ICT for SMEs

- Project goals
- Terms of references according to application
- Project Structure
GENERAL GOAL:
Strengthening of the region by spatial and structural changes to form a balanced region through broader use of IC-technologies. Their implementation and usage in SMEs shall be enhanced and bring positive results.

Reducing the urban-rural-disparities with respect to the supply of qualified manpower and workplaces by supporting SMEs to innovate, in using modern ICT and providing means for e-learning and qualification. By these means function of the rural and semi-rural areas of being a motor of economic development is supported and new business-fields can be opened.

Based on the knowledge about the present structure and problems of each region ("baseline") analyzing available research and solutions for SMEs that can be implemented to to improve their economic situation.

Providing strategies and measures by which the competitiveness and economic and technological development of SMEs is improved: Investigation in and reduction of (entrepreneurial) restraints to implement and use modern IC-technologies. Promoting the adoption of available new technologies thus creating new entrepreneurial possibilities.
Formation of a SME support-structure in the shape of a sustainable, vertically integrated, sector-spanning network between SMEs, local authorities, providers of education and transnational partners. The network shall be a physical/technical as well as a logical and help to reduce and compensate spatial and infrastructural disadvantages of SMEs especially in the rural regions. To help enterprises to engage in virtual networks a "Virtual Enterprise" pilot will be integrated.

Durable usage of the network-partnership and its technical installations for all entrepreneurial concerns.

Improving the ability of SMEs to gain access to available knowledge and experiences as well as to results of research and development in order to innovate and increase the competences of enterprises and staff. The technical basis for this are the Internet and modern IC-technologies used for access to regional support structures. The improvement in the abilities of enterprises to innovate will lead to technological change within the regions and by this to spatial and social changes.

Investigation into the needs of SMEs with respect to the ability to innovate, qualification, organisational structures and procedures incl. development of methods for improvement.
ICT for SMEs

Project goals (3)

- Awareness-raising: Improving the knowledge about the possibilities of modern IC-technologies and creation of incentives to use them with the aim to reduce restraints to use the technology; by that bringing new technology into use in the whole region

- Presentation of available ‘best-practice’-solutions for SMEs and their effects on them on a transnational level

- Development and implementation of measures for transfer and integration of these solutions at all partner-regions

- Improvement of the competence of enterprises and employees in using modern IC-technologies with the aim of an intensified, more aimed usage of these technologies for all entrepreneurial concerns

- Fostering the creation of new jobs (resp. securing jobs) by supporting new enterprises (Start-Ups) in using modern IC-technologies
ICT for SMEs

Project goals 4

- Finding concrete answers and solutions to avoid and to reduce traffic by using ICT, i.e. by e-learning
- Working out and presenting models to reduce the costs of the information society on the local level
- Presentation and usage of the other advantages of the formed network
- Creation of active demand for IC-technology
ICT for SMEs

Project objectives (1)

Improving the access of SMEs in rural and semi-rural regions to ICT-technologies and their use with the aim of reducing the urban-rural disparities.

Development and implementation of an assessment toolkit for checking ICT-use in local SMEs.

Execution of surveys to determine the need of SMEs with respect to technical equipment, organisation and education.

Awareness-raising: Creation of incentives to use modern ICT-technologies (i.e. Online-Banking). Taking into consideration the economical, technical and organisatorical aspects and education. Aim: Reduction of restraints to use the technology and by that bringing new technology into use in the whole region.

Development of transferable tools to assist better use of ICT by SMEs at the local level.
Building a technical as well as logical network of relations ("SME Support-Center") incl. integration of the cross-sectoral and transnational partners ("capacity building"). A special focus will be given on the relationship between the participating rural regions and their regional centres. On a technical basis the project will provide means to form and support Virtual Enterprises (VEs) to share skills, core competencies, customers, markets and risks, and reduce costs and time of producing integrated customer-specific products or services.

Reduction of (entrepreneurial) restraints to use IC-technology and by that bringing new technology into use in the whole region.

Assisting to job creation and entrepreneurship in ICT-related services and use of ICT to foster entrepreneurship.

Providing training opportunities, e-learning and on-site-support; by that closing the ‘digital gap’ and preventing ‘IT-Analphabetsm’. CBT and WBT will be used together with the measure to provide reasonable PCs and Internet-access to create incentives to use e-learning and tele-working. This results in reduced traffic from and to the workplace, can open new working-possibilities and increases the competences of the users.
Transfer and integration of ‘best-practice’-solutions into the SMEs incl. support in technical and organisatorical questions

Implementation and operation of a technical platform by which SMEs can receive and exchange information, perform eBusiness, co-operate electronically with their partners and obtain access to knowledge and support (technical SME-Center); involving local authorities and installations

Offering web-space on the technical platform (Internet-based "SME Support-Center") to the enterprises in order to give support to B2B contacts amongst the participating regions, especially for e-procurement and e-commerce

Creation of possibilities for SMEs and households to purchase and operate PCs and periphery at reasonable cost incl. access to the Internet

Creation of value-added by using the special competences and researches of the transnational partners in the execution of analysis and integration of the measures. In addition to that learning of the transnational partners about the subject of the project and especially the transnational exchange of 'best practise' is an important factor for the successful completion. This level cannot be reached without transnational partnership
Terms of references are stipulated by obligatory contribution to NSP and ESDP strategies as well as general rules of EU structure Funds regulations

- Cross sectoral integration
- Sustainable development
- Economic and social cohesion
- Spatial development of the North Sea Region
- Interregional and transnational co-operation
- Equal opportunities
- Environmental impacts
The monitoring and evaluation of the project is based on indicators which are part of the application.

- Project activities indicators (11)
- Output indicators (7)
- Result indicators (15)
- Impact indicators (8)
Target groups will be:

- local and regional SMEs and their employees;
- professional organisations and social partners on regional and over regional / national range
- local stakeholders of economic development
- authorities at local, regional and national level
- regional public authorities (the related services) and
- interested public within the North Sea Area and via Internet all interested publics
Lead Partner Tasks

Regional Tools & Strategies related to enhance ICT access for SMEs

Module 1

- Strategy Development
  - Development and implementation of tools
  - Test of tools
  - Generalization of the results
  - Solutions (=Tools)

Module 2

- Regional Support Structure
  - Virtual Form of Organization
  - Physical Form of Organization
  - WBT Tools Solutions Audit Guidance

Module 3

- WEB Platform
  - Communication between partners
  - Pin-board
  - Video-Conferencing
  - Documentation & Dissimination of Results
  - B2B Contacts between the partner regions (assisted)
  - Links to Local Partner’s Sites
  - Links to relevant information related to the project subject

RESULTS

All Regions

Increased ICT-use

Targets at regional level

One Partner

SMEs Stakeholders of local / regional development
Suppliers of Training
New entrepreneurs

Development Agents
Trainers
SME owners & leading staff
Start-ups

Awareness raising

Increased ICT-use

Regional Support Structure

Strategy Development

Module 1

Module 2

Module 3

Lead Partner

Regional Tools & Strategies

22.01.03 - v2
Module 2

Project Activities under the scope of transnationality

MODULE 1
Strategy Development

8 Partner Regions in 7 Countries

Region 1
Region 2
Region 3
Region 4
Region 5
Region 6
Region 7
Region 8

Work steps (part)

Survey Team
Develops tools for survey, carries out evaluation

Development of criteria
feed back of results
Development of Questionaire
feed back of results
Development of audit scheme
feed back of results
Outcome of proposal based on evaluated project activities

Stock- Taking
Implementation Support Structures
Screening 100 SMEs & start-ups

Audits in 30 – 50 of these
Test: Consulting & solutions
Awareness Raising
Capacity Building
Recommendations for local strategies

Work steps are Carried out in each Region with feedback to survey team

Survey team formed by delegates from lead-partner & 3 regions

Decision taken by all partners
Project Activities
under the scope of transnationality

MODULE 2
Regional SME Support Structures

Examples:
- e-learning
- one-line coaching
- ICT-Audits
- On-Line Help-Desk
- Career Service
- Seminars
- Tailor made training
- CBT Use
- Workshops
- B2B Contacts
- others to be defined in the project
Project Activities under the scope of transnationality

**MODULE 3**

WEB Platform

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**Regional WEB-Page**
(adapted in each region)

„SME-Centre“
for each SME support centre

**Development of Architecture by Sub partner Region 4**
(optional)

**WEB-Master**
Sub partner Region 2

**Video-Conference Master (Partner 7)**

**Communication Video Conferencing**

**Communication & Reporting**

**Hosting Best-Practice Portfolio**

**Hosting „useful links“**

**Enable B2B Contacts in NSR**

**Project Documentation**

**Links to Partner regions**

**Dissemination of results**

**Use of project WEB page and video conferencing by all regions**

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**Introduction, technical support**

Region 1
Region 2
Region 3
Region 4
Region 5
Region 6
Region 7
Region 8
Project Activities
Process Structure

**MODULE 1**
Strategy Development

- Stocktaking
- Development local structures

**MODULE 2**
Regional SME Support Structures

- Implementation 8 support structures
- Interviews & Auditz
- 30 to 50 interventions

**MODULE 3**
ICT Communication Tools

- Communication Platform for transnational activities
- Library for best – practice examples and useful subject related links
- Tool for project documentation and dissemination of results

**RESULTS**

- Survey
- Recommendation

**Continuing activities**
The project will be carried out in 3 Phases:

- **Module 1: Strategy development:** Stocktaking, local surveys, description of support-structures, definition of strategies and recommendations.

- **Module 2: Building regional support structures:** Development and implementation of regional support-structures, auditing enterprises, installation of training facilities, awareness-raising.

- **Module 3: Building the web-platform:** Development and implementation of the technical project-basis: Web-Platform for the project and SME-Centers (regional).

**Key data of the project life cycle:**

- **Preparation Phase:** September 1 2002 – February 28 2003
- **Eligibility Period:** June 1 2003 – August 31 2006
- **Project Runtime:** September 1 2003 - August 31 2006

*A detailed time-table will be introduced later*