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## CASE STUDY: Marinha Grande Territorial Employment Pact, Portugal

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### Background

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Marinha Grande is an industrial town in the central region of Portugal close to the Atlantic on Portugal's West Coast and just north of Leiria. The town has a traditional dependence on manufacturing (accounting for 63.2% of jobs), particularly in the advanced processing of glass and plastics.

### Activities

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Faced with a need for re-conversion of the glass-making industry, a partnership, led by the local authority and including local entrepreneurs, developed a strategy to increase the competitiveness of the town's glass and moulding industry for consideration by the Portuguese Government as a 'zone of excellence'. The partnership also sought and gained recognition from the EU as a Territorial Employment Pact.

The TEP is a partnership of local economic and social actors lead by the local authority. This is based on a strong tradition of associationism amongst glass companies in the town. The success of the partnership is attributed to the strong leadership provided by the local authority and the strength of involvement of local industry representatives. This enabled the identification of specifically local needs relating to competitiveness, as well as the development of a customised local response.

### Partnership

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The Cité operates as a French association under the law of non-profit organisation managed by a limited company (SARL) in the form of a Union d'Economie Sociale (UES or Social Economy Union). The partnership is broad, involving the local authority, Région, Département, urban community, national government, EU, consular bodies, European networks, schools and training institutions, trade associations and professional unions, major customers and funding bodies.

### Lessons

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- Creating a new local 'image' (for example based on quality, excellence and co-operation) is vital, particularly where an area currently has a negative one (based on social unrest and strikes in the case of Marinha Grande);
- Establishing a structure where local political power (e.g. the municipality) can have dialogue with local economic power (e.g. local business leaders) can widen the scope for action where national or local (public) funding is limited;
- Without the decentralisation of significant amounts of national funding to the local level, local approaches will struggle to become sustainable and will continue to depend on external sources such as EU funding.