



LNet public conference and workshop on innovation Hamburg September 2005

LNet partners met in Hamburg on September 20th-21st for the second thematic workshop, during which they addressed the transferability of innovative projects taking place in deprived urban areas. Tutech University - leading partner on this theme in the context of the European Learning Network - organised a two-day event around a public conference, seminars and a study tour. Economic practitioners and academics from Poland and Latvia joined the partner cities.



Key-note speaker at the conference was Mrs. Astrid Severin, representing the innovation policy department Unit of DG Enterprise and Industry. She introduced the audience to the tools available at the European level for assessing transferability, such as the *European Innovation Scoreboard*¹,

evaluating and comparing innovation performance, the *Innobarometer*², capturing enterprise and citizens attitude to innovation and the *Trendchart*³, comparing innovation policies and trends in Europe. Mrs. Severin pointed out the necessity of networks such as LNet, that allow the transfer of innovation excellence, through the systematic exchange of strategic ideas and good practices, identification and analysis of common strategies. In this context, she mentioned the new instruments available to regional practitioners under the PRO-INNO initiative⁴.

LNet partners understand innovation as the successful exploitation of new ideas encompassing any product, service or process (whether technology-focused or not), to support business growth, key element to realising the potential of deprived urban areas.

Following the preparation, in the objective of the workshop, of a thorough questionnaire on the public policies around innovation in each partner city, partners had screened their best practice projects thanks to a case study template assessing their strengths and failures when looking at their potential transferability.

Welcome to the fifth European Learning Network (LNet) newsletter. The Network partners - Amsterdam, Hamburg, London, Milan and Prague - are actively developing and implementing policies to promote enterprise in deprived urban neighbourhoods. Through LNet the cities will develop common approaches to realising the economic and social potential of deprived urban areas and practical tools to support enterprise in these areas.

The case studies brought forward show the vast spectrum of innovation, from business centres and incubators, to renewal of degraded neighbourhoods and to creative industries projects in deprived urban areas. The Milan partners presented two innovation projects, about the transformation of the deprived Bovisa area into a university campus and knowledge centre, and the construction of a "high-tech citadel" in Legnano. Prague introduced the Technology and Innovation Centre, supporting innovative SMEs, and the Business Innovation Centre. Other partners presented models for innovative businesses, such as the new centre for creative industry in Kinetisch Noord (Amsterdam) and the promotion of innovative designer-makers through social franchising (*Hidden Art*, London).



¹ <http://www.cordis.lu/innovation-smes/scoreboard/home.html>

² <http://www.cordis.lu/innovation-smes/src/innobarometer.htm>

³ <http://trendchart.cordis.lu/>

⁴ <http://fp6.cordis.lu/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP6CallsPage>

Hamburg (cont'd)

Greater London Enterprise, the LNet leading partner, presented a draft of the Innovation Toolkit, a guide for encouraging innovative approaches to business development. Still a working document, this tool will enable local practitioners to review the top tips behind the best practice projects, which allow for some of their components to be transferred to different local contexts. Partners worked on refining the toolkit by assessing each of its components: potential barriers to innovation (such as space, networking, financing and skilling gaps) and existing successful solutions. They also decided to look closely into the opportunities offered to innovative activities in deprived urban areas, where a vast social and economic potential remains largely untapped.

Some case studies presented during the conference:

Hidden Art

“Hidden Art” is a membership organization that supports and promotes designer-makers, while offering companies and members of the public access to original design. It is the trading name of Mazorca Projects, a not-for-profit organization. The project started in 1994 as a small open studios event, showing the work of 43 Hackney-based designer-makers. A decade later, it has developed into a unique network, supporting over 1,800 designer-makers, enabling the exchange of ideas and expertise and offering a platform for designer-makers to exhibit and sell their work, products and designs to key markets and the public. All generated revenue is reinvested to support the project. The Department for Trade and Industry (Small Business Service, Phoenix Fund) have awarded funding to replicate the Hidden Art success story. More information available on www.hiddenart.com.

THE RENEWAL OF BIJLMERMEER

(Amsterdam)

The Amsterdam neighbourhood of Bijlmermeer was intended to be a comfortable suburban living area for the middle class, but it didn't work out, ending up as an unsafe neighbourhood, with empty housing, poverty, social disintegration, crime and degeneration. The Commission invested approximately € 2 billion in a project started in 1992 to renew and renovate the area, not just in terms of housing, but also infra-structure, social and economical functions and public areas. One of the most successful components of the project was the transformation of giant car parks, built in 1970s, which were abandoned and unattractive

because of the high risk of car theft, into a profitable business area. Part of the unused parking areas (20.000 sqm) was remodelled for economic and social functions, and is now hosting shops, restaurants, social meeting points, providing cheap accommodation for small businesses and even for churches.



CTU - Technology and Innovation Centre

The Prague Technology and Innovation Centre (TIC) was established, under the name “Business and Innovation Centre” (BIC), in 1991 as the first of its kind in Central and Eastern Europe. It was founded with the assistance of the Government of the Czech Republic, the European Union and the Czech Technical University in Prague. The Mission of the TIC is to initiate and support the creation and development of small and medium-sized innovation firms. It operates as a business incubator, with an area of approximately 4000 sqm at its disposal. The delivery partners of the project are the Czech Technical University and the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Although according to the Czech Higher Act, the TIC is not an independent legal body, but a part of the Czech Technical University, it is not funded from governmental subsidies, but it is a self-funding organisation, collecting revenue from services such as consultancy, incubation, national and international projects etc.

News from LNet Partners

Partnerships and business opportunities for Milan and medium-sized enterprises.

New services for the most innovative Milan small and medium sized enterprises, for simulating the knowledge of American economy and approaching the Silicon Valley market: this is the goal of **Digital Hub in the Great West**, the internationalisation project of BIC La Fucina and Province of Milan. Dedicated to firms involved in ICT, multimedia, biotech, nanotech, new materials, agro-alimentary, design and fashion, Digital Hub in the Great West is not the first initiative in California made by La Fucina, but it is the first time that two permanent structure in the Bay Area are being opened:

- the **San Francisco HUB**, an information point for Milan firms that want to be updated about the American market, partnership and business opportunities;
- the **San Francisco Incubator**, a place with spaces and offices for companies that decide to settle a temporary office in California.

Besides traditional internationalisation services, La Fucina also offers innovative support such as **SWOT Analysis** and **WebCast**. The first is a detailed analysis of strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats for firms that want to face international markets, the second consists of 10 on-line meetings to understand the Californian market characteristics, focussing on the different sectors, which Milan firms would like to enter. All innovative enterprises in the province of Milan can propose their candidacy. The project will end in March 2006.

new!

Innovint (Support to the international development of new innovative entrepreneurs) is an Interreg IIC WEST project which is financed by the European Union and aims at promoting, supporting and accompanying the internationalisation path of high-tech businesses of recently establishment. It will be operative until December 2007.

LNet experiences presented in a book (Hamburg)



The LNet project and its findings are documented in the book "Economic and technological dimensions of national innovation systems", edited by the LNet German partner Walter Leal (TuTech, Hamburg) and Marzena Weresa, from The Warsaw School of Economics in Poland. This book is the result of a specialist workshop, co-organised by TuTech Innovation (Hamburg, Germany) and the Warsaw School of Economics, and held in Warsaw, Poland,

in early 2005. It aims to contribute to the debate on the implementation of innovation policies and action plans in Europe, by undertaking two main tasks: to provide an overview of the implications of national innovation systems and policies in the EU, linking economics and technology in an innovation context; and to describe innovation trends in various European countries and regions. The publication aims to pave the way for more concrete approaches to delivering innovation at the local level.

Innovation and Investment Conference: Prague – September, 20th, 2005



The ABF Company from Prague, specialises in the organisation of events such as exhibitions, fairs and conferences. ABF presented on 20th September 2005 the 2nd

year of the Innovation and Investment Conference, as a part of "FOR ARCH" International Building Fair. The Fair, held in Prague-Letnany, had an attendance of 100,000 visitors and 1,000 exhibitors from 10-15 countries. It provided a unique opportunity for all attending companies to showcase their products and services, not only to professionals but also to small-scale builders. The Innovation and Investment Conference presented research outcomes in the field, with a particular emphasis on research projects for the sphere of civil engineering. Attention was also given to financial resources for innovation implementation in civil engineering.

New initiative promotes enterprise in UK deprived areas

The UK Government has launched a new scheme, aiming to boost entrepreneurial activity, sustainable growth and inward investment in deprived areas. The Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI), which echoes the core goals of LNet, will be worth £50m in 2006-07, rising to £150m per year by 2008-2009. The initiative has three key objectives:

- To increase entrepreneurial activity among the population in deprived areas;
- To support sustainable growth – and reduce the failure rate – of locally-owned business in deprived local areas;
- To attract appropriate inward investment and franchising into deprived areas, making use of local labour resources.

The funding will be managed by UK local authorities, who will bid directly to the Government for between £2m and £10m. Under the three broad objectives, LEGI will give local authorities the freedom and flexibility to determine what the local priorities should be and how to tackle them – what indicators of growth to aim for, what activities to pursue and what local targets are needed. Much of the funding to promote enterprise and inward investment in the UK is currently managed by the regional development agencies (RDAs); the Government hopes that by putting control into the hands of local authorities, it can encourage the development of locally-owned proposals, which can develop local solutions tailored to local problems.

Lead partner GLE is using the lessons learned from LNet to help shape this programme at both national and local level. GLE has worked with the UK Government to develop the initiative and is currently working with local authorities in London to help develop their LEGI proposals. The lessons learnt as lead partner about the effective mechanisms to promote enterprise in deprived areas will be invaluable in this process.



"Grow Global" is an international conference that took place on the 19th October 2005 in Milan, at the Palazzo Isimbardi, Corso Monforte 35. It was good opportunity to compare approaches to international and internationalisation issues, for institutions, businesses, organizations, agencies, international experts and project partners. At the same time, it provided an important forum of exchange of European Best Practices and successful case studies which have been carried out in this context.

The London Development Agency Jumpstart Conference 19th - 20th September 2005

The London Jumpstart Innovative Actions Conference, held in September, was organised to promote the JumpStart programme and the associated advantages of innovation and knowledge transfer between SMEs and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the London Development Agency, the initiative has been in operation since April 2004, encouraging increased business productivity and profitability within the domain of innovation. The conference provided an opportunity for representatives from across the European Union to share best practice and present the achievements of Innovative Actions programmes funded through the European Commission.

GLE supports the LDA by providing management support to the Jumpstart Connect programme and the oneLondon-led *Inspiring Innovation in the BME Food Sector*. *Inspiring Innovation* supports London's black and minority ethnic food sector businesses by exploring business creative and

growth potential through innovation. The LDA has awarded 93 Connect grants to date to SMEs across London to work with HEIs or Research and Technology Organisations to exploit innovative ideas to develop new products or services, or improve efficiency and productivity. The broad range of projects funded through Connect not only represents the diversity and wealth of knowledge available within London, but also the willingness of businesses from a diverse array of sectors to embrace innovative thinking and utilise Connect as an effective vehicle of engagement.

Great success for "Dal dire al fare" (Milan)

On the 1st of October "Dal dire al fare", the first Corporate Social Responsibility Show, organised by Milano Metropoli Development Agency, BIC La Fucina & Koinetica took place in Milan.

More than 1200 visitors, 67 speakers in eight conferences and workshops, 23 exhibitors and 28 case histories were presented at the "Marathon of Experiences" during the three-day event which gave voice to companies, third sector organisations and local public authorities, in a lively, stimulating, rhetoric-free confrontation.

The show, hosted in the ABB premises, has been promoted by Milano Metropoli, BIC La Fucina, Province of Milan, Chamber of Commerce of Milan, Municipalities of Sesto S. Giovanni and Cinisello Balsamo, North Milan entrepreneurs Association (AINM), Resource Center for Social Enterprises (CRIS), BCC Sesto S. Giovanni (cooperative bank).



For further information:

www.milanomet.it or

Koinetica, Agenzia per la

Comunicazione Etica e Sociale

T: +39 02 67078256

E: daldirealfare@koinetica.net

Diary of events

Second dissemination seminar, Brussels, March 2006

The second dissemination seminar foreseen by the LNet project is scheduled to take place in Brussels in the early spring of 2006. The one-day event will bring together project partners, as well as guest practitioners outside the partnership, including delegates from the ten new EU Member States and accession countries. The seminar will be an opportunity to disseminate and publicise the network to a wider audience, and to discuss the LNet method of exchanging information and best practices, while focusing on the three project themes of entrepreneurship, innovation and social enterprise. More information on the event will be available on the website and invitations will be dispatched by mid-January.

Third LNet workshop on entrepreneurship in Amsterdam, May 2006

The third and final thematic workshop will focus on entrepreneurship and will be developed by the Amsterdam and Prague partners. Scheduled to take place in Amsterdam in May, the two-day event will consist of a public conference and presentations of case studies by the partner organisations, as well as a study visit to relevant local development project sites in the Amsterdam area.



Please visit our website:

www.thelearningnetwork.net

Closing conference in London, November 2006

The final LNet event will take place in London at the end of the year. Project partners, guest academics and economic development practitioners from across Europe will have the opportunity to assess what has been accomplished by the project and the lessons drawn from the partner cities. The event will also be an opportunity to look at the next steps the network will take, together with new members and partners, in looking at regeneration issues in urban deprived areas.

*For contribution and additional
information contact:*

Amana Ferro, Assistant Project Manager

Amana.f@gle.co.uk