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

Executive Summary of Thematic Learning

Invitation to Tender No. VT/2003/039
Contract No. VC/2005/0702

Report submitted to the Directorate General for Employment,
Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European
Commission

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

IDELE is a key element of the European Commission's activity 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.

Over the three years, the IDELE team has researched eleven themes relating to local employment development (LED), discerned key success factors and lessons from experience and identified best practice examples. The key element in this research process has been a series of 12 international seminars - one for each theme plus a final summary seminar - that have each brought together 35 stakeholders in local employment development. These seminars have enabled *conversations and shared learning* and *benchmarking* of best practice. As such, they have enabled the IDELE team to verify and crystallise the key success factors and lessons from experience and thus devise recommendations. The learning from these eleven themes is captured in eleven thematic papers already available.

This report acts as an Executive Summary of the eleven thematic papers previously produced by IDELE. As such it summarises all the learning, best practice and recommendations from across the three years of IDELE.

1.2 Purpose of IDELE

The Terms of Reference for IDELE noted the great potential of the local and regional levels for job creation and fostering employment. But they also noted that existing good practices for creating favourable conditions for local and regional employment are not always known at and communicated to other levels within a country. Not only that, but also the local and regional level are not fully or coherently integrated in the overarching national policy framework, partly as a result of low awareness of the European Employment Strategy at the local and regional level; there was a recognised need therefore to enhance understanding of the local and regional dimension for reinforcing the local and regional contribution to national policy objectives.

The Terms of Reference went on to state that both top down and bottom up approaches are crucial for a successful employment strategy and better governance at all levels. It is important to adopt a more strategic, coherent and comprehensive approach to local employment development. Without it, individual measures are likely to be less effective as synergy and complementarity are reduced.

Activity within IDELE therefore aimed to highlight and enhance the contribution of local employment development (LED) 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 was 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*¹, which guided the IDELE process.

More specifically, the purpose of IDELE has been to:

- Identify good practice examples at local and regional levels of Member States and Accession Countries² in the field of regional and local employment development, based on the development of a methodology for identifying good practice examples;
- exchange good practices in the form of seminars concentrated around different policy actions and measures; and
- disseminate the results of the seminars on good practice examples and experiences.

¹ The Conceptual Framework features in the Year 1 Report. It is included in this report as Annex I.

² At the inception of IDELE in 2003 Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia were not yet EU Member States.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO IDELE

2.1 Context of IDELE

In March 2000, the Lisbon European Council set out the *Lisbon Strategy* to make the EU the world's most dynamic and competitive, knowledge-based economy by 2010. The Lisbon Strategy has been adopted as the driving force shaping the future of the European Union and its Member States. As part of this process, EU policy is also underpinned by a series of *Integrated Policy Guidelines*, including eight *Employment Guidelines*. There is a view that the Lisbon strategy has no chance of succeeding without a *strong local dimension*. Indeed, the Guidelines make reference to the contribution of the local dimension of employment development.

At the same time as the 2005-08 Employment Guidelines were adopted, the EU was also drafting its programmes for 2007-13, including those relating to its regional policy, social policy and common agricultural policy. Community Strategic Guidelines were adopted to guide the new programming period and, in particular, the National Strategic Reference Frameworks that would determine how Member States implemented EU funding programmes.

Two additional factors determined the context of IDELE: firstly, a concerted trend across Member States to decentralise responsibilities for employment development to the regional and even, in some cases, the local level; secondly, the culmination of 15-20 years of experimentation in local approaches to employment, for example Territorial Employment Pacts, EQUAL or Leader, and a reluctance or inability on the part of the European Commission to maintain at the same level the funding for such experimentation.

The context of IDELE was, then, one in which:

- actors at all levels were seeking to determine *what strategies* should be developed to achieve the Lisbon targets;
- actors at all levels were also considering *how* such strategies should be designed, managed and delivered within the prevailing (national, regional and local) system of governance; at the same time as
- national governments were *decentralising responsibilities* for employment development, driven in part by a desire to reduce costs and in light of the perceived difficulties facing the European 'social model' (or 'models'); and
- a substantial amount of *learning from experience* was emerging from the period of experimentation with local approaches to employment development.

2.2 What is Local Employment Development?

According to the Commission's *Practical Handbook on Developing Local Employment Strategies* "local employment development covers a wide variety of actions that tackle unemployment and reduce inequality. It is a process that is designed, implemented and owned by local actors".

For the purposes of IDELE, a more extensive Conceptual Framework was developed, which expanded this definition. This noted that local employment development implied 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.

LED is, then, a *tool for better governance* that operates within the broader context of regional, national and European governance. We explore the lessons learned relating to LED as a policy tool in Section 3.

But LED is also a series of *practical policy tools* that are used at the local level. We explore the lessons learned relating to LED as a series of practical tools in Section 4.

3.0 LESSONS LEARNED: VALUE OF LED AS A GOVERNANCE TOOL

3.1 Increasing efficiency and effectiveness

The primary value of LED, as identified by IDELE, is as a tool for better governance. Indeed, what has been witnessed the last 10-20 years is not just a plethora of local projects but a different way of distributing power, resources and tasks in the public policy sphere – with the intention of increasing efficiency, effectiveness, democratic participation and ultimately the impact on employment problems. According to Jouen, "this trend reflected the theory that the State through its uniform and costly interventions, proved to be incapable of resolving more and more complex problems and of satisfying increasingly specific demands. Nevertheless, the free play of competition quickly showed its limits by creating wide social and regional imbalances". So LED, as a governance tool, is about recognising the need to be competitive and to address disadvantage and inequality without relying solely on large-scale, standardised national programmes.

IDELE has demonstrated that LED as a governance tool can add value by:

- Better sensing local opportunities, needs and gaps in service provision and devise strategies to meet them;
- Moulding national and regional policy to real local needs, for example by 'bending' mainstream programmes;
- Mobilising extra commitment from local actors by fostering mechanisms for participation, such as pacts or partnerships; and
- Enabling more creativity and risk-taking, by building a climate or trust and local ownership of activity.

For this benefit to be achieved, two things are necessary: firstly, for local actors to demonstrate to national authorities the efficiency and effectiveness of their contribution; secondly, for national actors to provide sufficient support, space and flexibility for local action within the national system of governance.

3.2 Key success factors for local partnerships

There is no simple model for effective LED. However, there are a number of key success factors that make local partnerships for employment effective. These were set out in the Commission's Practical Handbook on Developing Local Employment Strategies and have been verified by the experience of IDELE. We repeat and develop them here.

- Vision for what the locality can and wishes to become
- Awareness of the national context
- Partnership of local actors from the public, private and third sectors
- Meaningful dialogue between partners
- Co-ordination with regional, national and EU policy
- European dimension
- Thorough understanding of local needs and potential
- Focus on gender equality and social inclusion
- Co-ordination of activity locally

- Strategy and action plan
- Innovative activities
- Good management
- Local ownership
- Sufficient resources
- Learning from experience

In addition to these key success factors, IDELE has identified that a partnership must have one or more of three types of legitimacy in order to be effective:

- *Mandatory* legitimacy – is a partnership recognised legally as the legitimate vehicle for employment development activity and given mandatory authority and powers?
- *Market* legitimacy – is the partnership the vehicle that partners and funders will freely choose to use because it is the most efficient and effective option?
- *Community* legitimacy – is the partnership freely and fully supported by its local community?

As well as being "legitimate", it is necessary for local actors to convince national authorities of the value of their activity. This requires local partnerships for employment to:

- provide evidence that there is an issue that needs to be addressed and that national approaches alone are insufficient or inappropriate;
- demonstrate their ability to deliver activity efficiently and effectively;
- take into account the scale of the problem and the best level to implement a solution – and to accept that some activities are best done at a higher level; and
- demonstrate value for money invested by the taxpayer.

3.3 Key success factors for national authorities

Local action must be seen as one component within the full package of multi-level activities for economic development and employment. It is critical, if a successful national programme is to be implemented, that national (and in some cases regional) authorities:

- understand the need to *leave appropriate space* for local actions and allow local perspectives to influence how regional and national policies are designed and managed;
- give realistic consideration to the *institutional and organisational capacities* and resources required for local actors to play a constructive role directly and indirectly;
- understand and accept the *merits and limitations of local actors* working in partnership;
- encourage *flexibility and creativity*, avoiding over-rigid regulation and compliance where local players at a distance from the centre are given resources and powers to act;
- *build in sustainability from the outset* through appropriate funding; short-term grant aid to kick-start a policy for local action is an opportunity to get things going but risks creating behaviour that works against long-run sustainability.

4.0 LESSONS LEARNED: VALUE OF LED AS A SERIES OF PRACTICAL POLICY TOOLS

As well as being a *process* that produces better governance, LED is also a series of practical tools that can deliver tangible employment *outcomes*. IDELE has demonstrated how LED can deliver outcomes in four areas:

- Economic development and the creation of more and better jobs
- Improving access to jobs, skills and training
- Addressing inequality and social exclusion
- Developing social capital and the social economy

Eleven IDELE Thematic Reports explain in detail how LED has added value across these four areas, with reference to case examples. Here we summarise this added value.

4.1 Economic development and the creation of more and better jobs

Given the need to revitalise the economy of many localities, national interventions have mostly attempted to reduce factor costs and raise the efficiency of factor utilisation in order to make them more attractive as potential hosts to successful firms from inside and outside. However, such centrally-driven economic policies have tended to work in tandem with *locally inspired and delivered initiatives* in the areas of inward investment, sectoral clustering, SME development and innovation.

"Successful local milieux" that have most effectively undertaken economic development usually demonstrate a number of key characteristics including:

- identifying and building on their own "genius loci" – that thing that they can do in their own distinctive way better than anyone else in the world;
- presenting unique products certified by local 'branding' – with a history, quality and uniqueness rooted in the territory; in short, producing something of high value that cannot be imitated elsewhere; for example, the quality glass products of Marinha Grande, Portugal;
- continual adaptation and diversifying away from standard processes/products and to higher value added activities and products;
- new ways of organising labour and production that increase efficiency as well as encouraging inter-firm co-operation;
- progressive accumulation of knowledge and skills – particularly entrepreneurial skills - in part through the strong interaction between local production and the local education system;
- sensitive support from local or regional government that acknowledges, enhances and promotes enterprise without over-regulating and thus stifling innovation and spontaneity;
- identifying new and creative sources of finance, such as private equity, insurance funds and social security funds;
- internationalising operations by identifying localities in lower-cost countries with whom production synergies can be exploited; such internationalisation can be through advice or co-operation or even through the transfer of elements of the local 'production' cycle to these lower-cost localities, whilst retaining the higher value-added activities; and

- increasing the access of localities and local clusters of SMEs to technological innovations, for example emerging from research 'poles'.

Whilst the *successful local milieux* provide useful lessons about what is possible, other localities do not have in place the pre-requisites for such development. Rather than having a strong and diverse SME base, these localities may have suffered from the disappearance of the few large employers on which they have traditionally depended. Instead of enjoying strong local communities, a sense of place and a tradition of mutual-help, such localities may suffer from high out-migration, particularly of young people, who depart in search of 'a better life'. Those left behind are increasingly the aged, the lower-skilled and the socially excluded. They suffer from reduced job opportunities, a worsening environment and high levels of crime.

New entrepreneurial talent will need to come from within the locality itself. LED has added real value through supporting local enterprise and entrepreneurship, particularly in disadvantaged areas. Key lessons from this experience are as follows.

- Partnership approaches can encourage local SMEs to cooperate, where they supply national and international, rather than local markets and are thus not direct competitors.
- Partnership approaches can also reduce the fixed costs of SMEs by enabling the sharing of techniques, technologies, management and communication tools and human resources, as well as facilitating access to finance.
- Local actors should initiate and facilitate the provision of low-cost business units and improve access to finance. This will encourage the established institutions to join in partnership to provide such amenities.
- Local government should create a sustainable business environment that acts as a catalyst for business growth through collaboration with the local community, for example upgrading the shopping area to make it more attractive for other communities.
- Policy barriers and 'red tape' should be kept to a minimum. Despite commitment and enthusiasm, business support providers remain frustrated that many of their clients are hindered from achieving their business ambitions because of such barriers.
- Local actors should understand the unique character of the migrant community and provide a comprehensive range of services to assist the growth of migrant business, for example by providing networking opportunities or by removing barriers to business registration.

4.2 Improving access to jobs, skills and training

The immense changes brought about by globalisation, technological advancement, demographic upheavals, etc. mean that skills, attitudes and lifestyles need to be frequently re-examined, re-evaluated and re-validated if societies are to remain prosperous and cohesive. "Lifelong learning" with its sense of *continuous dynamic learning* over all life stages, has thus become vitally important to local employment development.

The lessons from the experience of IDELE in relation to lifelong learning as a means to improving local employment development are as follows.

- A local approach to lifelong learning strategies is essential, since local actors are best able to identify in strategic terms what any locality actually *needs*.
- Lifelong learning is a vital component in any local employment strategy, since it builds the necessary confidence, flexibility and skills of local people - equipping them to anticipate change and respond effectively to it;
- Local lifelong learning needs good institutional links and broader perspectives, being open to ideas from elsewhere, being in a position to exploit opportunities originating at higher levels, being able to mobilise political, financial and practical support.
- Local learning strategies require partnerships that are attuned to local needs, have a clear sense of strategic direction, and where participants pool resources and influence for the common purpose.
- Obstacles to success include institutional rivalry, lack of freedom of initiative, lack of consensus on what is needed, and weak institutional capacities (locally and at higher levels).
- Top down mandate can rarely create an effective local strategy and partnership – the most constructive higher level policy actions are to build capacity, facilitate joint working, and provide sufficient time for initiatives to learn their way to effective action.
- A strong and clear local sense of identity and of 'place' are particularly important to achieving impressive learning outcomes.
- Local lifelong learning strategies need to deal effectively with population *dynamics*, focusing on the needs of existing, arriving, departing and transitory populations as well as the changing patterns of needs at different life stages.

4.3 Addressing inequality and social exclusion

Even in the most successful local milieux, some people remain economically inactive. They tend to lack the skills, confidence or motivation to enter employment even where jobs are available. Such people are also more likely to come from certain disadvantaged groups – young people, older workers, people with disabilities and some ethnic minorities. Whilst mainstream national programmes can create routes into employment, they may not be the most effective way to integrate the long-term unemployed or those with particular disadvantages.

Local approaches can help identify and provide for such individuals, either by customising the service offered by national policy (where this is possible) or by creating new routes that start 'further back' than national policy. Indeed, the local approach has much to offer in relation to:

- *Identifying skills and barriers to employment in local communities*; disadvantaged groups are not homogenous but have distinct needs that are not highly visible to national policymakers;

different approaches are needed with different types of target group, particularly where these consist of different ethnic groups; for example the approach of Betet Skara to meeting the needs of Assyrian Christians in Antwerp was to create a social enterprise producing fine handmade fabrics drawing on traditional Assyrian skills; in contrast, the priority in Stockholm was to provide "Specific Swedish Language Skills Training" to enable immigrants to enter the labour market;

- *Generating trust*; local approaches, being closer to the communities that they serve, have the potential to generate trust in a way that national approaches alone cannot, particularly with disadvantaged groups that may be unable or reluctant to engage with "officialdom";
- *Acting as a 'bridge' between local people, local employers and training providers*; local approaches can better identify skills and barriers to employment and gain the trust of disadvantaged groups; they can therefore spot employment opportunities and link these to local people in a way that national approaches cannot; the smaller scale of local approaches may increase the "unit cost" of activity compared to large mainstream programmes but this masks the intensive support that disadvantaged groups often require and which tend to be most effectively provided locally;
- *Developing holistic local approaches*; local approaches can often put together a better "package" of support to meet the multiple needs of individuals and groups; for example, many municipalities in the Netherlands – now with fully devolved responsibility for social assistance – have a "supermarket" of options from which support officers can choose the best mix for any individual; and
- *Exploiting service gaps to produce new employment opportunities and "pathways to integration"*; local partnerships can bring together demand-side measures (job creation, business support etc.), supply-side measures (training, etc.) and inclusion measures and thus create better employment outcomes, often through the use of secondary or "intermediate" labour markets; for example, Objectif Plein Emploi, a prominent "économie solidaire" organisation in Luxembourg, has brought together local development measures with inclusion and training for unemployed people.

4.4 Developing social capital and the social economy

Whilst local partnerships for employment can, under the right circumstances, deliver tangible employment outcomes, an important part of their contribution is more intangible. Local partnerships can increase local social capital by adding value to civil society, encouraging networking and raising democratic participation. This social capital can itself be a source of competitive advantage by changing the way a locality sees itself, the way it responds to change and competitive pressures, the ways inequalities and social exclusion are handled and so on.

Key factors in this process include:

- greater *tolerance of risk* by those that regulate and fund local organisations and partnerships – a rather "messier" and more unstable set of arrangements may be needed than in the past;

- *building two-way trust and confidence* in relations between government agencies and local partnerships; local actors need to be allowed and encouraged to demonstrate their competency and creativity. For example, Pobal (formerly Area Development Management) in Ireland is widely regarded as having sensitively bridged the gap between regulating and allowing the freedom to be creative;
- strengthening "*institutional thickness*": the depth and "togetherness" of the governance system, including the *linkages* that bind a local partnership or organisation into the wider society of which it is a part;
- Encouraging *social enterprise and the social economy*; being essentially partnership-driven and mutual in ethos, the social economy requires good local social capital to be fully effective; moreover, with the period of EU subsidy for LED coming to an end, social enterprise is becoming increasingly important as a means of sustaining activity, hence the re-emergence of interest in co-operatives, mutuals, and associations as legitimate business forms. Social enterprises can create new job opportunities and build the confidence and capacity of people at a disadvantage in the labour market in a way that would be difficult for a purely commercial enterprise.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 European Commission

The EU has supported pilot actions for LED for nearly two decades through a range of programmes. However, no further Community Initiatives are planned and the overall level of EU structural funding for the Regional Competitiveness and Employment regions will be greatly reduced in the 2007-13 period. Even in the Convergence Objective regions, the European Commission will have less influence over the precise choice of measures and activities and thus less opportunity to stimulate local employment development directly. Whilst the European Commission will continue to finance some local employment activity through Interreg and Leader+, the nature of EU-funded support is undergoing a significant change; any future activity is likely to focus less on supporting experimentation and more on exchanging best practice.

Instead of directly funding and encouraging LED, the Commission will now need to look to fulfil three roles *in line with the Open Method of Co-ordination*:

- retaining and strengthening the local flavour of the Employment Guidelines and the Community Strategic Guidelines;
- encouraging Member States to create the right conditions for LED partnerships; and
- supporting local actors through disseminating information, advice, studies, tools and good practice as well as facilitating networks that assist benchmarking, peer review and cross-evaluation.

5.2 Member States

While IDELE provides evidence for the tangible achievements of local partnerships, these successes have often been achieved *in spite of* rather than because of national policy frameworks in their respective countries. There has been a tendency for national policymakers to see LED as a tool to help alleviate the hardships of "poor people in poor places", rather than as a policy tool with wider utility.

This has resulted in LED often being overly focussed on labour market insertion or social exclusion. Job-creation measures have largely remained the preserve of regional or national actors and the sub-regional role in such measures has more often been merely consultative. However, IDELE has identified numerous positive examples of local actions for job creation.

- National and regional policymakers should note the potential of the local level to deliver job-creation, demand-side activities, *as a complement to regional and national programmes*. They should nurture and support it, not least as a means to help achieve their own job creation objectives.

In most, if not all, EU Member States, the public employment service (PES) implements sizeable mainstream programmes to support unemployed individuals in returning to work. Whilst such

national programmes can serve large numbers of people at a low unit cost, they cannot necessarily address the full range of local needs.

- There is a strong case for national and regional PES to *allow greater local discretion and consultation within the PES*. This would allow local offices to initiate more activity aimed specifically at local needs and also to participate actively in local partnerships. For example, the district office of the PES in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland has been given discretionary funding and the freedom to develop local partnership approaches to helping recipients of "Incapacity Benefit" back into work.

The best national frameworks for LED go beyond merely giving local discretion to the PES. They create opportunities for sustainable partnership development and activity.

- National policymakers are recommended to adopt one (or more) of the following mechanisms for supporting local partnerships for employment.

Table 5.1 National mechanisms for supporting local partnerships for employment

1. *Recognition, promotion, and enabling* of a national network of local partnerships; this offers recognition in national policy, practical support and the space for action; local partnerships are able to set their own objectives with guidance and "monitoring by objectives" rather than micro-management from the national level; the Austrian Territorial Employment Pacts and the Irish Local Partnerships are examples here.
2. *National initiatives implemented locally*; whilst these are conceived and designed nationally, their management and implementation takes place locally; local actors "own" the initiatives and have flexibility to direct them toward specifically local needs and opportunities; performance is often judged by results, with a degree of freedom as to how these results are achieved; examples include the UK's Employment Zones and the French Plans locaux pour l'insertion et l'emploi (PLIE).
3. *Complete local ownership of LED* (or elements thereof); Member State governments have in some cases fully devolved certain responsibilities to the local level; this creates both risks and rewards for local actors, but also the potential to focus entirely on local priorities; the Work and Social Assistance in the Netherlands is perhaps the most prominent example here, where municipalities have full budgetary responsibility for social assistance; this creates the incentive for effective local employment development – the more people that return to work, the greater the savings to the municipalities.
4. *National legislation enabling the right legal forms*; LED activities are often best undertaken by new or innovative agencies or partnership forms; new national legislation may be required to allow for the creation of these forms of organisation; for example, national legislation in Luxembourg has enabled new organisational types within the *Economie Solidaire*", recognising it is a "third pillar" of the economy.

In addition to creating the right national mechanisms for LED, two other factors are also vital.

- National and regional policymakers are recommended to introduce appropriate *intermediary bodies* in support of LED; such bodies can play a vital role in overseeing local partnerships and monitoring them *by broad objectives* rather than against detailed outputs; they should also provide a coaching and support role, helping localities to build the capacity to initiate and undertake their own activity; for example, Pobal (formerly Area Development Management) in the Republic of Ireland has sensitively bridged the gap between regulating and allowing the freedom to be creative; such bodies often operate best with a degree of independence from national ministries.
- National and regional policymakers are recommended to *use funding mechanisms that encourage long-term planning and that build sustainability*; the right funding can help mould policy to real needs by promoting local strategy development rather than short-term action and grant dependency; the use of "global grants" in Spain is a good example here.

5.3 Local and regional actors

IDELE has uncovered not just examples of good EU projects but of localities that have shown initiative and taken responsibility for their own development. With the period of EU experimentation in LED complete, the onus is now on all localities to follow suite. However, the approach will differ depending in part on eligibility for EU funding in 2007-13:

- Localities in the Convergence regions are recommended above all to use the stimulus of EU funding to develop vision and long-term capacity not short-term dependency on grant funding;
- Localities in the Regional Competitiveness and Employment regions must identify the best elements of existing activity and continue them using sustainable and innovative sources of funding.

All localities are advised to take on board the key success factors and lessons from experience identified by IDELE. Above all, local actors are recommended to:

- *take responsibility for their own development* – and not rely on European and national programmes alone;
- identify and develop *long-term vision* based on their own particular *genius loci*;
- build long-term capacity and *invest in people not strategies*;
- *innovate, be creative and take risks*, seeing what works and replicating it at larger scale;
- *engage positively with regional, national and European authorities*, seeing themselves as a vitally important element of the system of governance not merely as a tool to deliver programmes and projects; and
- *learn continually* from experience and from others and *expect and adapt to continual change*.