerment can, of course, simply be a mandate from the centre to local agencies to carry out actions of their behalf at the local level. We have not ruled this out (see Figure 1) as a key component in local employment development; local “authorities” (“authorised” by the State to act in certain ways) are inevitably a vital element since they are embedded in the local milieu and are therefore more sensitive to local issues and to how things will work best locally. Being either democratically elected or the legitimate agents of the State they can capture that key ingredient making for value added – the trust of local people. The added value of the local approach that IDELE seeks to identify, however, is where the local authorities act *in concert with others* on such matters as local employment development and design combined and co-ordinated strategies that give local added value to existing policies.

The precise form of these multi-stakeholder, *partnerships, coalitions, and networks* (some appropriate descriptors for players “coming together”) is, as Figure 1 also suggests, highly flexible in form. In a multi-level system the players behind a local strategy can be from other levels notably regional or national. Significantly, however, while the local authorities may be members of most such bodies, there will be some partnerships or coalitions that have a purpose that gives them more of a focus on local employers and business interests. Other such groupings may capture only NGOs or social partners.

The Rich Variety of Possible Partnership Forms

IDELE shows, as its bank of case study examples expands, the rich variety that local partnership forms can take. It is consistent with the IDELE approach that conversations about this represent a key feature of the exchanges that need to take place between different places as they trade their experiences. It is part of our approach to acknowledge that the possible variety of local partnership forms is constrained in some readily identifiable ways – geography, the socio-cultural milieu, the scale and intensity of the local economic or social problems and so on. On the downside, we have already indicated also that under certain circumstances (the “crowded platform” example) this richness and variety in local partnership forms may become dysfunctional as players jostle with each other in competition rather than collaborate together for common purpose.

While we can assert the value (within certain limits) of the richness and variety that exists within local partnerships and coalitions and gain value from conversations between players in

different geographical, economic and political situations, we need also to capture more succinctly the essence of the value added that can make a difference to local employment and development. The clearest ingredients, whose presence or absence makes a significant difference to consideration of effectiveness and efficiency, are *trust, risk management and conflict resolution*. We can now explore how these can emerge in local partnerships to give measurable advantages to those localities that have them over those that do not.

2.4.2 The Intrinsic Value of Local Partnerships

Partnerships involving multiple stakeholders can have a particular functional value. They can reduce conflict between the different actors in a given venture. They can spread risk across a wider group of players and therefore encourage them to take more creative actions. They can increase co-ordination and ensure that the venture is effectively embedded in the local system of governance. Critically, they can underwrite a sense of common purpose that can marshal more than just efficiency and effectiveness to a venture and give it the extra drive and innovation that can come from mutuality. In this critical sense partnerships can be regarded as a device for the creation and maintenance of social capital in local communities as well as a source of value added to enhance local prospects for development and employment.

Local partnerships may also be able to provide a creative way to deliver some new services or help existing services to perform better – particularly in poorer areas where gaps exist that the private and public sectors leave unfilled (the market failure case referred to earlier). Where they really work well, they can provide a means both to control service delivery costs and to improve the quality of outcomes. They can, for example, encourage participants to offer more than the strict value of their labour time and to be willing to add free labour to a venture that they believe in. The trust that partners can create between them can also reduce management time and the transaction costs of conflicts over roles and actions. Where partnerships can be close to the customer or client base by being in some way “part of their world” they can help to ensure that delivery activities are more highly sensitised to local needs.

Getting the “right” partners involved is absolutely vital both to deal with the task itself and to create the necessary climate of trust. In the case of local employment development, certain obvious players suggest themselves, such as state agencies, local authorities, social partners, local community interests, and so on. Indeed, governments are taking an increasingly active role in bringing them together. IDELE already shows, however, that, in places where partnerships have come into being independently and out of some local sense of common purpose, success is more readily assured (the Sophia Antipolis (France), BioDundee (UK) and Oyonnax (France) case examples show just how effective this can be).

2.4.3 *The Added Value of Working in Partnership*

The special features underpinning the advantages local partnerships can bring to employment and development can be summarised as the opportunity to:

- establish a shared vision and strategy across a variety of stakeholders;
- use trust as a way to lower transaction costs;
- get stakeholders to see the importance of their common purpose as the basis for a fair distribution of costs, risks and benefits;
- raise the confidence of all their participants by a deliberate strategy of empowerment; and
- gain from sharing learning as the partners grow to understand each other and the needs of the venture over time.

These are only set out as “opportunities” since in reality, of course, the ideal properties of partnership do not simply emerge out of the process of stakeholders coming together. They have to be striven for, worked at and built up over time. As the IDELE case studies demonstrate, the best partnerships will seek to play to their strengths and minimising their weaknesses, whilst always understanding and working within the realities of the local context.

2.4.4 *Trust as the Key Factor in Adding Value*

For multi-stakeholder partnerships, whether in local employment development or any other activity based on social or common values, the key factor that delivers their special advantage is *trust*. In particular it is about the relationships between the players and relies on being able to:

- predict others’ behaviour with confidence;
- have confidence in the intentions of others; and
- have the confidence that the risk of creative action can be shared with others.

Trust is, however, not just some new management technique that can be learned from a textbook or installed by a hired consultant (though these can help). In reality, trust tends to build up slowly. At its simplest, trust is built up from the way people share experiences and learn from them. It is best thought of as being something inherited as an *endowment* from past actions – a feature that characterises most of the selected case studies of best practice in IDELE. In this sense it builds up as an intangible asset – “we have learned to understand each other and know how best to work together”. These trust-building experiences take time and build incrementally through good times and bad. Slow to build, trust can however be very quickly destroyed. It is a fragile property to be nurtured and protected and, if possible, handed on.

Partnerships are, in an important sense, vehicles for the installation and maintenance of trust. It is important, however, not to be naïve about them. They are also about *negotiations over power* between the individuals, agencies and groups involved. In reality, partnership is a compliance mechanism – getting people and groups to negotiate with each other about the

common purpose and to determine which views and interests will prevail over others in achieving it. Many examples of partnerships exist where vested interests use the façade of “partnership” to co-opt and disarm weaker players – destroying the basis of trust that gives real partnership its special edge. It is vital, then, not to be naïve about partnership and to recognise that malign things are possible and set out formal “rules of engagement and rights of challenge” to deal with them when they arise.

In this section we have established the intrinsic merit of the local partnership approach and some core principles about the nature of partnership working. We now need to focus our attention on the practical lessons emerging from IDELE. We restrict ourselves here to a general view since the necessary, context dependent, detail comes from the Theme Papers that accompany this overview.

2.5 Establishing and sustaining local employment development actions: some basic principles

2.5.1 Finding the resources, space and leverage for local action

Turning from the intrinsic value added from acting locally in partnership to an overview of more practical considerations, IDELE highlights three key issues that commonly exercise those acting locally.

- First, there is a need to achieve a degree of clarity about the problem to be addressed and devise a strategy.
- Second, there is a need to secure the necessary resources, leaders and people to act upon it.
- Third, there is an essential need to see what others have done in similar situations and learn from their experience.

In doing this, one of the most powerful findings is how important it is that local players “cut their cloth” appropriately and set themselves realistic ambitions about what they can achieve. As a key part of the overall approach, we have learned that it is vital to consider two less obvious things:

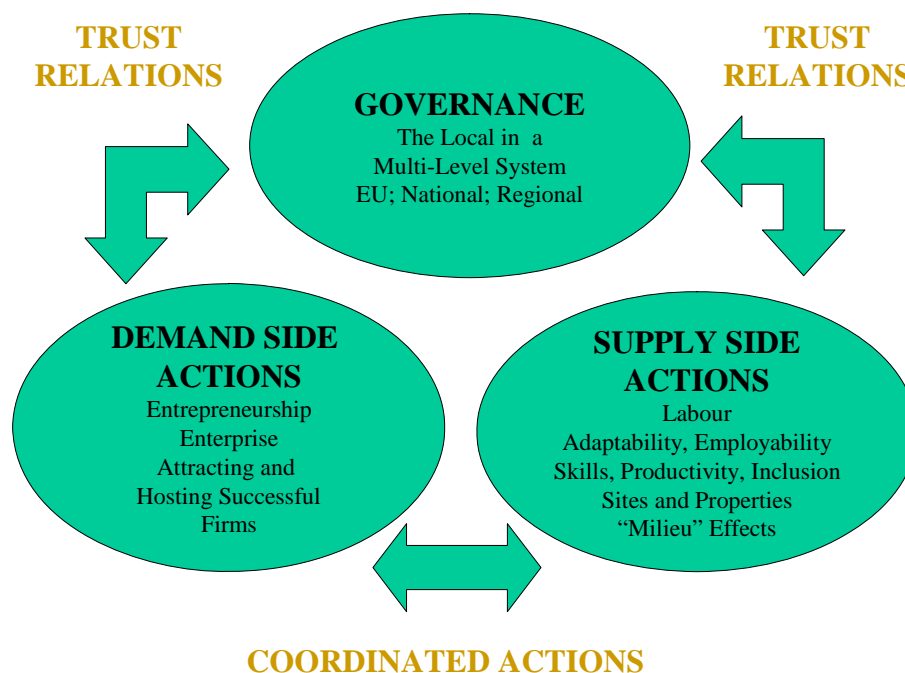
- where local players can fit their activity into those of others already in place; and
- where local players can best exert the leverage they need in the system of local governance.

It is obvious that, in any given situation, local action will be strongly influenced by the national, regional, economic and historical context. In some cases (regardless of resources) the limits of the space for local action may be highly constrained, yet in others, highly permissive. This is one of the *systematic* sources of difference in the shape and outcomes for local employment development that we shall emphasise throughout the IDELE process. Indeed, one of the early insights from IDELE is that the nature of the existing governance system as a restrictive or permissive force should be acknowledged at the outset and that

actors should learn to work within this to their best advantage. While change is always possible in the long run, it is better to see it as an exogenous variable. A second *systematic* source of variance lies in the geographical-economic-social context against which the action is set.

Figure 2 sets out a way of looking at the elements of the process in a given geographical and social context that serves to organise our thinking in IDELE.

Figure 2: The Methodology for IDELE: Defining Elements in a Given Social and Geographical Context



The diagram captures and simplifies the elements that are critical both to effective practice and to an exploration of the value added of the local approach. Each component (governance, demand, supply) differs from locality to locality, as do the ways in which they interact with each other in the differing circumstances that are confronted. While the individual elements (entrepreneurship, skills, multi-level governance and so on) can be understood individually, the essence of how additional value can be derived from acting locally comes from how all three *stand in relation to each other*.

The best examples that the IDELE case studies reveal is how elements within and between each component are constrained to somehow *cycle-together* in progressive ways (Sophia Antipolis (France) and Trångsviksbolaget (Sweden) show how this is achieved). In the logic we have designed this can only be revealed through *conversations about real actions in real contexts*; there will be no context-free theoretical solution for translation into policy practice.

It follows from this that there can be no simple prescriptions for “best practice” (except of the most generic and obvious kind) for local employment development. The only way to

improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local actions in the face of such contextual variety is by *conversation and shared learning* and by *benchmarking* where some general idea of “like-for-like” is identified through these conversations. By informed and structured conversations and a regular process of “open co-ordination”, the actors – local and non-local – involved in local approaches can learn how best to navigate the complexities of the policy environment. This, in essence, is what the IDELE process is seeking to achieve.

2.5.2 Time to establish the local approach as a key policy platform

One of the features of the flowering of local partnership forms dedicated to local employment development is that European policy initiatives have encouraged a wave of experimental activities under the sponsorship of Community Initiatives. IDELE comes at a significant moment in relation to this. After more than a decade of largely European funded experimentation and pilot action, the time has come to establish the local approach formally as a key platform for policy.

IDELE offers the opportunity to have real conversations about actual value added and to obtain and disseminate a rigorous view of where and precisely how “acting locally” makes its best contribution. As we have shown, this varies sharply depending on the policy issue that is to be addressed and the geography (urban, rural, growth region, depressed area) and the governance system (centralised, decentralised) that is expected to take local action on board. We already know that there are no ‘one-size-fits-all’ solutions and that these sorts of contingent conditions can strongly influence whether a local approach can be expected to go well or badly. IDELE offers all who participate in it the chance to participate in the evaluation and development of the thinking that lies behind *acting locally* so that we can give it a solid platform in enabling policy.

2.5.3 Sustaining local actions in the long-term

Over the last decade or so, there has been a plethora of funding programmes for local employment development made available by the EU and national governments. Whilst this has, as intended, stimulated an extensive and diverse pattern of local activity and partnerships, it does not necessarily guarantee the long-term sustainability of such action. Indeed, some partnerships may have become overly dependent on continued public subsidy from the EU or national level, rather than using such subsidy to create long-term benefit. With a greater emphasis on the open method of co-ordination, rather than pilot funding programmes, future funding opportunities from the EU are likely to be fewer than in recent years.

In this situation the prospects for sustainability will best come from exploring two pathways. The first involves taking active steps to ensure that the value added that arises from local partnership action is rigorously measured and documented and presented to the mainstream national, regional and European authorities with a view to having funds applied to it more

actively⁹. The second requires that new routeways to investment and finance be sought out – not simply within the domain of public subsidy but also within the sphere of private and mixed public-private finance – capturing those sorts of “double bottom line” funds we spoke about earlier through a recourse to social enterprise development.

The second year of IDELE will explore in more depth these possibilities for creating sustainability, with a particular emphasis on innovative financial instruments as an alternative to the grant culture.

Some of the following basic principles that have emerged from IDELE in this first year will be carried forward as we move on to develop the sustainability debate:

- Local employment development is as much about improved governance as it is about operating projects. Good local partnerships can bring about efficiency gains that would not be captured by individual actors working in isolation. In some cases, they can simplify and rationalise a proliferation of initiatives or customise mainstream (national) programmes to local needs. Placing the local more effectively within the multi-level governance system of a Member State or region is vital to having it recognised as part of “normal” governance.
- Local partnerships have a need to build their own institutional and enterprise capacity *for the long term*, as well as delivering short term activity ‘on the ground’. This will give them an enhanced scope for building diversity into their funding base and make them less reliant on a narrow and often public sector source of funding.
- Local employment strategies need to move on to be a statement of how *local needs can be most effectively met and opportunities for development put into place*, rather than reflecting the requirements demanded by particular funding regimes.(however rational this has been hitherto) In short, public funding should no longer be the dominant centrepiece for local strategy development.
- Local activity to support enterprise growth and development offers a relatively straightforward route to self-sustaining finance where it demonstrably serves to reduce the fixed costs of SMEs in ways that incentivise each of them to pay the costs of collaborative action. The sharing of techniques, technologies, management and communication tools and human resources can give local operators the benefits of added scale and scope in their individual markets. This can not only enhance their own profitability but can also provide real jobs for local people in the process.

⁹ Social audit and accounting methods are now widely available and will need to be more actively applied if adoption by the mainstream is to be effectively secured.

3.0 SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY IN YEAR 1

ECOTEC has undertaken activity in Year 1 in accordance with the Technical Specification of the Invitation to Tender No.VT/2003/039 and the approved Inception Report.

Being guided by the IDELE Conceptual Framework, activity in the first year has facilitated *conversations and shared learning* between stakeholders in local employment development and *benchmarking* (in an informal sense) of best practice. The conversations, shared learning and benchmarking have been facilitated through various means, including research, one-to-one discussions, seminars and on-line dissemination.

More specifically, this has included and will include:

- developing ways for identifying and selecting good practices of local and regional employment policies and better governance;
- carrying out the various elements of the work programme, including logistical support; this has included organising four one-day seminars;

Theme	Location	Date
Old Industrial and Mining Areas: The Added Value of Local Employment Development	Lille, France	2 July 2004
The Metropolitan City: Seeking Competitive Advantage through Local Actions to Integrate Immigrants and Minority Groups	Berlin, Germany	16 July 2004
Remote Rural Areas: Stimulating and Managing New Firm Creation and Entrepreneurship through Local Action	Rovaniemi, Finland	16 September 2004
Successful Local Milieux and the Lisbon Process	Cork, Ireland	8 October 2004

- production of thematic papers based on the subject matter of the above seminars;
- dissemination activity, primarily the launch of the IDELE web site featuring information about the seminars, programme background material, useful links, etc.¹⁰; and
- production of a final Year 1 report, containing a presentation of the theoretical basis for the IDELE programme, as well as details of work carried out to date, and with the thematic papers annexed.

Year 2 will build on the outcomes and learning from Year 1. The thematic papers provide a summary of the lessons from experience, and conclusions for policy. This final report of Year 1 provides a full summary of activity.

¹⁰ Year 1 outputs such as thematic reports will be disseminated early in Year 2.

Key lessons from Year 1, in terms of the content of IDELE, are that:

- the identification phase is an important means to generate lessons from experience as well as emerging conclusions for policy, as well as merely identifying good practice examples;
- identifying individual examples of good practice and drawing out their lessons from experience is an intensive and lengthy process; but it is vital, if the outcome is to be genuine learning from experience rather than traditional ‘showcasing’ of project examples. Project promoters need intensive, ongoing support throughout the process;
- the emphasis needs to be on local *strategies* and overall approaches, rather than ad hoc projects;
- the seminars are not an end in themselves; they are primarily a means to debate, validate and crystallise conclusions for policy as well as drawing out lessons from individual examples of good practice;
- presentations from experts and projects are essential to the seminars, but are primarily a means to inform and open up discussion; debate and discussion are the means by which learning from experience is truly captured;
- the key outcome of the project is the learning - captured in outputs such as the thematic papers – and the dissemination of that learning, rather than the seminars themselves (although they are of course an important part of the process); and
- there is a need to address very different audiences through the dissemination: experts/academics, practitioners and policymakers at local, regional, national and EU levels.

Key lessons from Year 1, in terms of the operation of IDELE, are that:

- There is a need to allocate significantly more resources into the research, identification and reporting stages; as noted elsewhere, there is a need to develop in more depth background material and issues for interrogation and debate in advance of seminars, as well as the final thematic paper after the seminar; there is also a need to offer more intensive support to presenters and participants in advance of the seminar;
- Seminars can be organised more cost effectively than estimated at the outset;
- The learning gained from the seminars would be increased by modifying the format of the seminars, to cover part of two days. It takes some time for participants to fully understand the aims of IDELE and the conceptual framework underlying it. However, once this is achieved, the debate and discussion becomes more fruitful. Opportunities for informal networking and ‘ice-breaking’ also enhance debate and discussion.
- Seminars are more productive if participants are more aware of the key issues that are emerging from the theme; we propose to include more in depth material and issues for discussion in the background materials;
- With the IDELE project now established, it will be possible to fix seminar dates and venues earlier. It is proposed to hold the seminars during between March and July, giving adequate time for preparation but also more time during the Summer and Autumn for analysis and reporting.

4.0 IDENTIFICATION

4.1 Selecting the themes for the Year 1 Seminars

While the overall IDELE programme spans three years and a total of 12 seminars, we were advised that planning should be confined to Year One only. The essence of the choice of Year One themes (agreed at the Inception Stage) was that we should encompass a wide, but necessarily incomplete, set of themes and places. The set of themes covered spatial conditions ranging from the major metropolitan centres to rural regions. There was a basic focus on the well-established policy domains of the Structural Funds – Objectives One, Two and Three - as well as a focus of contemporary special concern on migration and the integration of what we have called “outsider” populations in the metropolitan capitals of the EU.

We attempted to give the seminars a focus that in each case will draw together participants from similar socio-economic environments, facing similar sorts of policy choices and around some key types of intervention that are regarded as effective for the problems they face. The dialogue of each seminar was focused – going directly to the lessons from practice in a particular field without having to spend valuable time on background. The themes for Year One were:

- Theme 1: Old Industrial and Mining Areas: The Added Value of Local Employment Development. *Focus: Older industrial and mining (Objective Two) areas undergoing structural transformation and physical regeneration. Location: Lille, France.*
- Theme 2: The Metropolitan City: Seeking Competitive Advantage through Local Actions to Integrate Immigrants and Minority Groups. *Focus: Major metropolitan cities with dynamic and fast moving labour markets. Location: Berlin, Germany.*
- Theme 3: Remote Rural Areas: Stimulating and Managing New Firm Creation and Entrepreneurship through Local Action. *Focus: Outer regions with a focus on primary activities and a dispersed rural population. Location: Rovaniemi, Finland.*
- Theme 4: Successful Local Milieux and the Lisbon Process. *Focus: rural-urban, semi-rural and small freestanding towns. Location: Cork, Ireland.*

4.2 Understanding the theme

Before beginning the process of identifying good practice examples, presenters and seminar participants, we undertook background research into the theme of each seminar. This research gave broad definition to the type of geographical areas under consideration, considered some of the challenges facing such areas and investigated current policy approaches.

Conclusions from the research were tested in the course of one hour seminars operated internally within ECOTEC. This brought wider expertise to bear on the theme, from

ECOTEC staff outside the immediate research team. The research culminated in a background paper that was circulated to seminar participants and that informed the final thematic reports.

4.3 The process for identifying good practice partnerships

Following internal discussion and a progress meeting with the Commission, the methodology for the identification of best practice examples for IDELE was altered from that originally proposed. Rather than carrying out an initial general survey of local employment development projects across Europe, we took a more focused and pragmatic approach, whereby we investigated relevant networks to identify contacts and best practice examples on a theme basis for each seminar. The Commission agreed to the IDELE team ‘testing this approach’ in Year 1. Having used this approach, we consider it to be more effective than would have been the original approach that included a large e-mail survey.

4.4 Identifying best practice examples

In identifying best practice examples, our aim was to identify the best EU examples of local employment development actions undertaken by local partnerships and local authorities. In order to identify the best examples, we took a dual approach. This involved:

- asking known academic experts, policy experts and network heads (listed in Table 3.1) to provide good practice examples known to them (top-down approach) and to provide key contacts for these good practice examples;

Table 3.1: Networks contacted

URBACT	European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC database)
ECO-FIN-NET	European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
REGENERANDO	UN Habitat Best practices organization
UEAPME	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
REVES	EQUAL thematic networks
European Industrial Regions Association (EIRA)	Metropolis Association
smallbusinesseurope	Caritas Europa
EUROCHAMBRES	Leonardo
REACTE	Munich Local Employment Conference
Ruralnet uk	European Association for Information on Local Development (AEIDL): Rural Europe contact
Rural Transfer Network (North Sea & Scandanavia Regions)	European Network of Agricultural and Rural Policy Research Institutes
European Rural Development Network Leader: ERD Project	PREPARE - Pre-Accession Partnerships for Rural Europe

- asking known good local employment projects/partnerships in the theme areas (identified by team members from previous evaluations; evaluation material; and Commission databases) about best examples known to them and contacts; and
- searching existing databases of projects and tools funded under the EU funding programmes listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Territorial Employment Pacts (TEPs)
EQUAL
URBAN I
URBAN II
Article 6
Third System and Employment Pilot Action
Urban Pilot Projects
Structural and Cohesion Funds (from the DG Regio <i>Success Stories</i> database)

Through this approach, we built a database of best practice partnerships relevant to each Year 1 theme. For each theme, we developed a long list of 20-30 partnerships, and then selected a number that were most appropriate to the seminar. Information on the remaining projects was retained within the IDELE database as an output in itself and as they may well be relevant to future IDELE seminars.

Each of the selected projects was asked to present a summary of their experience at the seminar. In identifying relevant projects to speak, we applied the criteria set out in the Terms of Reference for this contract, in identifying projects that present greater potential for dissemination through:

- demonstrating the effectiveness of specific policies and methods used to strengthen the local dimension of the European Employment Strategy;
- the potential for transferability of the tools and approaches used to other territories within Europe (old and new Member States); and
- the potential for dissemination and a ‘multiplier’ effect at a local and regional level.

Due to the multi-dimensional nature of LED, horizontal themes were an integral part of each seminar. We therefore also sought evidence of good practice in meeting various horizontal themes including:

- Sustainable and inclusive partnerships;
- Strong management skills;
- Innovation in terms of both processes and outcomes;
- Good governance and partnership;
- Capacity building of local actors;

- Equal opportunities between men and women;
- Achieving the greatest possible impact on excluded groups and marginalised local places; and
- Evaluation, use of indicators and benchmarking.

While sustainability was to be a key criterion for identifying projects, we also sought to involve new participants and projects within the seminars, rather than projects that have presented many times before within the European context. Consequently, we selected some examples that had not been directly funded by ESF, TEPS, etc.

4.5 Telephone interviews

In order to select the best practice partnerships to speak at the seminars, we interviewed potential partnerships from the long list of projects. These interviews enabled us to probe more deeply into the particular characteristics of the projects that were of interest. We also used the opportunity to introduce and discuss each seminar theme in more detail.

‘Project description templates’ were completed for each project, which acts as a diagnosis tool (in some cases a ‘self-diagnosis’ tool). In most cases, we already had a significant amount of data about the projects identified through our search of European funding databases. We therefore did not use the template to seek detailed information about activities or outputs achieved, but instead to identify more information about particular success factors and lessons learnt. In order to ensure maximum participation of the project representatives in the agenda for each seminar, we also asked each project to provide us with a summary of the issues they would most like to see addressed.

4.6 Project visits

Project visits were undertaken in order to identify more in-depth information about certain projects as a final check on their suitability. The visits involved interviews with the project/partnership manager (who would normally be the person invited to present at the seminar) as well as a number of other key partners and stakeholders. Meeting other partners and stakeholders, where possible, was important to gain a wider and more realistic perspective on the strengths and successes of the project.

In each of the four seminar locations, we also invited one or more local employment partnerships to attend the event, some of whom also presented.

4.7 The process for identifying seminar participants

As required by the Terms of Reference for this contract, seminar participants included ‘representatives and actors from all levels, in particular regional and local, independent experts and Commission Staff’.

To achieve the right participants for the seminars, we again used a triangulation approach. The academic experts, policy experts and network heads we contacted were asked for their

suggestions as to possible participants for the seminars: either practitioners, policy makers or experts from the field. In addition, each project or partnership invited to speak at a seminar was asked to invite a policymaker to the seminar who is linked in some way to the project. In this way, we were able to exchange principles linked to the policy environment with relevance to each identified project.

We invited up to three experts to each seminar who gave an overview of the key issues to be discussed. These experts were selected for their previous research in relation to the specific theme of the seminar, and their experience of talking and debating these issues within European seminars. The events were also by attended by representatives of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

Overall, we included a wide cross-section of participants taking into account:

- different levels of governance (local, sub-regional, regional, national etc);
- a broad geographical representation (avoiding concentrations of participants from individual countries, ensuring a spread across Europe);
- participants from ‘slack’ and ‘tight labour markets’; and
- participants from ‘complex’ and ‘simple’ governance structures¹¹.

¹¹ ‘Complex’ governance structures are characterised by the presence of multiple local stakeholders linked through formal and informal networks. Here, there are several levels of governance that have responsibilities for employment in local areas – national and regional as well as local itself. In this context, there will most likely also be a variety of other agencies and partnerships operational in areas relevant to LED. In ‘simple’ governance systems these institutional linkages are relatively undeveloped. Powers and competencies are generally concentrated in the hands of the central government and its agencies. Although sub-national tiers of government with significant devolved powers may be emerging, this process is not yet complete; there is still not the level of multi-tiered, multi-actor governance that characterises the complex of multi-level context. This is the kind of governance context that is likely to exist both in many of the regions of the new Member States and Candidate Countries as well as in some regions of the more centralised old Member States.

5.0 EXCHANGE (THE SEMINARS)

As stipulated in the Terms of Reference, ECOTEC organised four seminars in 2004. Each seminar was based on the good practice examples identified and involved an assessment of specific local and regional employment development policies, with the objective to determine whether and how they can effectively be implemented in other territories of the new and old Member States.

The agendas and final invitation list for each seminar are attached in Annexes I to IV. Thematic reports¹² capturing the lessons learned from each seminar (and the research preceding it) are attached in Annexes V to VIII.

5.1 Lille Seminar

The first seminar took place at the *Maison de Commerce*, Lille on Friday 2 July 2004. It was preceded by an informal dinner the evening before attended by ECOTEC staff and some delegates. A visit to a local partnership was proposed for delegates arriving early, but there was limited interest from delegates and the visit did not in the end take place. Indeed, experience from the Lille seminar suggests that most delegates attending seminars in ‘easy-to-reach’ locations tend to arrive and leave on the day itself, making informal networking the day before difficult. Our proposal for Year 2 therefore proposes a change to the seminars, spreading activity over two days to encourage delegates to stay the night. This should improve the informal networking and thus the whole seminar.

The seminar consisted of presentations from experts and examples of good practice partnership, interspersed by discussions and debates to validate and crystallise lessons from experience. Our experience from Lille is that the number of good practice presenters (six) was perhaps too many for an open forum and limited the time for discussion. Similarly, four expert presenters was perhaps too many – although the seminar timetable was revised in the afternoon to incorporate the experts into the debate rather than having discrete presentations, thus ensuring that a valuable debate nonetheless took place.

The theme of the Lille seminar was ‘*Old industrial and mining areas: the added value of local employment development*’. It considered areas facing high and persistent unemployment due to economic restructuring and deindustrialisation, with a consequent need to identify new sources of jobs and help local people into these jobs. Annex V sets out the full conclusions of the Lille seminar. However, some of the key findings are summarised below.

- Centrally-driven policy approaches increasingly need to be complemented by local approaches that are more customised. As well as attracting inward investment and reducing factor costs of production, these local approaches need to create a positive ‘message’ for a locality based on people, lifestyle, civic and cultural factors.

¹² Available in English only.

- New forms of governance can be built on the rich tradition of civil society, strong sense of community and local loyalty that often exist in such areas. Areas with a proliferation of local partnerships and initiatives should co-ordinate or rationalise delivery mechanisms. Areas with little experience should build capacity for local employment development.
- Areas dominated by a single industry need to create a culture of entrepreneurship and enterprise. This can be encouraged by social enterprises, training in entrepreneurship and the arrival of immigrants with a capacity for entrepreneurship. Partnership approaches can encourage SMEs to cooperate where they are not direct competitors and can also reduce the fixed costs of SMEs through sharing techniques, technologies, management and communication tools and human resources, as well as facilitating access to finance.
- Local approaches should offer new routes into employment that start ‘further back’ than mainstream programmes - offering ‘re-engagement’ packages together with real work experience in secondary or intermediate labour markets or social enterprises.

5.2 Berlin Seminar

The second seminar took place at the Jewish Museum, Berlin on Friday 16 July 2004. A tour of the museum and informal dinner took place the evening before, for delegates arriving early. The tour helped to set the scene for the seminar, given its relevance to the theme.

The morning session consisted of an introductory presentation from an expert to set the scene followed by parallel workshops involving presentations from good practice partnerships and ‘peer group’ discussion. Organising parallel workshops enabled more good examples to be presented, without impinging on the time for debate. They also improved the quality of debate and discussion, due to the smaller size of each workshop (15-28 people each). The afternoon session featured introductory presentations from two experts followed by an open discussion forum including all delegates.

The theme of the Berlin seminar was ‘*The metropolitan city: seeking competitive advantage through local actions to integrate immigrants and minority groups*’. Metropolitan cities need to have the right forms of human capital to deliver good quality services, both to the local population and on the global marketplace. The seminar considered how the potential of immigrants and minority groups to provide that human capital is best realised. We summarise the key findings below, although they appear in full in Annex VI.

- Minority ethnic groups and immigrants are a major part of the comparative advantage of cities which needs to be harnessed; cities have important employment opportunities to offer these groups in terms of skills gaps and service gaps which need to be filled. These can often be filled through entrepreneurs
- Local approaches can be effective in identifying the skills of minority ethnic groups and immigrants as well as their barriers to employment. They can generate trust and act as a ‘bridge’ between local people, local employers and training providers, as well as provide basic training in languages and build familiarity with the working environment.

- Local schemes can give people the right support to convert their qualifications to local requirements and ensure that their experience, skills and qualifications are recognised by employers. They can also provide ‘routes’ into employment for people with multiple barriers. Different approaches are needed with different groups, but targeting can cause stigmatisation.
- Introducing regularised employment in work areas which traditionally fall within the informal economy can be achieved at the local level. Local approaches can also support people to build strong local businesses from family-based un-regularised entrepreneurship.

5.3 Rovaniemi Seminar

The third seminar took place at the Arktikum, the provincial museum of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland on 16 September 2004. The location of Rovaniemi, near the Arctic Circle, meant that most delegates arrived during the evening of the day before the seminar, but did not leave until the morning after. Consequently, a tour of the museum and an informal networking took place on the evening directly after, rather than before the seminar. As in Berlin, the museum reflected the theme of the seminar.

The seminar consisted of an introductory presentation from two experts to set the scene and then parallel workshops involving presentations from good practice partnerships and ‘peer group’ discussion. The afternoon session featured two further expert presentations followed by further parallel workshops and a final round-table discussion involving all delegates.

For this seminar, the theme was ‘*Remote rural areas: stimulating and managing new firm creation and entrepreneurship through local action*’. The remoteness and low and falling population levels of such areas density can place them at the edge of political influence and priorities. Yet opportunities often exist in the form of tourism potential, an attractive environment, high quality of life and a strong sense of community. Annex VII sets out the full conclusions of the seminar, but some key findings are listed below.

- Embedded local cultures and heritage are a key feature of the potential comparative advantage of rural communities as well as the natural environment. Long histories of cultural richness and diversity have the potential to be mobilised, and the valorisation of these attributes has become in many cases a source of new competitive edge in the global marketplace.
- A regional strategic approach may be more appropriate, where activities need to operate at a greater scale. However, enough flexibility should be retained to enable local people to participate by developing sub-projects and smaller-scale activities at their local level.
- Policy makers can support local partnerships and networks by providing Intermediary Support Structures (ISSs) for them to link into. ISSs can support rural enterprise, particularly through local branding and collective marketing. Facilitating business

networks can improve quality and business performance, for example through quality standards and targeted business support and training. There is also significant scope for several part-time jobs to be combined into full-time jobs through job-matching schemes that can increase the ability of SMEs to expand their activity.

- Wider land and property ownership (including models of community ownership) can increase entrepreneurial and creative activity. Communities can also benefit from owning other, small-scale assets. Moreover, small scale local action *can* achieve improvements to community infrastructure.
- Local action can take advantage of the strong social and trust relationships in rural communities to lever in voluntary donation of labour and skills and to encourage entrepreneurial risk taking in the community.
- The relative lack of local action and locally engaged government agencies mean that there is significant scope for local partnerships to develop. Policy-makers can help by supporting rural partnerships in campaigns for improved transport or communications infrastructure or in making improvements themselves, such as widening broadband access.

5.4 Cork Seminar

The fourth seminar took place at the Jurys Hotel, Cork on Friday 8 October 2004. Most delegates attended an informal networking dinner the evening before the seminar, again helping to make the next day's discussions more productive.

The seminar consisted of introductory presentations from two experts to set the scene and then parallel workshops involving presentations from good practice partnerships and 'peer group' discussion. The afternoon session featured one further expert presentations followed by further parallel workshops and a final round-table discussion involving all delegates. Experience from Cork suggests that the greater time devoted to parallel workshops allows better debate and scrutiny of good practice examples and ultimately better 'output' in the form of lessons learned. Indeed, in Year 2 the afternoon sessions may move straight into workshops, allowing even better debate and discussion.

This last seminar of Year 1 explored the role of local employment development in the context of the Lisbon Strategy and was entitled '*Successful Local Milieux and the Lisbon Process*'. It focused on localities that are intermediate in size and that have thrived on the shift of economic emphasis to high value added, high skill and knowledge-based activities. Annex VIII sets out the findings of this theme in full, but here we highlight the main conclusions.

- Leadership or the collective sharing of a vision is essential to provide local actions with the necessary focus and momentum.

- Local branding or place-marketing and gathering sufficient intelligence to understand the marketplace and to “sense weak signals” as a means to staying ahead as things change are all essential.
- The wider local environment or *milieu* is a key factor determining a local area’s ability to develop and to sustain a successful economy. It is fundamental where the need is to attract a critical mass of the highest quality workers and the very best companies.
- Being adaptable and flexible is essential for a place to respond to change and to “ride the wave” of dynamic economic events. Change management is a vital function for the members of local partnerships. With these characteristics, locally embedded partnerships can operate exclusively in the open marketplace or with only limited amounts of public subsidy.

6.0 DISSEMINATION

Dissemination is a vital part of the IDELE process and follows on naturally from the identification and exchange phases. Having captured and validated lessons from experience (as well as individual examples of good practice) in the thematic reports, the dissemination phase then transmits these lessons to a wider audience to achieve the desired impact of IDELE.

Overall, dissemination will increase within Years 2 and 3 of IDELE, since more of the setting up and initial research has been done in Year 1, and there will be more to disseminate in later years. For example, outputs from Year 1 will continue to be disseminated at the start of Year 2.

6.1 The IDELE identity

We have developed a project identity for IDELE. This has allowed a consistent graphic approach to all the online and written materials (the website, letters, invitations, agenda, speaker notes, working papers, reports/dissemination materials, label for packs, PowerPoint presentations, name badges, name cards). The IDELE identity can be seen on the IDELE website.

6.2 Project Website

The IDELE project website¹³ is hosted on the ECOTEC website and reflects the overall ‘project identity’ of IDELE. It includes the following main elements:

- *Welcome* page introducing the project, its overall aims and objectives, role of ECOTEC and project ‘ownership’ by the European Commission;
- *News* page featuring information about the start of IDELE, news on seminars and other events;
- *Events* page featuring details of the seminars;
- *Resources* page hosting key policy documents (such as European Commission Communications), research reports (such as those produced by the OECD LEED programme) and IDELE seminar agendas;
- *Links* page, providing links to key EU websites (such as the Local Employment Development pages of the Europa website), EU national ministries of labour, international organisations (such as the OECD); and
- *Contact* facility, enabling visitors to the site to contact ECOTEC.

All information is currently available in English and the Welcome page is also available in French. The French language content of the site will be increased over the course of Years 2 and 3.

¹³ www.ecotec.co.uk/idele

The website will be continually improved and updated throughout Years 2 and 3. Key tasks will be:

- adding (IDELE and other) news and events items to the site;
- hosting thematic reports and other project outputs, once approved by the Commission;
- incorporating the database of good practice projects;
- hosting additional useful information, such as policy documents, research reports, etc.; and
- increasing the French language content.

A database of contacts has been gathered during Year 1. A regular e-mail newsletter throughout Year 2 and 3 will direct visitors to the site, to coincide with the release of key IDELE outputs.

6.3 Project Database

The research for each seminar and thematic report has identified a long list of good practice examples, including partnerships, strategies and projects. These examples have been collected into a database, a subsection of which is incorporated into each thematic report. The role of the database includes being a 'store' of good practice projects, listing contacts in local employment, acting as an identification tool (for example for future IDELE seminars), a tool for dissemination, i.e. mailing list for sending out summary reports, etc. compatible with use as part of a 'virtual community'.

The database captures the following information about each example:

- Partnership/project name and location;
- Description of the partnership;
- Purpose, target group and objectives;
- Activities and successes; and
- Contact details.

Upon approval by the Commission, the full database will be made available on the IDELE website.

6.4 Thematic Outputs

Annexed to this report are the four thematic reports¹⁴ developed during the course of the year. These are a comprehensive summary of our findings from the research and identification phase as well as the exchange and seminar phase. Once approved by the Commission, the reports will be hosted on the IDELE website and distributed electronically to the relevant seminar participants.

Early in Year 2, we will produce shorter thematic outputs that will contain the key lessons learned but will be customised to different audiences, e.g. policymakers, practitioners. These

¹⁴ Available in English only.

shorter reports will be available on the website and distributed electronically to a wider audience, but will also refer readers to the longer reports hosted on the website.

6.5 Networking

In addition to the dissemination activities above, the IDELE team has also linked into other networks and organisations. An early task was to establish links with key individuals and organisations as part of the process of researching the theme and identifying expert presenters and good practice examples. These links will now aid the dissemination process.

Links have been developed with the following:

- Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR): ECOTEC met with representatives of CEMR to introduce IDELE and gather information and contacts relevant to the seminars; CEMR has now invited ECOTEC to present key lessons from the IDELE project to a meeting of its Working Group on Employment and Social Policy in 2005.
- Eurocities: similarly, ECOTEC has met representatives of Eurocities to inform them about IDELE; we will explore dissemination opportunities with Eurocities.
- Quartiers en Crise: ECOTEC met with Quartiers en Crise, which led to the participation of Haroon Saad as an expert presenter in the Berlin seminar;
- The Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) programme of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): discussions with the OECD have led to the participation of representatives in seminars in Year 1; further co-operation is planned;
- International Labour Organisation (ILO): discussions have been held to introduce IDELE; these will be built on in the dissemination of Year 1 outputs; and
- Other units in DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities¹⁵: ECOTEC has visited Heads of Unit and Desk Officers for Italy, Portugal, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Malta, Romania, Czech Republic.

With the support of Unit A4, the IDELE team will ensure that relevant Committees at the European level (e.g. European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, Committee of the Regions Commission for Economic and Social Policy, etc.) are regularly informed about identified policy actions, measures and results of the seminars.

6.6 Links to the Peer Review Process

As set out in the Terms of Reference for this contract, it is important that IDELE contributes to the assessment of the local employment dimension through the peer review programme in the framework of the European Employment Strategy.

One of the key aims of the Peer Review Programme is the dissemination of good practices of Member States in labour market policies, with the overall aim of enhancing transferability

¹⁵ i.e. in addition to Unit A4.

and mutual learning processes and promoting greater convergence towards the main EU goals. Good practices to be reviewed are selected by Member States among those published in the Joint Employment Reports or the National Action Plans for Employment.

While the Peer Review will not necessarily be focusing on the local employment development, there will be a number of parallel issues and concerns, and it is important that links are maintained to avoid ‘overlap’. In particular we are regularly checking the Peer review website for good practice initiatives relevant to the IDELE seminar series. Haroon Saad from Quartiers en Crises has also agreed to keep us up to date with seminars being run through the peer review process.

6.7 Dissemination over the three year contract period

Overall, we expect dissemination to increase within Years 2 and 3 of the contract, since more of the setting up and initial research has been done in Year 1, and there will be more to disseminate in later years.

With lessons from experience and concrete outputs available from Year 1, dissemination will become increasingly important. The immediate task at the start of Year 2 will be to make the four thematic reports from the first seminar round widely available, and to produce new material based on these in a simplified and more targeted form for the different audiences for IDELE, including, inter alia, policy makers at European and National level, and policy makers and practitioners working at regional and local levels.

A dissemination strategy will be agreed early in Year 2 with the Commission, and can be expected to include expansion of the IDELE web site to include relevant material and downloadable documents, as well as more proactive publicity and distribution of key materials through the IDELE contacts database and other identified routes. This could also include e-mail newsletters to interested individuals, such as previous seminar participants.

We will also propose to make presentations in suitable forums. Firstly, we would be happy to hold a presentation for staff within DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Secondly, we are in discussion with the organisers of Employment Week 2005, as to the opportunities for disseminating outcomes of IDELE. Thirdly, we propose to identify other suitable events to present to, such as any organised by the Commission or linked to the LEED programme. The Commission has already indicated a number of other possible initiatives into which IDELE results may be input, and we would wish to confirm these as soon as possible in the second year.