



Identification, Dissemination and Exchange of good practice in
Local Employment development and promoting better governance

< Team Cote d'Azur- France >

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Details of activity

Background to the case study	<p>Details of activity</p> <p>Sophia Antipolis is a long standing, highly successful 'technopole' in the South of France generated by local drive and connections able to manage change and achieve sustainable growth. Since the first company set up a shop in 1974, the site has grown into a highly developed centre of innovation and enterprise.</p> <p>The park today is composed of over 1,620 independent companies, employing over 25,000 people. The site also includes a campus hosting 5000 students from the University of Nice.</p> <p>Aims and objectives</p> <p>Sophia Antipolis was created in 1969 – the vision of Senator Pierre Laffitte who wanted to create a 'city of science and wisdom'. Laffitte came from the Antibes/Nice part of France, and this is where he wanted to realise his vision. The idea ran contrary to other thoughts at the time – because the economy around Nice/Antibes was almost wholly based on tourism. Laffitte's personality was very important in the early stages of the project – his connections and influence with people/organisations were an important force driving the development of the initiative.</p> <p>The <i>Fondation</i> Sophia Antipolis was created in 1984. It leads the scientific and cultural activities of the park. The Foundation's aim is to facilitate exchanges and prospective reflection, at the French, European and international levels, in the fields of science, industry and culture. It aims not only to foster industrial and technological research and development but also to nurture</p>
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European Commission

	<p>culture and philosophy.</p> <p>In July 2005, the new economic development agency Team Cote d'Azur was created by the main economic partners of the country: the Nice International Chamber of Commerce (www.businessriviera.com), the General County Council, and the board of the various "communautes d'agglomations" (townships) constituted in the country. Since July, Team Cote d'Azur is in charge of the international development and economic promotion of the county and of the business park. The <i>Fondation Sophia Antipolis</i> however remains an essential tool of this promotion and is one of the main responsible actors.</p>
Description of activity	<p>Outline of programme / activities and approaches used</p> <p>Sophia Antipolis is involved in the development of promising economic sectors, and encourages networking among researchers to develop innovative ideas and transfer them to the marketplace. Currently, Sophia Antipolis is involved in the development and promotion of the technology cluster for excellence, known in France as "Pole de competitivite".</p> <p>The venture has been particularly successful in attracting 'grey matter' to the area and hence developing an endogenous highly skilled local workforce.</p> <p>Sophia Antipolis also aims to be a breeding ground for innovation and ideas sharing in the philosophical, ethical and cultural fields. There are various events organised to further the exchange of ideas between these fields, as well as cultural activities which take place in Sophia Antipolis.</p> <p>The ethos of Sophia Antipolis is to manage change actively. This operates at several levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within the labour pool through links with training and educational institutions; • within civil society through links with 60 local community partners; • with key national institutions, for example, by acting as a centre for national telecommunication regulation; and • with green interests by taking a key role in environmental issues. <p>Clusters are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Solutions Communicantes et Sécurisées (secured communication solutions) (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur), led by STMicroelectronics: Software for secure



telecommunications – Telecom Valley

The pole's objective is to integrate software for the transmission, integration, exchange and treatment of information in a secure environment.

Partner companies include Alcatel, Amadeus, HP, Philips, IBM, SAP, FRANCE Telecom, Gemplus and Texas Instruments.

Academic institutions include: Université Nice, CNRS, IT research agency INRIA, and the Erecom and Ecole National Supérieure des Mines engineering schools. Project is lead by CREMSI – Regional Centre for Research in Silicon Microelectronics.

(www.pole-scs.org)

- Photonics cluster (<http://www.popsud.org>)
- Marine cluster: evolving around sea related technology, sciences, security, environment (<http://www.tvt.fr>)
- Flavoring, food, cosmetics and perfume industry (<http://www.prodarom.fr/>)
- Homeland security (<http://www.pole-risques.com>)
- New energies (Iter Program) (<http://www.energy-eden.com/>)
- Orphan and emerging pathologies: Orphem www.biomediterranee.com

Who was involved in the design, management and delivery of the programme

The Sophia Antipolis venture involves partnerships at all levels of government, including local, regional and national. Other important partners include the local Chamber of Commerce, the General County Counsel and local businesses.

In the government sector, significant investment in the project came from local and regional government (around 1/3 of the overall investment). In 2002, 16 communes from the area around the site of Sophia Antipolis united to create the 'Communauté d'Agglomération Sophia Antipolis'. The local Chamber of Commerce is also heavily involved in the Sophia Antipolis partnership.



Geographical focus of the case study	South of France: Nice/Antibes region
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Theme-Specific Questions

Successes / lessons learned	<p>Lessons from experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual leadership: Sophia Antipolis demonstrates the importance of the key leadership role of a single individual for start-up of such initiative. • Political support: Essential for the success was a “political” plan of action that involved getting local interests around the venture and taking carefully considered steps to engage with the regional and national authorities at the appropriate levels. This took the sponsor from the <i>Département</i> through to the <i>Ecole des Mines</i> and departments of the Paris administration in a search for backing. • Leadership and political support: While the individual leader had a crucial role, his actions needed to be embedded within a coherent framework that engaged local actors and institutions and had them buy into a coherent and evolving strategy. <p>Key success factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking and 'cross-fertilisation': As research is undertaken by many different sectors in Sophia Antipolis, the Foundation encourages ‘cross-fertilisation’, i.e. networking among these companies to encourage the sharing of ideas. There is recognition that ideas can be shared across sectors or even combined to foster further innovation, and encourage networking via a number of means, such as the holding of informal ‘get-togethers’ over breakfast, seminars and forums, etc. Not only does this cross-fertilisation help in getting different sectors of research to interact, but it also helps to add to a sense of ‘community’ for the people who work in Sophia Antipolis. • Partnership with a wide range of local actors: Another key factor for the success of Sophia Antipolis and its longevity has been the successful engagement of a network of local actors.
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- **Collaboration with academia:** Sophia Antipolis recognised the need to engage the academic sector from the outset. The University of Nice is closely involved with the venture, so much so, that it modified its name to ‘Université Nice Sophia Antipolis’. Part of the university campus is now on the site of Sophia Antipolis. It hosts 5000 students and helps to foster an atmosphere of networking and ‘cross-fertilisation’ between the academic world and the private sector.
- **Collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and the General County Counsel:** Collaboration with the local chamber of commerce and the General County Counsel further enhanced Sophia Antipolis’ credibility in the private sector, given the considerable influence of Chambers in France.
- **Marketing the region for highly skilled workforce, creativity and innovation:** Antipolis takes pride on promoting itself under a slogan that highlights its “300 days of sunshine”. There is also a clear management imperative to maintain the quality and balance of the living community and supporting physical environment. This can sometimes produce hard political choices about which firms to encourage into the area and which to deflect. The key is the recognition that for the highest quality of professional and technical workers to move to the area and be prepared to commit their family lives to it, there is a whole local community dimension to the planning and development process. With regard to Innovation, the Toyota European Design center relocated from Brussels to Sophia Antipolis in order to provide a wider inspiration material to the Toyota car designers.

Quality of life is also addressed in other ways in the Sophia Antipolis project. Indeed, the Fondation Sophia Antipolis aims to create a ‘Florence for the 21st Century’. It aims not only to foster industrial and technological research and development but also to nurture culture and philosophy

Further information: <http://www.sophia-antipolis.org/>

