

# The IDELE Project

## INTRODUCTION

ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd. is inviting project promoters and policy-makers to present the lessons learned from their experience of local employment development in old industrial areas (Objective 2 areas) at a seminar in Lille, France on 2nd July, 2004. These lessons will be disseminated across Europe and will inform EU policy.

Below, we explain:

- the background, purpose and format of the Lille seminar; and
- the role of project promoters and policy-makers at the seminar.

## THE IDELE PROJECT

The European Commission (DG Employment and Social Affairs) has appointed ECOTEC Research and Consulting to implement the IDELE project. IDELE will "identify, disseminate and exchange good practice in local employment development".

The overall aim of IDELE is not to promote individual, isolated examples of good practice. Rather, it is to identify the key lessons, principles and tools of local employment and how they can be transferred to different localities and regions across Europe.

In particular the aim is to inform national and European policy and it is for this reason that it is important that the seminar includes participants from these levels of government.

IDELE pays particular attention to the context in which local employment development takes place. It recognises that successful activity is dependent on the political, economic and geographic circumstances of a locality or region. So it seeks to identify and disseminate best practice between localities that share common characteristics.

## THE IDELE SEMINAR SERIES

The IDELE process will involve four transnational seminars in 2004 in Lille, Berlin, Cork and Tampere. Each seminar will focus on a particular theme reflecting a particular geographical, economic and governance context.

The seminars will bring together academic experts, practitioners and the European Commission to identify and crystallise good practice lessons, principles and tools in local employment development - in order to inform European policy and practice.

It is our hope that each seminar will allow policy-makers and promoters facing similar problems to share a real dialogue about how the local approach can make a difference - and thereby strengthen local employment development across Europe.

The lessons, principles and tools identified will also be disseminated across Europe by ECOTEC and the European Commission - via websites, publications and presentations.

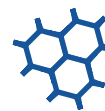
# EUROPEAN FOCUS

The European Commission supports the participation of regional and local actors in employment development, particularly through local partnerships that create local employment strategies. It has funded many pilot initiatives, including Territorial Employment Pacts and Innovative Measures under Article 6 of ESF. Other important activities have been supported by national, regional and local authorities.

These activities have demonstrated the potential for regional and local partnerships to contribute to the new strategic goal of the EU, (also known as the 'Lisbon process') namely:

"to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion".

Implementation of this goal will be facilitated by the new 'open method of co-ordination'. This includes comparing and disseminating best practice between localities, regions and Member States.



# The IDELE Lille Seminar

The seminar in Lille will particularly focus on local employment development in old industrial and mining areas (Objective 2 areas). It will identify good practice lessons, principles and tools that can inform European policy and be disseminated to localities and regions across Europe.

## AREA CHARACTERISTICS

These areas typically suffer long-standing high unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, poor housing and other forms of deterioration in the living environment and a general decay in the urban fabric. A tradition of heavy industry and of large firm dominance has sometimes limited entrepreneurship and small independent enterprise. The skills of the local workforce have been based on traditional industries. But new skills are needed to meet the newly emerging demands for business, personal and environmental services.

Some core cities in these regions have regenerated themselves through urban renaissance based on arts and culture and the leisure industries with the development of sporting and entertainment venues. Others have focussed on environmental renewal or the development of the service sector, particularly the care industries.

New and small businesses can act as major agents of change for jobs and innovation. They can also promote integration and social inclusion. Social enterprise and the social economy can also play a key role in the economic development of older industrial regions. Partnership is a clear feature of the supporting framework for social enterprise and for small and medium-sized enterprises. As such, partnership provides a clear opportunity for the EU's actions in support of local employment and development.

## KEY SEMINAR QUESTIONS

The seminar will seek to explore the following key questions in particular:

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- 1 How can local partnerships encourage small business creation and spirit of entrepreneurship in the areas of weak entrepreneurship tradition?
- 2 How can local partnerships support the growth of Social Enterprise sector in declining industrial areas and therefore utilise the sector as a new source of jobs?
- 3 Can, or how can, local partnerships improve access to finance for SMEs and Social Enterprises since access to finance still remains an important constraint to SME development across EU?
- 4 How can local partnerships influence/ increase education and training for managing and developing SMEs in the areas of weak entrepreneurship?
- 5 How can the role of local policy-makers in creating and managing local partnerships be 'made' more clear, effective and efficient?
- 6 How can local partnerships in declining industrial regions better utilise national and EU policies and funding programmes to address the specific employment needs of old industrial areas?

# THE SEMINAR PROCESS

The seminar agenda (subject to change) is attached. The seminar process will involve five key stages:

- 1 A prior preparation stage during which case study presenters will be guided by the ECOTEC project team in the preparation of their inputs;
- 2 Presentations by key experts in the field of local employment development in old industrial areas;
- 3 Brief and focused presentations of lesson from experience by practitioners and policy-makers; and
- 4 A facilitated debate drawing out key themes and the opportunities and constraints associated with the local approach; and
- 5 a follow-up stage to prepare and review a working paper for further discussion from the product of the seminar.

# PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Examples of relevant experience have been identified in six areas and it is proposed that practitioners and policy-makers from these areas attend the Lille event to present their experiences:

- 1 Catalonia (Spain)
- 2 Lille/Roubaix (France)
- 3 Leipzig (Germany)
- 4 Liverpool (UK)
- 5 Marinha Grande (Portugal)
- 6 (to be confirmed)

We have also identified a participant area from a new member state (Katowice Poland) to introduce a new member state (NMS) perspective focused on the questions surrounding the development of local approaches.

The seminar will offer practitioners and policy-makers from the areas identified the opportunity to:

- present their experiences to the European Commission and an invited audience of 35 key people, including academic experts, policymakers and practitioners from across Europe;
- hear about examples of local employment from other regions, with similar characteristics to their own;
- debate and discuss lessons, principles and tools of local employment development in former industrial areas; and
- contribute to the development of European policy relating to local employment development.

ECOTEC Research & Consulting will pay the travel and subsistence expenses of all participants, including one night's accommodation at the hotel in Lille.