

The OECD LEED Programme and its Partners Club

The Local Economic and Employment Development Programme (LEED) was created in 1982 on the initiative of France and Italy. First known as the ILE (Programme for Local Employment Initiatives - ILE follows the French acronym) and based within DEELSA, the initial objective of the new programme was to stimulate employment at the local level through the implementation of active employment policies favouring self-employment and enterprise creation. In 1994, the Programme became part of the newly created Territorial Development Service where it continues to play a pivotal role as an innovative body for promoting coherent and comprehensive policy approaches to territorial development. A specific action programme, LEED currently attracts funding from 24 Member countries, as well as the European Commission. Current members are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States. Other countries that have expressed an interest in joining the Programme are Germany, Iceland, Japan, Korea and Slovenia. The World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), together with the Central European Initiative (CEI), and the Inter-American Development Bank are currently in the process of becoming members of the LEED Programme. The current level of funding, including voluntary contributions is about Euro 1,520,500 pa. The LEED Programme structures its activities around the following 6 major axes:

- Decentralisation of employment policies, local partnerships and governance
- Entrepreneurship, self-employment and job creation
- Social cohesion at the local level
- Globalisation and local authorities
- Evaluation and exchange
- Outreach Programme with Non-Member Countries

The LEED Secretariat reports twice a year to the Programme's constituent body, the LEED Directing Committee, which considers all questions related to the carrying out of the Programme, reviews the documentation prepared by the Secretariat and approves the annual programme of work for submission to the OECD Council. The Committee is currently chaired by Carlos Flores Alcocer, a Cabinet Member and Chief Advisor to President Fox of Mexico. In 2000, the LEED Mandate was renewed by a further 5 years by the OECD Council and will therefore run until 31 December 2005. The mandate was recently modified to allow the participation of other international organisations and non-member economies in the Programme.

Past and current LEED contributions to OECD horizontal programmes: the Jobs Strategy, the Growth Project, Governance, Sustainable Development and the Health Initiative.

The LEED Partners Club

The Partners Club of the LEED Programme was set up ten years ago to act as a network of public and private institutions throughout the world to work with the LEED Programme and its Directing Committee. The Club's growth during the past two years has been strong and it now has a membership of about 100 organisations from 25 different countries. This network, creating a direct connection between sub-national authorities, non-profit organisations, new and small entrepreneurs and the OECD, clearly underpins in the most concrete way the OECD's commitment to involve the civil society more widely in the debate on public policy issues.

By associating a wide network of national, regional and local government bodies, development agencies and NGOs, as well as grassroots organisations and voluntary institutions and foundations with LEED work on a continuing basis, the Partners' Club extends the influence of LEED policies and approaches and attracts public

and financial support. The Partners' Club now functions principally through three consultative fora, which were created both to reflect the main axes of the LEED Programme of work and also to channel the interests of the different institutions which form the Partners Club. They are the Forum on Cities and Regions, the Forum on Social Innovations and the Forum on Entrepreneurship. Each forum is presided by a Chair who is a recognised personality in his or her field of expertise and who acts as a counsellor to the LEED Programme. The Chairs of the fora are often invited -- as experts -- to attend meetings of the LEED Directing Committee to present initiatives that may be of particular interest to the Committee. And meetings of the fora are often scheduled to coincide with meetings of the LEED Directing Committee in order to create further opportunities for collaboration between LEED Partners and LEED Delegates.

What LEED Has to Offer

Policies to support employment creation and economic development through locally-based initiatives are a major concern of governments, which look to LEED for practical policy guidance. The LEED Programme offers participants a unique active approach by:

- continuous monitoring and assessment of current practices and the diffusion of related findings
- assessing and proposing methods for the growth of high-quality self-employment and entrepreneurship
- serving as a critical link both between sub-national institutions, and between the OECD and sub-national bodies
- analysing and promoting forms of local partnership between the private, public and non-profit sectors with the aim of complementing public policy and supporting local economic and social development.
- elaboration of common methodologies for carrying out local reviews and studies
- elaboration of analytical frameworks for assessing best practices

LEED achieves these objectives through the following work methods and products:

- national and local reviews
- evaluation of best practices
- study tours and transfer of best practices
- tailored seminars, ranging from expert seminars to international conferences

The outcomes and results of the LEED Programme activities are published on a regular basis at an average rate of 7 publications per year. Recent LEED publications have included: *Micro Financing & Local Development*; *Fostering Entrepreneurship*; *Good Practices and Transferability in Local Development*; *Business Incubation: International Case Studies*; *Putting the Young in Business*; *Social Enterprises*; *Devolution and Globalisation*; *Corporate Social Responsibility: Partners for Progress*; and *Local Partnerships for Better Governance*.

Forthcoming publications include: *Entrepreneurship, Self-Employment and Local Development*; *New Trends in the Non-Profit Sector*; *Asset Building for an Inclusive Society*; *Social Capital and Local Clusters*; *Social Innovation in the Silicon Valley*; *Innovation and Clusters*; and *Community Building for Peoples' Empowerment*.

A selection of recent and forthcoming key events is attached.

