



## Chamber of Eco Commerce (CEC)

### Regional Strategy 2010-2013

Chamber of Eco Commerce (CEC) assists start-up businesses grow providing a broad range of services to companies during their early, most vulnerable years. Easy and fast access to hands-on advisory and soft landing services, referrals, fund raising assistance, shared office and manufacturing space, meeting rooms, administrative help, business equipment, financial and technical expertise, IT support, marketing PR, and other services will help defer the need for heavy investment when a company is getting started.

Read more: <http://www.chamberofecocommerce.com/cecglobal.html>

CEC headquarters is located in Atlanta, with satellite offices and Global Sustainability Centers in key regions worldwide. The regional CEC chapter may affiliate with, or also be, a financial institution. Each chapter is an independent for-profit entity assisting new businesses thrive in their region.

Read more: <http://www.chamberofecocommerce.com/sustainabilitycenters.html>

Companies that join CEC partner projects and initiatives, most often originate from another region. CEC has implemented an invitation-only process. Unsolicited proposals are NOT accepted.

Read more: <http://www.chamberofecocommerce.com/home/foundersmessage.html>

CEC works closely with local chapter leaders and highly qualified individuals and organizations, to internally develop priorities, projects and a strategic portfolio of technologies. CEC is NOT a membership organization and therefore does NOT charge membership fees, nor accept donations.

#### **Definitions**

**Eco Commerce** is a business, investment, and technology-development model that employs market based solutions to balancing the world's energy needs and environmental integrity. Through the use of green trading and green finance, eco commerce allows for the further development of clean technologies. Eco Commerce is an integrated ecological-economical model that provides a means to account for and value land management activities that improves the condition of natural capital and values the output of eco services.

Read more: <http://www.chamberofecocommerce.com/>

**Eco Commerce Hub** is a web-based virtual location or a region whose population has or acquires a culture of eco innovation and eco entrepreneurship and whose public authorities implement innovative support strategies for businesses and business persons.

Read more: <http://www.chamberofecocommerce.com/ecocommercehub.html>



#### **Introduction**

Regional dynamism is measured by the adequate availability of affordable manpower, raw materials, and infrastructure. These factors all relate to training and to formal and informal relationships between economic players.

Regional dynamism is measured by the propensity of a region's population to start new businesses and to innovate rather than in terms of the number of direct and indirect jobs created by companies operating in traditional sectors.

Attention to Eco Commerce and eco entrepreneurship and business creation can be justified by various drivers including:

- Tackling persistently high levels of unemployment - business creation is an alternative to unemployment;
- Activating local economies - business creation becomes a key to regional development;
- Promoting the emergence of new technologies and eco innovation at regional level - business creation is one of the factors that contribute to the transition between a traditional regional economy and a knowledge-based economy.

The role of Eco Commerce in a discussion of the factors that stimulate business and entrepreneurship, and the need to measure its contribution not only by the number of new jobs it creates but also more precisely in terms of their added value and their ability to transfer know-how into the region.

#### **Summary Chamber of Eco Commerce (CEC) Work on The Issue**

- Eco entrepreneurship among the population;
- The administrative environment surrounding eco business creation;
- The availability of adequate capital for eco business;
- The local socioeconomic sphere's potential for eco business;
- The quality of local networks of decision-makers and eco entrepreneurs;
- The presence of quality SME support;
- The accurate perception of true needs;
- The implementation of new forms of public-private partnership investment in human resources both by local authorities and businesses.



#### **Governance**

Our definition of governance is simply the ability of all regional CEC players to agree a long-term vision for the development of their region and their ability to invest a share of their financial and human resources in the achievement of commonly defined Eco Commerce objectives.

Governance therefore requires the private sector and public authorities to agree a set of basic infrastructures that are essential to the development of an 'Eco Commerce Hub', as well as a number of common services that have to be made available to eco innovators and potential investors.

In other words, governance demands that business and public decision-makers be "realistic visionaries". Governance should lead to a review of both the way in which regional development measures are implemented and the definition of priority areas for public intervention.

It should allow an unbiased examination of market failures and of the public sector's inability to promote the emergence of the support services required to deliver strategic regional objectives.

As part of a regional policy that is adjusted to the requirements of a knowledge-based economy, investment will increasingly serve training and common services provided to groups of businesses.

Common business services can either be generic - access to venture capital, eco innovation, vocational training, internationalization, information technologies, provision of quality community infrastructure, etc. or sectoral - access to specialized technical or technology centers, technological or economic watch systems, quality control, certification and design centers, business and sponsoring clubs, support for cluster management, networking and other forms of collaboration between different players in an industrial sector.

We should seek to promote the de-compartmentalization of educational institutions so they can play an active role in delivering the objectives of local or sectoral development. There will be a need to develop partnerships between - and promote spin-offs of - schools, universities and enterprises.

Governance allows us to anticipate future needs that are either not currently solvent locally or are not yet available locally to businesses from the private sector.



### **Eco Entrepreneurship Among the Population**

Regional dynamism is measured by the net rate of creation of new businesses with a genuine potential for growth and innovation. It should be understood that eco innovation is not necessarily a synonym of “hi-tech”.

Regions may decide to invest in the stimulation of Eco Commerce, business and entrepreneurship among the general population - including at all educational levels. The promotion of spin-offs both in existing businesses and in academic institutions may also be a requirement in many regions.

There is a need to offer potential eco entrepreneurs tailored services including—but not exclusively - soft landing services, management training, start-up reception, mentoring, introduction to holders of experience or expertise. Additional support services include assorted seed and venture capital products, guarantee and credit schemes (at affordable rates for start-up SMEs) as well as accommodation in business nurseries and incubators. In order to foster spin-offs, there may be a need to establish pre-incubators. Public authorities may also need to work on the concept of 18/24-month universal support service packages for business creators.

CEC in collaboration with regional partners and authorities will further need to disseminate and publicize success stories of eco innovators and innovation initiated in their region. This could be achieved through CEC media portal, which regularly promotes regional activities in support of eco entrepreneurs and potential business creators.

Read more: <http://www.chamberofecocommerce.com/mediaportal.html>

### **The Administrative Environment Surrounding Eco Business Creation**

While a substantial share of the many regulatory requirements that exist are imposed at national level and there is therefore a need to check what is feasible in terms of regional measures aimed at simplifying the administrative process surrounding eco business development, unavoidable administrative hurdles can be overcome successfully if start-ups are supported by specialists made available by regional Eco Commerce Hubs.

CEC is a one-stop-shop where business creators can fill in all their needs to simulate the eco business creation path and formalities per industry. Our web-based portal entitled, “Eco Commerce Hub”, includes micro-sites and offer business support services. Our Global Sustainability Centers, provide eco business creators and eco entrepreneurs soft landing services, working groups, and a physical place of business - a place to work.

Read more: <http://www.chamberofecocommerce.com/ecocommercehub.html>



#### **Availability of Adequate Equity**

It seems paramount to promote locally the provision of and access to all venture capital and guarantee products whereby eco entrepreneurs can procure the capital they need to grow their business or innovate. Generally speaking, there is a need to pay attention at regional level to the availability of seed capital and guarantees for young businesses. Packaged solutions and new integrated financial services should be developed and offered locally. Where possible, financial packages should include appropriate advisory services as well as tools to monitor the fulfillment of turnover growth targets.

Read more: <http://www.chamberofecocommerce.com/finance/financinginnovation.html>

Worth underscoring is also the fact that financial tools are each suited to the needs of eco businesses at different and quite narrowly defined stages of their development. In other words, different forms of equity bear differently on company growth and not all businesses have the same financial needs. Regional authorities should therefore also provide services that help entrepreneurs be fully informed of and briefed about the decision-making parameters used by each type of financial intermediary.

Read more: <http://www.chamberofecocommerce.com/finance.html>

#### **Potential for Eco Innovation**

In a globalized economy, medium-sized enterprises can be competitive in the long run only if they innovate constantly.

The term “eco innovation” should be understood as a company’s ability to market new products, services or processes, even if it is not a hi-tech business. So there is a need to distinguish between innovation and technological research. Most regions have a corporate make-up of companies that need to innovate rather than businesses that can thrive on the results of research.

In addition to community infrastructures, CEC has implemented support schemes such as knowledge transfer, economic intelligence and technological watch services.

Co-operation schemes between academic institutions and eco entrepreneurs should be strengthened in order to promote the emergence of a local eco innovation culture. There may equally be a need to implement financial engineering schemes and tailor them to the innovative projects developed by local businesses. A number of surveys have shown that businesses that co-operate with others tend to innovate more.



#### **Networking**

Our experience has shown that company networks make a significant contribution to regional competitiveness. Though business networking should normally be managed by the private sector, public authorities should in some cases be ready to play an essential role as catalysts of the emergence of inter-company networks. Different types of networks may co-exist in the same region. This is how, in addition to one or more sectoral networks (clusters), thematic networks or clubs can be supported including exporters' clubs, young entrepreneurs' clubs and business-academia clubs.

There may also be a need to ascertain whether all or part of public intervention in the form of business support schemes should carry mandatory stakeholder of an Eco Commerce Hub whose essential strategic importance for regional development is recognized.

Inward investment reception officers should spare no effort to encourage the harmonious integration of newly installed businesses in existing networks and to promote the emergence of new networks based on the know-how imported by investors into the region. This way of approaching the attraction of foreign investors leverages further local added value from this category of businesses and contributes to their retention in the region.

Efforts to network local businesses should be accompanied by marketing operations focusing on regional excellence as well as communication operations based on the local presence of a high concentration of Eco Commerce know-how and leading companies in one or more clearly-defined market segments.

#### **Globalization**

With regards to economic globalization, special attention should be given to its impact on the establishment of business creators and on the privileged, local relationships that nurture Eco Commerce. Internet eliminates time and space constraints. A majority of successful technology clusters share dynamic local networks of ideas, individuals, economic activities and finance. CEC's communication and collaboration portal entitled, Eco Commerce Hub, was built to support global Eco Commerce community, networks and one-to-one contacts in transferring knowledge and technology to create new Eco Commerce opportunities.

The potential advantages of eco business networks are in areas such as mentoring, improving the flow of information, transferring knowledge and know-how, constantly improving management using benchmarking techniques, sharing costs or risks, pooling forces, identifying economies of scale, strengthening competences, etc.



#### **Providing Quality SME Support Services**

Generally speaking, all regions have a plethora of public, semi-public or even private business support services. Unfortunately, competition in this field is frequently sterile and leads to confusion rather than eco innovation and dynamism.

Regional development strategies cannot afford to overlook the need to objectively evaluate whether the services provided by each intermediary organization are adjusted to the true needs of eco business and eco entrepreneurs on the one hand and to the requirements of business creators on the other hand. Eco Commerce Hubs demonstrate their ability to identify true business needs, as opposed to obvious or expressed needs. They should demonstrate their ability to provide the right services pursuant of the agreed regional strategy.

This should naturally lead individuals and organizations to recognize CEC's ability to set up first advisory-stop shops for eco entrepreneurs in search of support.

Read more: <http://www.chamberofecocommerce.com/sustainabilitycenters/softlandingservices.html>

#### **New Forms of Public-Private Partnership**

In the context of a globalized free market economy, the role of regional Eco Commerce Hubs be to define our relationship with the public and private sector. This is how we can step in and form relations with private business support service providers. The concept of universal business support services will have to become reality in each region.

#### **Investment in Human Resources**

Too often, syllabuses are still defined at national level despite the need for strategic regional development choices to find an appropriate reflection in manpower training approaches.

Regional CEC will therefore need to look for solutions in order to tailor training to the future needs of those economic sectors whose development is considered desirable or a priority. Regions should invest both in training infrastructure and in the range of training packages on offer. With this in mind, it would for instance be useful to involve training in the definition of the measures required to deliver this strategy.

Specific attention should be paid to the stimulation of eco commerce and entrepreneurship as well as to the sharing of knowledge and the need for networking, which are crucial components of the knowledge-based society and of the transfer of know-how between organizations. In regions with sizable remaining manufacturing sectors, training about concepts such as quality management and quality control as well as constant eco innovation may prove absolutely vital.



### **Culture, Environment and Quality of Life**

In a society that routinely grants access to advanced telecommunication technologies, any eco entrepreneur, innovator or holder of knowledge is free to choose where he wants to locate his business. Therefore, all other entrepreneurial conditions being equal, businesspersons' choices will obviously depend on individual perceptions of quality of life in a region as well as of the quality of formal and informal business and advice contacts and networks. Similarly, the importance of business opportunities in cultural, environmental and quality-of-life sectors as contributors to business creation is increasingly being recognized and has become the subject of growing attention.

### **Controversial Issues**

The current objectives of regional policies are chiefly based on GDP growth. A whole range of measures are therefore taken with a view to delivering this objective, some of which in the form of support for eco commerce, businesses and entrepreneurship. In view of recent changes in the economic sphere, it has become necessary to review the rationale of this objective and to refocus regional policies around the need to promote and develop eco innovation. This requires designing regional policy tools that serve eco commerce instead of simply hoping that the creation of new businesses will come as one of the natural results of existing policies.

This rethinking of regional policies can eventually lead to the creation or attraction of Eco Commerce to the region, provided that all efforts converge on this objective. Whereas, regional development is only one of a variety of actions that support eco commerce business creation or growth.

### **The Parameters of Eco Entrepreneurship include:**

- Population and economic structure;
- The perception of opportunity;
- Social and cultural standards;
- Education, especially in the field of eco entrepreneurship;
- Finance;
- Diversity of sources of capital;
- Enabling culture;
- Strong local networks;
- Supportive infrastructure;
- Eco Commerce friendly government.





The benchmarks of regional eco entrepreneurship is linked to potential entrepreneurs' perception of the following parameters:

- Proximity to markets;
- Talented locals;
- Closeness to suppliers and customers;
- Proximity of research centers and other innovation sources;
- Cost of making business;
- Presence of physical and advanced telecommunication infrastructure;
- Presence of networks;
- Availability of venture capital;
- Availability of business support services.

#### **Eco Entrepreneur's Decision to Start a Business. These Elements include:**

- Opportunities: their interpretation and identification;
- Resources: human, knowledge-based, and financial;
- Individuals: their motivations, training and social values.

#### **Obstacles to Eco Entrepreneurship:**

It appears that potential young entrepreneurs believe that the factors that could dissuade them from setting up a business are:

- Lack of money;
- Financial uncertainty;
- Fear of failure;
- Fear of risk;
- Administrative complications;
- Lack of competencies;
- Lack of entrepreneurial knowledge;
- Belief that failure is not allowed;
- Lack of information;
- Lack of family support;
- Lack of ideas.



The difficulties that entrepreneurs face during business development. Young entrepreneurs underscored the following problems:

- Administrative complications;
- Staff skills;
- Lack of available equity;
- Overall economic context;
- Lack of support;
- Lack of information;
- Commercial problems;
- Infrastructures.

#### **Eco Business Creator Needs**

The main categories of services that business creators generally need as follows:

- Help with developing ideas into viable business propositions;
- High quality, clear, reliable and prompt information relating to the government's regulatory requirements for setting up and running a business. As part of this, it is important that they can find out what government as a whole asks of them, regardless of what part of the public sector they approach;
- Access to high-quality, relevant, consistent and up-to-date business information and advice both within the public and private sectors;
- Help with understanding their financial needs and to be properly prepared before approaching banks and other financial providers;
- Access to high-quality advisors having extensive business knowledge and experience;
- Support services should be broken down into two categories according to whether the address the needs of business creators during the pre- or post-start-up stage of business development.

#### **Eco Innovation**

Business can become more competitive on their markets if they invest in a process that leads to eco innovation in products, manufacturing processes or management. This eco innovation-driven approach requires careful consideration of the mechanisms used to procure information about sources of innovation, access to the owners of innovation and financial means.

#### **Impact on Regional Policies**

The above should stimulate a reflection about the contents and formulation of the strategic pillars of any regional development program. There is a corresponding need to find new balances between traditional measures of the sort implemented in current program and eco innovative measures aimed at supporting an appropriation by regions and all local players of the knowledge- and innovation-based economy. Regional policy designers should also be



careful to avoid multiplying or fragmenting support measures in favor of the socioeconomic sphere and instead help them—and intermediary organizations—evolve toward full integration of the requirements and needs linked to this type of economic construction. In a number of regions, this will certainly involve changes in public authority and intermediary organization cultures rather than the development of new regional policy instruments.

The changed options required to adjust traditional regional strategies to the needs of a new approach based on the promotion of entrepreneurship and on access to knowledge or eco innovation might include:

- More investment in education and training so as to give people access to jobs with more added value;
- More investment in living and physical environment quality;
- Looking for market niches that support labour creativeness and eco innovation;
- Attracting talented individuals to the region and retaining them to promote the emergence of Eco Commerce Hubs - eco innovation centers of excellence.

#### **Support Services**

Support services should be broken down into two categories according to whether they address the needs of business creators during the pre- or post-start-up stage of business development. Below list of the elements of assistance that might generally be needed for each of the two stages.

#### **Pre-Start-Up**

##### Objectives

- To help people develop ideas
- To weed out non-viable proposals

##### Delivery

- Information
- Advice
- Training
- Mentoring
- Networking
- Access to appropriate finance
- Training about access to finance
- Pre-incubation
- Business concept incubation



### **Post-start-up**

#### Objectives

- To help businesses begin trading
- To help businesses grow

#### Delivery

- Information
- Advice
- Training
- Mentoring
- Networking
- Access to appropriate finance
- Help to find premises
- Incubation

### **Innovation**

Businesses can become more competitive on their markets if they invest in a process that leads to eco innovation in products, manufacturing processes or management. This eco innovation-driven approach requires careful consideration of the mechanisms used to procure information about sources of innovation, access to the owners of innovation and financial means.

The above should stimulate a reflection about the contents and formulation of the strategic pillars of any regional development program. There is a corresponding need to find new balances between traditional measures of the sort implemented in current program and innovative measures aimed at supporting an appropriation by regions and all local players of the knowledge- and innovation-based economy.

Regional policy designers should be careful to avoid multiplying or fragmenting support measures in favor of the socioeconomic sphere and instead help them—and intermediary organizations—evolve toward full integration of the requirements and needs linked to this type of economic construction. In a number of regions, this will certainly involve changes in public authority and intermediary organization cultures rather than the development of new regional policy instruments.

The changed options required to adjust traditional regional strategies to the needs of a new approach based on the promotion of eco entrepreneurship and on access to knowledge or eco innovation might include:

- More investment in education and training so as to give people access to jobs with more added value;



- More investment in living and physical environment quality;
- Looking for market niches that support labour creativeness and innovation;
- Attracting talented individuals to the region and retaining them to promote the emergence;
- Creating common services for enterprises and entrepreneurs;
- Improving intangible infrastructures as well as the provision of mentoring, economic intelligence, technological watch and innovation transfer services;
- Improving access to or provision of venture capital and guarantees for novel and innovative projects as well as entrepreneur investment readiness;
- Intensifying prospective reflections about the regional potential and encouraging a constant review and updating of strategic development pillars;
- Investing in the professionalization of public service staff in charge of implementing the strategy.

#### **This Requires Revisiting a Variety of Basic Regional Strategy Instruments Such as:**

- The development of eco entrepreneurship among the local population;
- The nature of public financial support;
- The place of the region in the global economy;
- The role of technological excellence valleys;
- The place of academic institutions in the regional economic fabric.

This approach also presupposes the existence of an entrepreneurial culture within public authorities. Indeed, eco entrepreneurs expect support organizations to act both professionally and entrepreneurially. Decisions must be taken efficiently and quickly. When businesses apply for subsidies or licenses, they should be told how long it could take before they receive an answer from the administration or support agency.

#### **Stimulating Eco Commerce and Eco Business Creation**

The regional business creation are:

- Universities and other academic institutions;
- Research centers;
- Existing businesses;
- The general population.

Stimulating eco commerce and business creation requires that equal attention be paid to the following stages of business development by supporting:

- The regional eco entrepreneurial culture and the detection of potential entrepreneurs;
- The maturation of ideas, products or services that will develop into business;
- Business development as such;
- Businesses in their early stages;
- The integration of businesses in formal and informal local business networks.



Therefore, regional strategies designed to stimulate Eco Commerce and eco business creation should cover:

- Awareness campaigns about eco business creation;
- Eco business creation forums and fairs;
- Eco business management and eco entrepreneurial psychology training;
- Developing a culture of spin-offs in businesses, universities and research centers;
- Business plan competitions with evaluation and prizes; Helping wanna-be eco entrepreneurs draft their business plan and present it to all types of potential financial partners: banks, business angels, venture capitalists and public authorities offering subsidies and/or guarantees (investment readiness);
- Offering seed capital;
- Organizing (pre-) incubation;
- Offering support and advice for the development of prototypes, the validation of designs, quality processes and technological solutions as well as the evaluation of market readiness for products;
- Providing coaching;
- Giving access to specialized support services and facilitating contacts with local networks of eco businesses and eco entrepreneurs;
- Making local infrastructures available: relay workshops, advanced industrial facilities, know-how and knowledge transfer and new telecommunication technologies.

#### **Practical Measures Taken as Part of the Strategic Plans Developed by Regions.**

##### Territories and Eco Commerce Hubs

Whereas regions have long tended to specialize their economies, they are now faced with an obligation to identify the promising technological sectors and the market niches in traditional sectors that can potentially yield regional added value and notoriety.

Spotting opportunities to develop an Eco Commerce Hub requires detailed prospective work at regional level as well as a thorough analysis of resources - available or to be procured - in order to persuade initial investors, prime the establishment process and attract the kind of talented people who can further enhance the process.

#### **Success factors for Eco Commerce Hubs include:**

- The ability to create new businesses;
- A propensity to share knowledge or initiate business collaborations that generate eco innovation;
- The presence of a few multinational companies, a university and/or public research centers;
- Access to venture capital and tax incentives;
- The availability of skilled labour;
- Good perception of the "time-to-market" concept;



- Business networks and other regional players such as universities and venture capital firms;
- Public authorities that support technological businesses both with incentives of all type and less bureaucracy.

Though the presence of one or more research or university centers seems essential to the emergence of an Eco Commerce Hub, it is not sufficient in itself to increase business creations.

The region must have the financial infrastructure required to support the development of new businesses. Local legislation on innovation must support the emergence of eco commerce and start-ups, and the resources earmarked for their growth has to be adequate.

It should be underscored that Eco Commerce Hubs are mostly born out of a single visionary's dream rather than following an institution's reasoned decision. Without Henry Ford, there would have been no automobile cluster in Detroit, nor would there have been an IT cluster in Seattle without Bill Gates!

#### **Reformulating Business Financial Support Systems**

Local and regional authorities traditionally favor the payment of direct subsidies to businesses rather than the capitalization of specialized regional credit organizations (micro-credit and innovation credit funds,...), venture capital funds or guarantee schemes despite the fact that subsidies have a number of disadvantages compared to financial engineering, the least of which is certainly not their very high consumption of public funding. In addition, subsidies are grants coming from funds that offer no prospect whatsoever of regenerating themselves. Furthermore, there is reason to question both the sustainability of subsidized projects and the bonanza effect that grant-based schemes tend to create among potential beneficiaries.

In addition to self-regeneration, it is worth mentioning that the public cost of financial engineering schemes per new job is lower compared to subsidies because they are often based on partnerships with private players or they help leverage sizable additional equity from the private sector.

Also remarkable is that the regions that decide to invest public assets in setting up regional venture capital firms generally also invest in other fields including:

- Training of eco business finance specialists,
- Public/private partnership design and evaluation,
- Reduced operational expenditure linked to business project evaluation,
- Improved matching between businesspersons and equity suppliers.



A cultural change regarding subsidies must be accompanied by a confidence-building strategy for private operators as well as help for eco entrepreneurs in drafting their business plans and introducing themselves to different types of financial organizations. There is a diversity of measures that can be implemented in order to help create a local environment that is friendly to financial engineering, including:

- Setting up guarantee schemes;
- Setting up or capitalizing public or semi-public venture capital funds,
- Implementing co-investment mechanisms;
- Identifying and intervening in market segments that private operators consider hazardous or uninteresting;
- Training or attracting skilled business finance specialists;
- Improving the provision of business advice services in order to enhance business project quality, thereby reducing as much as possible the cost of analyzing and evaluating investment applications tabled by businesses;
- Identifying the best exit routes for local venture capitalists;
- Arranging matching schemes between entrepreneurs and the regional financial community, namely by analyzing and disseminating relevant information about the investment priorities of all financial organizations operating in the region (types of products available, minimum and maximum tickets, preferred lines of business, required guarantees, nature of financial agreements, etc.) as well as mandatory information to be mentioned in applications or information about the weighting systems used by different financial organizations in reaching investment decisions;
- Providing specific training on access to external equity sources;
- Promoting the organization of investment forums where entrepreneurs can meet with representatives of the regional financial community.

### **Reformulating Regional Spatial Planning**

Without minimizing the importance of basic transport, energy and telecommunication infrastructure, it is increasingly apparent that it is not enough in itself to support the emergence or consolidation of an Eco Commerce culture among the regional population as a whole nor the development of an innovation culture among businesses and other key regional organizations.

Regional development initiatives increasingly need to aim at balancing the geographical provision of advanced entrepreneurship consulting, technological watch and innovation transfer services. The same is true of local infrastructure and business networks as well as their interconnection. Information technologies can only remove the constraints of peripherality if regional populations gain access to the same advice and funding as are available in urban or central areas.





### **Defining the Role of Regional Educational and Vocational Training Institutions**

Universities and other academic institutions are per se both a breeding ground for skilled manpower and a reservoir of eco innovation and eco business that is all too often insufficiently or ineffectually tapped or inadequately connected to the social and economic spheres of the regional society.

As far as permanent vocational training organizations are concerned, they need both to tailor their offer to emerging eco business needs and to anticipate on future eco business requirements. These organizations also need to support public investment aimed at promoting the emergence of new sectoral activities in their catchment area.

Finally, reflection and action is needed about the role that educational organizations can play in regional economic development because of their local presence as well as the impetus they can provide for, and the role they can play in, the identification and initiation of new eco innovation and technological activities in the region.

### **Positioning the Region in a Globalized Economy**

One of the consequences of globalization on product ranges is their trivialization. Some regions can try to promote local products with geographical denominations (origin labeling) that often generate added value compared to unprotected, and therefore trivialized, products. Surveys of products protected by geographical denominations have shown that there are considerable differences in the number of such products between countries. The promotion of labelled products can be a source of dynamism and eco innovation, both in terms of production and marketing, and fits in with economic globalization.

Eco Commerce Hubs must equally be imaginative in marketing their territory as a packaged regional proposition rather than exploit a narrow competitive edge. Such a territorial offer can be based on the valorization of local Eco Commerce, eco business or eco entrepreneurship.

### **Main Components of Regional Eco Commerce Hub Strategies**

Regional strategies help compare priorities as well as the micro and mesoeconomic measures that they contain.



### **Wording of the Strategic Measures**

#### **Awareness Project**

- Development of an Eco Commerce Hub
- Launch of a media campaign
- Outdoor advertising campaign
- Reaching out for enterprising and successful businesspersons
- Publication of a compendium of entrepreneur testimonies
- Leveraging the "Eco" experience

#### **Stimulating the Entrepreneurial Approach**

- Creation of an Eco Commerce Hub or Global Sustainability Center;
- Pilot-project(s) to produce eco commerce, business and entrepreneurship modules in secondary schools;
- Series of seminars based on eco entrepreneur testimonies;
- Chairs in eco entrepreneurship;
- Synergies between the various programs;
- Administrative simplification;
- Analysis of regulatory tools that promote eco commerce.

#### **Mobilization of the Financial Sector**

- Integrated finance;
- Investment readiness training;
- Venture capital fairs;
- Opportunities from SBA;
- Launch of a finance roundtable;
- Corporate venture potential;
- Instruments such as SBICs (Small Business Investment Companies);
- Stimulating the emergence and the establishment of new venture capital funds;
- Local initiative platforms granting loans without interest.

Read more: <http://www.chamberofecocommerce.com/finance/financinginnovation.html>



### **Eco Commerce-friendly Public Sector**

- Achieving maximum efficiency and quality in the various business consulting and support services;
- Improved internet access;
- One-stop shops on the range of available support schemes;
- Creating new eco industrial parks;
- Administrative simplification and speedier procedures for businesses;
- Exchange of civil servants with the private sector;
- Entrepreneur competitions with prizes;
- Timeshared executives.

### **Pre-Start-Up**

- Support for the creation of traditional activities (by means of feasibility studies), organization and promotion of pre-start-up fairs;
- Stimulating spin-outs and spin-offs;
- Compiling a list of obstacles to eco business/entrepreneurship;
- Organizing business plan competitions.

### **Implementation of Specific Instruments**

- Eco Commerce Portal to support entrepreneurs through the business development process;
- "Second chance" culture;
- Assistance for spin-outs and spin-offs;
- Mobilization of senior consultants;
- Financial products and guarantee schemes;
- Promotion of financial instruments including business angels, seed capital, financial breakfasts;
- Promotion of the provision of free advice by accountants and tax experts to entrepreneurs in drafting their business plans;
- Development of incubators;
- Facilitating wage-earner access to self-employment;
- Employer association;
- Business project packaging firm.

### **Youth Eco Entrepreneurship initiatives**

- Expanding sponsoring systems;
- Developing a youth awareness campaign;
- Stimulating youth action;
- Inviting more entrepreneurs to share their experience in educational and vocational training programs.



**Women Eco Entrepreneurship initiatives**

- Publication of a compendium of businesswomen testimonies;
- Analysis of obstacles and implementation of specific projects;
- Promotion of financial instruments that meet the specific needs of women entrepreneurs;
- Stimulation of businesswomen meetings;
- Analysis of existing initiatives and surveys for businesswomen.

**Optimizing Management**

- Establishment of an Eco Commerce Institute;
- Administration school.

**Stimulating Collaboration Among Businesses**

- Intensifying efforts in the field of Eco Commerce Hubs;
- Support for Eco Commerce Hubs;
- Stimulating the use of the web-based Eco Commerce Hub by businesses;
- Encouraging businesses to take a more active part in Community programs.

**Promoting Research and Eco Innovation Activities**

- Autonomous global contact point - Eco Commerce Hub;
- Financing patent applications;
- Development of Global Sustainability Centers in each Eco Commerce Hub;
- Intensification of contacts with other regions worldwide;
- Competitions with incentives for research;
- Competitions with incentives for innovation.

**Internationalization**

- Encouraging to strengthen our relationships with foreign counterparts;
- Leveraging the advantages of Single Market;
- Stimulating the creation of joint ventures;
- Developing financial tools that help SMEs go international (credit insurance, finance).

**Creation of a "Governance"**

- Analysis and follow-up of performance indicators.

**Exchange of Experiences**

- Exchange of experiences relating to best practices.

**Evaluation and Monitoring**

- Participation and leveraging Eco Commerce Hub technology.

**Brand & Image**

- Advertising the Regions as dynamic and creative.