

# ESCALE

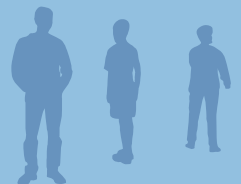


ÉCHANGES SOLIDAIRES DE COLLECTIFS D'ACCOMPAGNEMENT LOCAUX EN EUROPE

Development of collective European practices  
supporting new enterprise initiatives in rural environments



METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES  
"COLLECTIVE AND TERRITORIAL SUPPORT SCHEMES  
FOR ENTREPRENEURS"

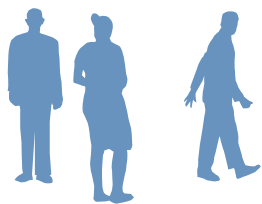
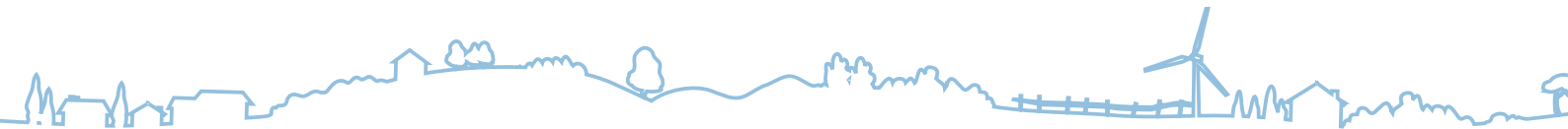


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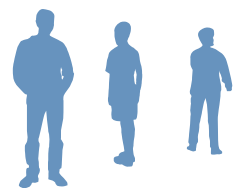


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## Development of collective European practices supporting new enterprise initiatives in rural environments



### METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES "COLLECTIVE AND TERRITORIAL SUPPORT SCHEMES FOR ENTREPRENEURS"



Initiated by the french partners, this methodological reference frame was worked out by:

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
THE ESCALE PROJECT	4
WHY METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES RATHER THAN A GUIDE?	5
FOR WHOM ARE THESE GUIDELINES INTENDED?	5
<b>I. UNDERSTANDING THE NOTION OF COLLECTIVE &amp; TERRITORIAL SCHEMES (DCT)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>FROM THE EXISTENCE OF MULTIPLE PLAYERS...</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>...TO THE NECESSITY OF JOINT ACTION FOR CONSTRUCTING APPROPRIATE SOLUTIONS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>JOINT ACTION SUPPORT TARGETING A «SPECIFIC» PUBLIC</b>	<b>8</b>
1 / A LIFE PROJECT AND A QUEST FOR AUTONOMY IN THE PROJECT	8
2 / A DIFFERENT PERCEPTION OF ECONOMIC FACTORS	8
3 / LOCAL CONNECTIONS	8
<b>II. DCT: DIFFERENT WAYS OF "WORKING TOGETHER"</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>THE DIFFERENT FORMS AND TYPES OF DCTS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL DCTS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>THE SCHEME'S MATURITY</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>SELECTING SECTORS FOR ACTION</b>	<b>12</b>
1 / REGIONAL SCALE	13
2 / INTER-DISTRICT SCALE	13
3 / VERY LOCAL SCALE	13
<b>GENERAL, SPECIALIST (TOPICAL) AND POLITICAL DIMENSION</b>	<b>14</b>

### **III. CONDITIONS OF SPIN-OFF OPERATIONS AND DCT SUSTAINABILITY 15**

<b>NECESSARY INTERACTION BETWEEN ORGANISATIONS AND PLAYERS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>JOINT CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL ISSUES CONCERNING ENTERPRISE INITIATIVES</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>DECISION TO WORK IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER PLAYERS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>COORDINATION OF THE COLLECTIVE AND TERRITORIAL SCHEME</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>EVOLUTION IN OPERATING METHODS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP DYNAMICS</b>	<b>18</b>
FINANCE	19
THE GROUP OF PLAYERS	19
COMMON ACTIONS OPERATED BY PARTNERS	19

### **CONCLUSION 20**

### **FACT SHEETS 24**

<b>FACT SHEET N°1: COLLECTIVE OF PLAYERS FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE RURAL SECTOR, IN THE SUB-REGION OF SOUTH-EAST ALENTEJO</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>FACT SHEET N°2: COLLECTIVE OF PLAYERS IN FAVOUR OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE ÎLE-DE-FRANCE REGION</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>FACT SHEET N°3: COORDINATION SITE IN THE ÉTANG-SUR-ARROUX MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>FACT SHEET N°4: "DE L'ENVIE AU PROJET" ACTION GROUP</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>FACT SHEET N°5: ACTION GROUP FORMED BY PLAYERS IN FAVOUR OF AGRICULTURAL/RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE POITOU-CHARENTES REGION. NAME OF RESOURCE: "TECHNICAL SET-UP COMMITTEE"</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>FACT SHEET N°6: PAYS DES VALLONS DE VILAINE EMERGENCE OF GROUP ACTION IN FAVOUR OF SUPPORT FOR PROJECT HOLDERS</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>FACT SHEET N°7: PROJET'CTEUR SITES IN BASSE-NORMANDIE</b>	<b>54</b>

### **GLOSSARY 60**

# INTRODUCTION

## THE ESCALE PROJECT

*ESCALE – Joint Exchanges between Local Support Schemes in Europe – is a European project run by AFIP<sup>1</sup> and CELAVAR<sup>2</sup> in partnership with ESDIME<sup>3</sup>. The aim of this project is to create a European network of collective and territorial schemes (DCT) for supporting entrepreneurs in rural sectors. This network should enable project holders to integrate pan-European experience within their entrepreneurial process and thereby enrich their project with experience gained in similar schemes and receive support and guidance from European partners to complement support available in their home country.*

*The first project phase in 2009 allowed identification and description of existing joint schemes (see attached resource sheets), the initiation of networking operations aimed at certain joint action support schemes existing in France and Portugal and the initiation of exchange of practices between facilitators. In 2010, this DCT network will broaden its horizons, notably to other European countries, and set about the task of identifying requirements for a European network for project holders with a view to establishing possible exchange procedures.*

*These «methodological guidelines» complement the resource sheets. The resource sheets describe different local schemes, based on pooling of experience and collection of field data. They endeavour to understand local dynamics currently in place, by means of a comparison chart featuring the different schemes. Using this work, we have been able to draw a comparative analysis of the different initiatives, with a view to meeting several objectives:*

- *To define the notion of collective and territorial scheme (DCT) through comparative interpretation, based on identified common criteria*
- *To facilitate the emergence, development and sustainability of DCTs in rural sectors in Europe.*

*These «methodological guidelines» endeavour to provide a better understanding of the issues and constitutions of the different collective and territorial entrepreneurial support schemes; they have been drawn up with a view to generating more appropriate joint actions for entrepreneurs in European rural sectors and perpetuating existing collaborative practices.*

*1/ Association for Training and Information for the development of rural initiatives.*

*2/ Research and Networking Committee for Associations with Agricultural and Rural Vocation.*

*3/ Portuguese Social Solidarity Cooperative.*

#### WHY METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES RATHER THAN A GUIDE?

*The end result of this task will consist in identifying and pinpointing factors that do or do not contribute to the success of joint entrepreneur support organisations in the rural sector. In this respect, these «methodological guidelines» are not intended as a «guide» of good local collaborative practice, but more as reference material for players in the entrepreneur support sector.*

*In the light of schemes studied in France and Portugal, this task intends to lay the foundations for a strategy to be deployed in the geographical sectors to implement suitable dynamics for joint action. Laying these foundations involves drawing up practical recommendations which concern the conditions for setting up an efficient collective and territorial scheme and warn of the hurdles and obstacles that could potentially jeopardise successful collaboration.*

*The varied codes of practice applied in other geographical sectors with differing local contexts, drawn up in response to specific issues, may have inverse impact when applied in other situations and curb existing dynamics.*

*We therefore decided to establish a common analytical framework suitable for application by different players, based on several essential criteria (or points for attention).*

*As mentioned previously, these guidelines are complemented by resource sheets which have been used as reference material to produce these guidelines, along with a glossary listing the different names and acronyms used throughout the documents.*

#### FOR WHOM ARE THESE GUIDELINES INTENDED?

*Essentially, they are designed for facilitators and training agents working in entrepreneur support organisations and for rural sector development agents working on responsible and solidarity-based development in rural sectors in Europe.*

*They are also designed for project holders and entrepreneurs wanting to share their experience and seeking a collaborative framework that will allow them to do so.*

# I. UNDERSTANDING THE NOTION OF COLLECTIVE & TERRITORIAL SCHEMES

*Nearly ten years work on different partnership-based projects revolving around the topic of employment have made it possible to identify numerous joint action dynamics aiming to support entrepreneurs in the rural sector. First and foremost, these initiatives have the common purpose of providing a support solution for emerging local micro-enterprises. Some back up the support sector by providing access to «test sites», facilitating the development of complex multi-activity projects by organising a suitable process for entrepreneurial projects or even by favouring self-employment by running «de l’envie au projet» group training sessions or by providing access to documentary resource centres.*

*The steering group for the ESCALE project observed the following schemes closely:*

- *Collective of players for entrepreneurship in the rural Alentejo sector. Portugal. (resource sheet n°1)*
- *Collective of players in the Ile de France region (resource sheet n°2)*
- *Coordination site for the Étang-sur-Arroux municipality in Burgundy (resource sheet n°3)*
- *The «de l’envie au projet» (from concept to concretisation) group action association in Nord Pas de Calais (resource sheet n°4)*
- *The technical set-up committee in Poitou-Charentes (resource sheet n°5)*
- *Joint entrepreneur support action in Pays des Vallons de Vilaine in Brittany (resource sheet n°6)*
- *Projet’cteur sites in Normandy (resource sheet n°7)*

*The capitalisation operation conducted by the steering group for the ESCALE project endeavoured to promote joint action dynamics, regardless of the types of partnership engaged in and their level of progress. Before going into further detail concerning analysis criteria for these creations, we will first examine the definition of this notion of DCT.*

## **FROM THE EXISTENCE OF MULTIPLE PLAYERS...**

All the schemes involve several different organisations providing support for project holders or intervening in the entrepreneurial process at a given point in time and within a given geographical sector. Firstly, we have (in France) Consular chambers, associations, professional and employment cooperatives. We also have local authorities, AMAP (Associations for the preservation of rural agriculture) networks, the farmers themselves, training centres and company unions. Their positions can be sector-based (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chamber of Trade, Chamber of Agriculture, etc), theme-based (Terre de Lien, ADIE, Accueil Paysans, etc.) or even methodological (Boutique de Gestion, AFIP, CIVAM, etc.). The entrepreneurial landscape is therefore both diverse and dispersed.

Diverse, we have seen, due to the numerous different players operating in a geographical sector, whose existence willingly lends itself to evident complementarities. This does appear to create a competitive climate between the different organisations, whose strategic positions intersect, sometimes within their member network with similar ideological principles.

Dispersed, because the majority of their operations are uncoordinated; rather than acting together with other players, they try to act faster than other players. Furthermore, this dispersal is fuelled by the different fields of action (emergence, official creation procedures, testing, post-creation follow-up) and a local imbalance between urban and rural networks.

## **...TO THE NECESSITY OF JOINT ACTION FOR CONSTRUCTING APPROPRIATE SOLUTIONS**

From the existence of numerous players intervening at different stages of the process, in different geographical sectors and/or focused on specific themes, all joint schemes examined revolve around the will to provide a more consistent solution, on a territorial scale viewed as being pertinent.

It is therefore evident that collective and territorial dynamics emanate from a common desire, whether or not this be of a concerted manner, responding to a range of concerns:

- compensate for deficits in support services for entrepreneurs in the rural sector,
- intervene in a lesser-explored field of support services (emergence phase and / or test phase),
- facilitate anchoring projects in the geographical sector,
- engage projects in the field of social and solidarity-based economy.

If we wanted to define a collective and territorial scheme, we could say that it is a territorial dynamic involving several players acting in favour of the creation of economic activities (agricultural and non-agricultural), and offering, officially or unofficially, conditions propitious to establishing sustainable projects for economic activities in a given geographical sector.



## **JOINT ACTION SUPPORT TARGETING A «SPECIFIC» PUBLIC<sup>4</sup>**

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These joint action dynamics are aimed towards a «specific» public. Individuals encountered appear to be lacking in the criteria traditionally found in entrepreneurs, for different reasons. We can therefore identify a range of key factors which drive such project holders. Three characteristics are often identified: the development of a life project, geared towards autonomy in the entrepreneurial project, a certain perception of economic factors and local connections.

### **1 / A LIFE PROJECT AND A QUEST FOR AUTONOMY IN THE PROJECT**

- The parameters in play are complex and do not solely depend on the commercial feasibility of the project. Projects cannot be viewed in isolation from a more global approach to «having better control of one’s own lifestyle». “I want to redefine my life - bounce back for a different future».
- This will often concern people who plan to break away from a specific lifestyle (e.g. urban – salaried employees).
- A wish to set up locally, find a place in the local scene and participate in networks, is often a determining factor of motivation.
- Such projects are often conceived by couples: even if the project is only run by one member of the couple, the role of the spouse is crucial.
- The project is often characterised by strongly principled engagement.
- Some projects to an extent are driven by Utopian ideals.

### **2 / A DIFFERENT PERCEPTION OF ECONOMIC FACTORS**

- The enterprise’s immediate profitability is not the predominant motivating factor, in the sense that this cannot be viewed in isolation from many other considerations.
- The majority of people supported by organisations do not come from an entrepreneurial background. They do not identify with the term «entrepreneur».
- Their predominant economic model is initially to fix objectives with a long-term horizon.
- Their sense of time-scale is often correspondingly different. («Take the time for a project to take shape»). Some decide to develop their enterprise as a part-time occupation, always with an eye to controlling their own life-style and time-management.

### **3 / LOCAL CONNECTIONS**

- The project’s suitability for the locality is an important element and reflects local potentiality in terms of support for entrepreneurs and also the capacity of projects to take root locally and to respond to a local need.
- The necessity of participating in networks (social and economic networks, local networks, etc.) is of significance, even more so than researching both the market and potential openings for the enterprise.

*4/ It is not easy to establish a generalised terminology suitable for members of the public who seek specific response to their needs. In «classic» entrepreneur support schemes, consular ones in particular, a type of measurement system is used to gauge project potential. As a general rule, individuals with ideas and plans which are often innovative but unconventional, are fast rejected by this system, sometimes too fast. The dynamism and enthusiasm nurtured by such individuals may never be tapped due to a lack of proactive support services. DCTs intend to respond to such evident shortcomings.*

## II. DCT: DIFFERENT WAYS OF "WORKING TOGETHER"

*DCT initiatives observed in France and Portugal show a typological variety which provides opportunities for the establishment of joint action dynamics. Accumulation of knowledge has made it possible to identify different ways of «working together», in other words working in «partnership».*

*For the purpose of these guidelines, the differing forms of «joint action» or «collaborative» practices must be identified. Some players have sought to highlight characteristics of joint action, through the concept of partnership.*

*Here, the notion of «partnership» can be interpreted as a system that associates partners<sup>5</sup>. In this respect, we favour systematic approaches to partnerships requiring an understanding of the sometimes complex interlinking of the different players in the creation of a shared project. We see partnership as a «combination of human and non-human resources associated in one single group [...] brought together to achieve a specific goal<sup>6</sup>». In this sense, partnership is a system of interrelations which depends just as much on the political, legal and even cultural local institutional structure in which it operates, as it does on the skills of the associated partners and the type of project.*

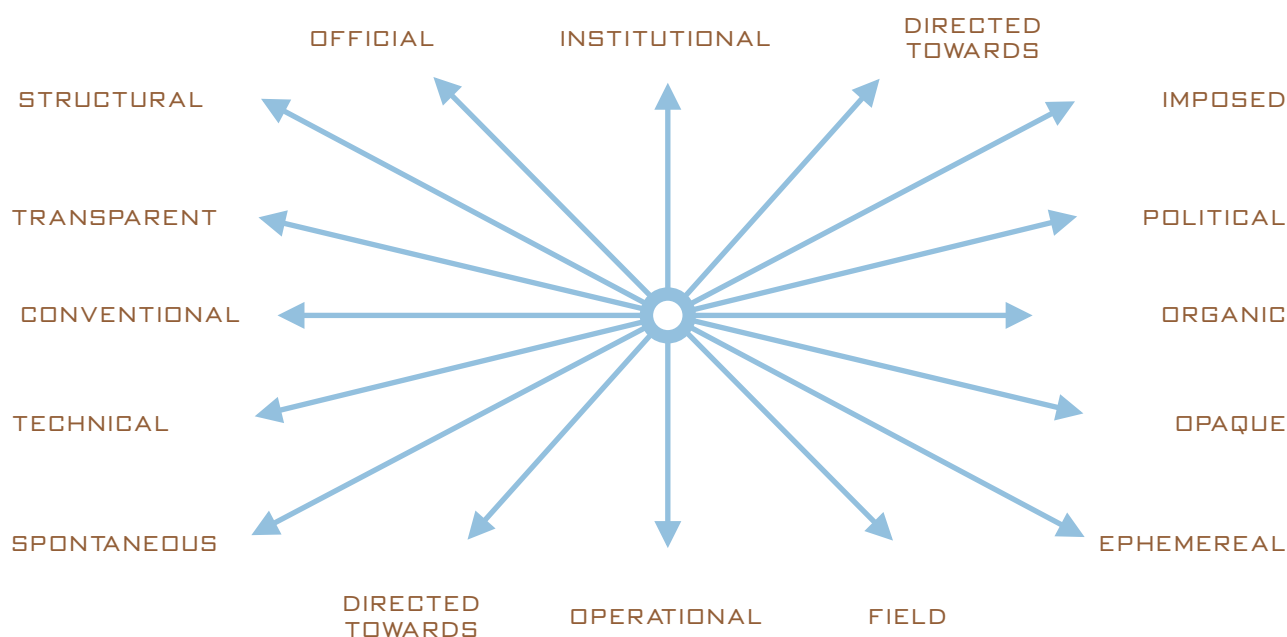
*This chapter aims to shed light on our understanding of the different possible forms of DCTs in a geographical sector.*

5/ MERINI Corinne «Le partenariat: histoire et essai de définition», Acte de la journée nationale de l'OZP, 5th May 2001, p. 1.

6/ BOUTET J.P., Anthropologie du projet, PUF 1990.

## THE DIFFERENT FORMS AND TYPES OF DCTS

Jérôme DAMON<sup>7</sup>, in a critical analysis of partnership, has developed what he calls «a partnership star» in an attempt to define the wide range of different possible combinations of partnerships in both form and nature. It should be noted that this «partnership star» does not intend to grade the different partnership practices but rather to provide a classification system for the various types of applicable joint action forms within an area.



The first difference to be found in practices lies in the conventional or organic nature of the relationship. In other words, this distinguishes between the different forms of collective and territorial scheme. The DCT is based on conventions, i.e. implicit rules of behaviour, with no specific originator. This can be formalised, to a greater or lesser degree, between the players, setting down operating procedures without specifying each player's level of engagement. Such a case can be observed today in the Pays des Vallons de Vilaine sector (see resource sheet n°6) where the joint action dynamic is based on an implicit «organisation» that links the different players.

In contrast, the so-called «organic» partnership requires greater involvement since its structures are grouped into a «dedicated structure with a more rigorous organisation of reciprocal rights and obligations» such as the coordination sites in Burgundy (see resource sheet n°3). This approach was initiated in the framework of an official and structuring joint action project of limited duration; it then questions the viability of the partnership once the framework and funding has disappeared (see part III). This framework and these financing systems impose strong links between organisations. Once those links have disappeared, maintaining synergy between players then depends upon their strength of will and the definition of new dedicated resources.

The second distinction focuses on the nature of partnerships. We can sometimes see an institutionalisation of

<sup>7</sup>/ DAMON J., «La dictature du partenariat: vers de nouveaux modes de management public?» in *Futuribles*, N° 273, March 2002, p.8.

partnership practices, for example in the case of Alentejo in Portugal (see resource sheet n°1), where the social solidarity cooperative, Esdime, signed a partnership protocol with the Mayor's office in Aljustrel to regenerate the municipal support centre for micro-enterprises. Evidently, such institutionalised joint actions are largely shaped by the nature of the partnerships themselves. Local authorities or State authorities often formalise agreements. Furthermore, «operational» field practices exist, embodying the more pragmatic nature of the collective and territorial scheme. In Nord-pas-de-Calais and in Ile de France (see resource sheets n°4 and 2), there is no legal framework and joint action revolves around principles and entrepreneurship.

## EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL DCTS

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The internal or external dimension of a partnership is dependent upon the scale of the scheme and the extent to which the players are willing. This aspect is relative. It conveys the different mechanisms and therefore has a bearing on the choice of the appropriate DCT.

A partnership could be described as being «external» if it involves partners with different legal status, resources and power, such as a partnership between a local authority, a training organisation and an association. The external nature of the partnership depends on the extension of spheres of action, i.e. the capacity of players to operate outside their «natural» circle of partners. A good example can be found in the Projet'cteur sites in Normandy (see resource sheet n°7) which demonstrate external joint action schemes.

A partnership would be deemed «internal» in the context of inter-organisational cooperation, i.e. organisations belonging to one same field, with similar legal status and relatively similar principles. Branching out is easier in such a context, since collaboration can take place with a regular partner or a local organisation. Belonging to one same group of players, such as «popular education», «alternative agriculture», or «solidarity-based economy», facilitates partnerships. The Poitou-Charentes DCT (see resource sheet n°5) is a good illustration of this internal dynamic and mainly incentivises organisations from the INPACT network or from within a very close circle.

This differentiation takes on meaning within the context of local and political dimensions of partnership. A major consequence of decentralisation laws is evident in the involvement of partnership operations in joint action, a new type of development model, where the State no longer imposes solutions but rather endeavours to incentivise all local players, local authorities, enterprises, individuals and associations. The latter are brought to construct an external partnership with local authorities, the principal financiers.

However they do also engage in internal partnerships. This is illustrated by certain collective and territorial dynamics; it is not indicative of withdrawal, but of a quest for credibility in building on existing pre-identified foundations of complementary qualities. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe that the strategy of preparing an «internal» form of DCT can influence a collective territorial dynamic with greater scope and receptivity.

## **THE SCHEME'S MATURITY**

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Those collective and territorial schemes observed demonstrate varying degrees of maturity in building successful collaboration. Certain geographical sectors such as Brittany, Ile de France and Poitou-Charentes, are at the starting point of collaborative joint action work. There is a complex system of inter-relations between players, who are supported by existing collective dynamics (the INPACT network for agricultural enterprises in Poitou-Charentes for example). However such initiatives are not based on a well-founded form of partnership, insofar as the involvement of the different players has not provoked tangible changes in behaviour.

Experiments in Nord-Pas-de-Calais, in Normandy or in Portugal convey a more distinct level of interaction of players, translating a will to «work together». The longevity of schemes demonstrates the commitment of partners to the scheme and the need to lay the foundations progressively to anchor joint support initiatives in a given geographical sector. The «de l'envie au projet» action group in Nord Pas de Calais has been doing so for three years. The Projet'cteur sites in Normandy, despite past setbacks due to funding cuts, have been operational for 6 years. The Esdime organisation has been conducting operations with its partners for 20 years in a specific sector.

## **SELECTING SECTORS FOR ACTION**

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The territorial dimension of the joint action dynamics studied also varies from project to project. Entrepreneur support schemes do not automatically refer to an identifiable territorial unit, even if local DCTs seems to require a suitable level of intervention. Indeed, entrepreneur support schemes can be of a regional, departmental, inter-district or even district scale. The level of intervention therefore depends on the action: the action targeted by the group and that generally displayed by players involved in the scheme. Selection of the geographical scope of action would be better if it were based on suitability criteria which would account for the demographics of the targeted public, for areas where players are influential and for funding organisations involved. Regarding this last point, it should be noted that the DCT can have a declared regional character, restricted by funding procedures or even by the involvement of a broad network of players, whilst accepting and even encouraging the relocation of players on a lesser scale, notably at an inter-district level.

### **1 / REGIONAL SCALE**

In Nord-Pas-de-Calais, the training programmes target all project holders in the region and training sessions or workshops are run in several different areas in the region. They can also be organised at a regional scale, based on the location of the players forming the action group.

In Poitou-Charentes, the different players support project holders according to their geographical location; the regional dimension is more aimed at coordinating these players than the project holders themselves.

In Normandy, the collective of players takes action on a regional level and also voices its ambitions to support entrepreneurship on this same level.

Lastly, in Alentejo, the action group formed around Esdime works at a sub-regional level, with a small number of requests from outside this perimeter.

## 2/ INTER-DISTRICT SCALE

In Brittany, the players are grouped together at a regional and départemental level in the INPACT pole, however the action group and entrepreneur support actions focus on an inter-district level in the Pays des Vallons de Vilaine.

In Normandy, the global scheme which is run at a regional level still has an entrepreneur support scheme (support for individuals, group training sessions, workshops, etc.) which is anchored locally on a district council level.

## 3/ VERY LOCAL SCALE

In Nord-Pas-de-Calais the majority of training, guidance and coordination schemes are conducted on a regional scale, but the «De l’envie au projet» action group has produced a number of more local tools such as the Gerموir in Ambricourt (incubator initiative, agricultural test site and organic basket marketing) or Chrysalide in Ruisseauville (an incubator initiative which provides enterprises with legal hosting within the tax-paying association A Petit Pas but also provides support through the structure’s pluri-activity for testing projects: use of meeting rooms or premises, standardised kitchen, energy information).

In Burgundy, local social and solidarity-based economy sites can be coordinated across the whole Saône et Loire département, however each coordination site is rolled out at a district council level. Département-level interaction has rendered schemes consistent between the three sites, some themes such as access to mobility or the «de l’idée au projet» general training schemes have been developed in two of the three geographical sectors. Requirements on a very local level have many differences and each site has coordinated schemes that would not necessarily have been suitable for the other sites. This response to requirements in terms of proximity is therefore to be considered as a very important factor: it assumes that each site coordinates its schemes accounting for identified needs, without endeavouring to apply one same approach on a larger territorial scale.

## **GENERAL, SPECIALIST (TOPICAL) AND POLITICAL DIMENSION**

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In all schemes analysed, a general approach to entrepreneur support can be identified (for example, «de l’envie (ou idée) au projet» training schemes are not technically specialised) and in theory no specific project types are selected.

Nevertheless, partnership methods can have an impact on project types and the support offer: in Brittany as in Poitou Charente, the INPACT partnership, which advocates sustainable agricultural development, «attracts» project holders who are sensitive to this issue. The same can be found in Nord-Pas-de-Calais where solidarity-based economy, organic agriculture and renewable energy are strong fields. Schemes in Normandy also focus on solidarity-based economy, specialising in project emergence, the downstream phase of enterprise creation. The «label» concept stems from this notion, differentiating such organisations from other players in the entrepreneurship sector (Boutique de Gestion, Consular chambers, employment centre, etc.). In this sense, there is a degree of political ambition and a desire to promote it.

The policy in Burgundy, as discussed earlier, was to be receptive to all projects, regardless of fields and structures. Two types of solutions have resulted from this more generalised accessibility: some of a more general nature, accessible to a high number of projects and other more specific ones allowing the exploration of subjects that has not been possible before under pre-existing structures (support for creating an action group of artists for example, implementation of a local barter system...) The «social and solidarity-based economy» angle of projects was a common theme running through all projects, whether of a general or specific nature.

# III. CONDITIONS OF SPIN-OFF OPERATIONS AND DCT SUSTAINABILITY

*A collective and territorial scheme therefore primarily brings together players wishing to pool their skills within a specific environment to solve an identified issue.*

*Based on this concept, a number of factors can be determined which will allow the emergence of partnerships between different players who are not yet operating in active collaboration, and if possible, the construction of a long-term entrepreneur support scheme.*

*In other words, the identification of factors of success, or pinpointing points to be monitored carefully, brings us to pose two questions:*

- *How might we contribute to the emergence of a collective and territorial dynamic in a geographical sector?*
- *How might we favour longevity in local entrepreneur support schemes?*

*Our task does not lie in providing a pre-prepared, readily applicable recipe, with these methodological guidelines, which would imply that all collective and territorial dynamics can be created and stand the test of time. It is limited to identifying key points, levers that we feel to be essential and that must be taken into consideration. Different points need to attract the attention of players to trigger off or render perennial a collective and territorial dynamic:*

- *A necessary interaction between organisations and players*
- *Joint consideration of issues present in the geographical sector in matters of new enterprise initiatives*
- *A desire to work together with other players, in a collaborative approach*
- *Coordination of the scheme*
- *Evolutions in operating methods*
- *Long-term partnership dynamics*

*It should be noted that the process does not involve chronological stages to be validated in turn, but points requiring close monitoring, themes to be explored or even questions to be considered.*



## **NECESSARY INTERACTION BETWEEN ORGANISATIONS AND PLAYERS**

The implementation of a joint action dynamic evidently implies interaction between the different players as well as recognition of each player's position in a given geographical area. Although not considered an essential pre-requisite in certain forms of partnerships, it appears evident for the different schemes examined in France and in Portugal that the collective and territorial schemes largely rely on this interaction between the different partners. The level of interaction varies from one geographical sector to another, but overall, a consistent characteristic can be observed in the identification of players working in the field of entrepreneurship. Evidently, and this point should certainly not be neglected, the task of interaction must not be taken for granted. It requires constant re-examination of one's knowledge of other players, of their field of action and of their missions. Operators of a DCT need to be able to identify themselves as players operating in one same geographical sector and one same field of intervention.

## **JOINT CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL ISSUES CONCERNING ENTERPRISE INITIATIVES**

Evidently, the dynamics of a DCT depend on the power of intent to provide a more efficient solution to a local concern. It is interesting to note that this consideration can be played out at several levels, reflecting the internal or external dimension of the partnership.

On one hand, the different partners can share a common project because they belong to one same network, with shared principles and/or schemes, and can found that project on a common appreciation of development concerns in rural sectors. This is the case for the support action group currently under construction in Poitou-Charentes, which revolves around the INPACT project. There is no legal structure in Nord-pas-de-Calais and in Ile de France and the action group revolves around mutual values and consideration of issues concerning entrepreneurship in the rural sector.

Rather than sharing the diagnosis, it reveals the capacity of players to identify common solutions often fuelling the joint action dynamic. The coordination sites in Burgundy and the Projet-cteur sites in Basse-Normandie provide joint action solutions for the geographical sector which are often highly innovative. Here, similar working principles evidently need to be shared, such as support during the emergence phase, group training, etc.

Consideration of issues that are specific to a geographical sector, by a collective and territorial scheme, is also a way of expressing the needs of project holders, who often call upon the services of different players (for example: the GABs for Organic agriculture, Civam for sustainable agriculture and renewable energy, Accueil paysan for teaching and project hosting services, Terre de Liens for access to property for agricultural projects). The action group agrees to take them on and to start the support process to provide appropriate solutions for their projects. Joint action dynamics are often born at this point, with an aim to providing solutions that are closer to the concerns of the entrepreneur.

## **DECISION TO WORK IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER PLAYERS**

We cannot discuss shared issues if the aims of each player have not, at a given point in time, been clarified. For some, entrepreneurship starts with exploiting specific markets such as tourism, food and service, etc. while for others, it starts with promoting natural local resources and cooperation between players; exchange of practice therefore needs to be taken to a deeper level in order to define which operations would be suited to pooling and which ones should be conducted independently by each individual player. In parallel, the question needs to be examined of whether the financing organisations (the State, regional or district authorities) have very clear ideas of what they want to support and whether or not their ideas are consistent with what is being promoted by the DCTs.

Furthermore, partnership is still a vague notion and one that incites questions and fears. This relationship is often perceived as a form of assimilation, a negation of individual identity and even submission. However a collective and territorial dynamic by no means intends to create subordinate relations. On the contrary, it intends to rally the strengths and assets of each player to complement one another and to strengthen the local enterprise fabric. The example of the current scheme in Pays des Vallons de Vilaine expresses well this reluctance to institutionalise collaborative practice for fear that doing so will curb the spontaneous participation of players.

Nevertheless, while the notion of «collective of players» can take a more or less «official» form, the emergence of a real collective and territorial scheme would not economise on a more structured and perhaps more incentivising organisation. Evidently, implementation of a collective and territorial scheme cannot be transposed in an identical state from one geographical sector to another. The strength behind these joint action dynamics lies in not overlooking local specificities. Furthermore, the joint action dynamic only represents one of the possible solutions to the issues of development in rural sectors. By no means is it the one and only solution.

## **COORDINATION OF THE COLLECTIVE AND TERRITORIAL SCHEME.**

Nevertheless, it appears that the «partnership» dimension of schemes, characterised by joint action, can only be constructed if an organisation, an official structure, is provided which therefore needs to be run by an entity. This task can be entrusted to a neutral structure, such as a council service, or to a partner structure that is involved directly and would be recognised in this role. In all cases, it involves mediating between the different players, coordinating the support schemes and keeping the project on an even keel.

In an «external» collective and territorial scheme, the presence of diverse partners ranging from consular chambers, local authorities, institutional support organisations and associations, justifies careful structuring, accounting for each player's interests. In this case, an external structure would catalyse tensions more easily and conduct actions within a common project.

The existence of competition or operational problems cannot be overlooked within a more internal support action group, belonging to one same network for example. The scheme needs to be coordinated within the action group itself, by one of the associations that has been delegated this function by the group.

Spin-off operations and moreover the longevity of such activities therefore undergo a necessary coordination process, which by no means formalises the scheme but rather provides tangible coordination of actions.

## **EVOLUTION IN OPERATING METHODS**

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Entering a partnership entails a change in internal practices applied to each organisation. This is indeed yet a further obstacle. Nevertheless, it remains a determining factor for the longevity of a collective territorial scheme.

The different organisations need to learn to work together, to establish a dialogue as collaborative partners. This concept connects with the notion of the scheme's structure. Networking tools need to be implemented with a view to monitoring project holders in a coordinated manner and facilitating information flow between organisations working with the same entrepreneur. These are not necessarily very complex or demanding to set up, but at least allow the maintenance of linkage between the organisations and to pool all information relating to an individual entrepreneur. These tools are also designed so that project holders do not have to repeatedly provide the same information to different organisations and to favour their integration within a coordinated entrepreneurial process.

## **LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP DYNAMICS**

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The longevity of schemes is definitely one of the key elements in effecting collaborative practices in geographical areas. Such an approach is decisive in the long-term for the technical partners but also for identifying entrepreneurs and recognition by district councils and external partners to schemes. Regular action and permanent contact establishes the legitimacy of these DCTs.

Time is also a key factor in providing coherence between the scheme and the strategy proposed to the entrepreneurs. The schemes are generally positioned very far upstream of the creation process and favour the emergence of projects, inciting entrepreneurs to take time to assess their project and its development. The DCTs should therefore offer support taking into consideration the different stages of the project, but above all the action groups need to commit for the long-term in order to guarantee continuity of service and remain in touch with entrepreneurs throughout all stages of the process.

Different elements, both internal and external to partners in the scheme, can affect the longevity of such support schemes.

## FINANCE

For all schemes studied, the question of funding is crucial for the sustainability of local entrepreneurial dynamics, even more so for action groups where the necessary coordination task is hard set to be acknowledged in terms of funding. It would be ideal if the financing organisations were fully involved in the partnership dynamic, sharing announced aims, which is rarely the case.

We can also note that the different support schemes (notably in Normandy or Burgundy) have at some point in their existence received funding for a given period of time (project-based funding). Once the project is complete (according to criteria defined by the financing organisation), the action's sustainability becomes problematic due to a lack of resources, which can cause (as for the *Projet'cteur* sites in Normandy) these actions to be placed in standby, even if needs are still present, until new funding resources are obtained, essential for pursuing operations.

At this stage, the project's pursuit can revolve around (as is currently the case in Burgundy) results in terms of individual or group enterprise creations and real added-value on the quality of life in the rural sector (new services, new founded social bonds participating in improving community living and the attractiveness of the area). Such results influence local political decisions: if they are positive, funding can be envisaged, if they are not convincing, they will be aborted. Maintaining an operational partnership of this type therefore depends on the results that it has produced.

## THE GROUP OF PLAYERS

Without overlooking competition and internal operating issues, the action groups that found their work primarily on complicity between the community of players, independently of funding opportunities, in theory consign their ambitions to the long-term. This does however depend on joint funding, without which organisations are liable to withdraw from group action; it also depends on the recognition of the specificities of each player in the action group.

## COMMON ACTIONS OPERATED BY PARTNERS

Even when a group of players is involved, when common actions operated by partners amount to a simple exchange of information and dialogue, there is a risk of dispersal over time (notably shown by the scheme in Poitou-Charentes). If common actions take concrete form through the joint construction of the support service offered to the project holder, by the co-coordination of «de l'idée au projet» training, or the training of training agents, the joint interest is more likely to be long-lasting, in spite of potential tension between organisations.

## CONCLUSION

As stated in the introduction, these guidelines do not intend to provide pre-prepared, readily applicable recipes for any geographical sector wishing to develop entrepreneurship. These are areas for consideration and recommendations resulting from an analysis of several different schemes identified in France and Portugal. These guidelines aim to be enriched by new schemes lending themselves to analysis.

In order to delve deeper into the different elements evoked in these guidelines, we feel that it is important to place the scheme in the context of the objective that it is pursuing, so to favour the creation of sustainable activities in geographical sectors and to provide the best possible support for project holders in this approach.

The questions summarised in the following table show how the joint action dynamic contributes to the advice and support strategy, and how this joint action scheme draws us closer to sustainable development and equal opportunities. Such questions can help procure an objective view, to assess a scheme that is already in place or can even help with projection when implementing a new dynamic.

## ANALYSIS GRID OF THE PUBLIC AND LOCAL SUPPORT SCHEMES AND INITIATIVES IN TERMS OF ENTREPRENEUR GUIDANCE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

ENTREPRENEUR GUIDANCE	How does the collective dynamic favour the entrepreneur guidance process?		
	FOR THE ENTREPRENEURS	FOR THE MENTORS	FOR THE TERRITORY
<b>«De l’envie au Projet» («from project concept to concretisation») action group, Nord-Pas-de-Calais</b>	Entrepreneur’s guidance over the long run by a variety of organisations, each having a specific added value.	A part of the guidance is global but collective work also enables the mentors to specialize in thematic topics.	
<b>Collective of players in favour of entrepreneurship in the Île-de-France region</b>	Provides a wider assistance encompassing each organisation’s specificities. The collective training provides a general survey of the players involved in this field of activity.	Exchange of practices and reinforcement of the mentors’ professional skills, especially on training courses prior to business creation.	Reinforcement of an assistance center on agricultural projects, especially focused on alternative projects.
<b>The Projet’cteur spots in Basse Normandie</b>	Collective healthy competition in the training programs «from project concept to concretisation»: knowledge pooling/ networking with territories.	Reinforcement of means and tools which aim at professionalizing the mentors.	Attempt to create new networks between players of various fields: people working for employment, economic development, local governments...
<b>The collective dynamic in business creation guidance in Pays de Vallons de Vilaine</b>	Variety of ways and spots favouring discoveries. Guidance can run over a long time.	Collective work. Interaction and synergy.	Importance of the number of people and institutions involved, which forces elected officials and their institutions to get involved themselves.
<b>Coordination site in the Étang-sur-Aroux municipality</b>	Gathers and provides resources from a variety of structures which contribute to offering a guidance adapted to the local context.	Through coherence and link building between various projects of the territory. This overall approach make the mentor’s work easier.	Provides permanent exchange between different projects’ stages and different players.
<b>The technical committee in installation in Poitou-Charentes region</b>		Improvement in professional abilities with regard to individual and collective guidance – reinforcement of mutual knowledge between structures.	Take into account projects requiring a specific guidance.
<b>Collective of players for business creation in rural areas (Alentejo, Portugal)</b>	Synergy between structures providing general and technical guidance to the entrepreneurs as well as financial support.	Links and partnerships are developed, especially between Esdime mentors and local governments’ clerks.	The joint efforts of the partners enable to develop and reinforce a dynamic of individual business creation, in an area where people are not prone to entrepreneurial initiatives .

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	How does the collective and territorial dynamic favour sustainable development?		
	FOR THE ENTREPRENEURS	FOR THE MENTORS	FOR THE TERRITORY
«De l'envie au Projet» («from project concept to concretisation») action group, Nord-Pas-de-Calais	The guiding structures rely strongly on sustainable development and fair economy principles, which encourages entrepreneurs to take these principles into account.	Resource and tool sharing between the different structures composing the collective action group, as well as with organisations intervening in urban areas on sustainable development and fair economy issues.	Mostly oriented towards organic farming projects and promotion of local resources.
Collective of players in favour of entrepreneurship in the Île-de-France region	Exchanges during collective trainings enable to question a project in the light of sustainable development issues.		The collective dynamic enables to encourage more strongly entrepreneurs to settle in the Île-de-France region, so as to answer the strong local demand (especially in agricultural production).
The Projet'cteur spots in Basse Normandie	New project opportunities for entrepreneurs (fairtrade, organic market gardening, green building).	Must professionalize on these fields of activity to provide added value to mentoring.	Networking various players at the «Pays» scale.
The collective dynamic in business creation guidance in Pays de Vallons de Vilaine	Themes closely linked to local resources and to organic farming; true guidance over the long run.	Structures strongly involved on these themes.	Strong involvement of players working in organic farming and green building: «democratisation» of these themes; with links created with fair economy (as sustainable development players are very involved in this economic field).
Coordination site in the Étang-sur-Arroux municipality	The work is understood locally, favouring human and geographical proximity, which encourages projects aiming at the efficient use and allocation of local resources.	Project leaders contribute to promoting sustainable development practices.	Enable to transform the will to act for sustainable development into concrete actions, which are evaluated and which can be carried out elsewhere.
The technical committee in installation in Poitou-Charentes region		Takes sustainability into account in setting up a project (territory/people/project).	Installation of innovative activities from an ecological and social point of view.
Collective of players for business creation in rural areas (Alentejo. Portugal)		Esdime sensitivity to sustainable development issues positively influences its partners.	Entrepreneurs want to promote local resources (natural and human), thereby contributing to the local added value.

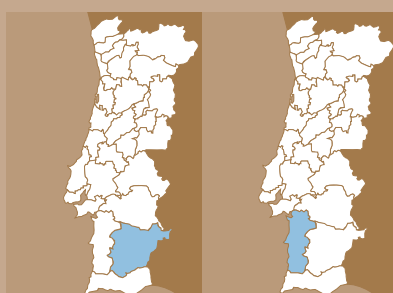
EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES	How does the collective and territorial dynamic favour equality of opportunities?
	FOR THE ENTREPRENEURS
«De l’envie au Projet» («from project concept to concretisation») action group, Nord-Pas-de-Calais	Entrepreneurs assisted by the action group are actually 50% males and 50 % females.
Collective of players in favour of entrepreneurship in the Île-de-France region	Some personal questions do not take the same importance for men and women creating a business (lifestyle, accommodating family and work, tasks performed especially in farming...).
The Projet’cteur spots in Basse Normandie	Awareness raising during the trainings «De l’envie au projet» on the differences of treatment between males and females in business creation.
The collective dynamic in business creation guidance in Pays de Vallons de Vilaine	Strong care for long-term unemployed people in favour of their professional integration. The project opportunities are suitable for both men and women.
Coordination site in the Étang-sur-Arroux municipality	The provided guidance is open to all, some actions are particularly designed for socially excluded people, in partnership with local organizations specialized in social and professional integration, in a perspective of mingling diverse social groups, which enable excluded people to develop an active social life. The structures act according to «éducation populaire» principles (i.e. «people’s education» outside the state education system) even if it is not always put forward.
The technical committee in installation in Poitou-Charentes region	Methodological exchange reinforces network mentors’ professional abilities in guiding persons who are not familiar with entrepreneurial approach. A particular attention is given to farmers’ wives wishing to create their own activity (whether on the farm or not).
Collective of players for business creation in rural areas (Alentejo. Portugal)	The specific work on equal opportunities lead by Esdime provides a new insight on guidance practices in the light of the identified matters.



# FACT SHEETS

## Fact sheet n°1

### COLLECTIVE OF PLAYERS FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE RURAL SECTOR, IN THE SUB-REGION OF SOUTH-EAST ALENTEJO



*Bas Alentejo*

*Alentejo littoral*

PROJECT MANAGER: Esdime

**STATUS:**

Co-operative of social solidarity

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**ADDRESS:**

Rua do Engenho, 10 - 7600-337 Messejana  
- Portugal

**TECHNICAL PARTNERS:**

Institute of employment and Professional training, Animar network, Aljustrel municipality, The Council of partners of the Rural development program, Local social networks

**FINANCIAL PARTNERS:**

EAFRD

#### GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR

REGIONS: Bas Alentejo (5 municipalities)

and Coastal Alentejo (1 municipality)

SUB-REGION: South-East Alentejo

MUNICIPALITIES: Aljustrel, Almodôvar, Castro Verde, Ferreira do Alentejo, one parish in Odemira, Ourique

POPULATION: 43 171 inhabitants

DENSITY: 12,65 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>

SURFACE: 3 413,4 km<sup>2</sup>

#### CONTEXT

The sub-region of south-east Alentejo is an impoverished sector, characterised by a population with low qualification levels. More specifically, this sector's population is faced with the following difficulties:

- Poor educational qualifications: the eldest generations are characterised by a high rate of illiteracy while the youngest generations have a high rate of premature school leavers,
- Difficult access to income,
- Very high unemployment rates, higher than the average rates for the country.

There is an aging population, characterised by a double-aging phenomenon, resulting in two distinct factors: emigration of young people and the working population, in conjunction with the return of emigrants at retirement or pre-retirement age.

Agriculture, commerce, the restaurant trade and civil construction

are the most important economic activities, in terms of assets in this geographical sector. Furthermore, the extraction industry continues to have important bearing in the municipalities of Aljustrel, Almodôvar and Castro Verde.

This geographical sector is marked by a low density of businesses, despite growth over the past years in the entrepreneurial fabric due to an increase in the number of businesses. The existing entrepreneurial fabric is characterised by a high level of micro-enterprises, fundamental to the region's economic activity.

## **ISSUE**

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In this region, there are very few support/guidance structures/organisations available for potential entrepreneurs. Furthermore, those that do exist do not (as yet) develop integrated action to provide advice and support services at the stage of idea consolidation, with training for entrepreneurs, places for testing out activities, financing support for new businesses and follow-up, advice and support during the post-creation phase.

## **INITIATOR**

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ESDIME – Local Development Agency for South-East Alentejo – with head office in Messejana, in the municipality of Aljustrel. This Social Solidarity cooperative was created in February 1989 and intervenes in the field of training and qualification, and in the promotion of entrepreneurship and regeneration of the enterprise fabric.

ESDIME started its activity as ILE d'Appui (ILE standing for Local Employment Initiative), following an innovative self-employment training scheme developed in Messejana between 1988 and 1990. This training consisted in supporting and providing guidance for «budding» micro entrepreneurial initiatives; little by little, this training initiative was deployed across the geographical sector, which comprises two sub-regions of bas Alentejo and coastal Alentejo. With local action in mind and to respond to needs and support the specific potential of each geographical sector, the scheme focused on the qualification of people and organisations as a solution for building sustainable development. ESDIME was fast called upon by players and organisations operating in different parts of south-east Alentejo.

This territorial dynamic has been largely responsible for the geographic and sector-based construction of ESDIME's action, providing new solutions for emerging needs, new partnerships and new players. Throughout this process, ESDIME has played a fundamental role in terms of training and technical assistance for entrepreneurial initiatives in its geographical field of action and has become a reference organisation for the world of micro and small enterprises and participatory solution finding.

## **OBJECTIVES**

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Esdime has an extensive background in terms of support for entrepreneurship in this geographical sector. The community of players aim to strengthen coordination between actions of different partners, with a view to offering a coherent and concerted advice and support offer for the sector. With this cooperation project, Esdime aimed to consolidate its position as a Technical Support Structure for Entrepreneurship, and to consolidate, in a sustainable manner, the working methods developed over its twenty years of existence.

## **THE PROJECT**

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Background in concerted consultation and partnerships with public employment and training organisations  
Work in concerted consultation with the IEFP (Institute of Employment and Professional Training) began once Esdime had been approved to operate as ILE d'Appui (when it was created). Approval to operate as an ILE (Local Employment Initiative) meant that it could put together a technical team equipped to support and provide guidance for small-scale entrepreneurial projects and start-ups in the sub-region. Once this status had expired, work in cooperation with IEFP structures was maintained in close collaboration on a regional level, chiefly with the Employment Centres of Ourique and Beja, which cover the majority of Esdime's geographical scope of action in terms of missions and resources.

Esdime systematically and continuously emerges as the entity towards which the above-mentioned Employment Centres refer their project holders. This is why Esdime was selected in the framework of programmes run by the IEFP (such as the PESSOA programme, from 1994 to 1999) to promote professional training projects for the unemployed, to support employment and to encourage self-employment initiatives.

Esdime was later selected, in 1999, in the framework of the PIPPLEA (Pilot Initiative of Local Employment Promotion) in Alentejo to develop integrated training actions, to provide follow-up, support and advice for local employment initiatives. In the framework of LEADER community programmes piloted by Esdime (LEADER II and LEADER+) in the south-east Alentejo sector, Alentejo's Regional IEFP Delegation, represented by the Ourique Employment Centre, was an active partner for consultative cooperation and partnership. Esdime's expertise was also called upon to discuss «good practices» in the framework of the REDE Programme, in which it participated assiduously and actively.

The identification of potential training beneficiaries is developed in close collaboration with the IEFP. This concerted consultation is the result of close relations which were founded right from the beginning and more recently, in the framework of Social Networks for municipalities (Aljustrel, Almodôvar, Castro Verde, Ferreira do Alentejo, Ourique and Odemira) in which Esdime and the Employment and Training Centre services participate.

## OPERATING PRINCIPLE

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Esdime now works in partnership with a group of players who are fundamental for deploying its action in the field of advice and support for entrepreneurs.

Such players include:

- **The Animar network:** as a partner and now coordinating the APDL (Portuguese Association for Local Development), we feel that this network is the ideal national platform for qualifying and furthering advice, support, consulting and training services for project holders, since they develop actions in this field in partnership with Esdime. Concerning the certification programme, a consultation process is already in place between all members to make Animar a priority platform for the design, exchange and promotion of local actions,
  
- **ESCALE, transnational cooperation project:** in the context of recent exchanges, consolidated with an initial work session in Portugal, in October 2009, Esdime is joining a project to create a European network for assisting entrepreneurs in the rural sector with French partners (AFIP and CELAVAR), with a view to furthering interaction and exchange of methodologies and experience with European partners operating in the field of entrepreneur support. In the framework of this project, Esdime will be involved over the next two years in a programme that will include visiting projects involving current and future entrepreneurs and other public and private organisations, and will also be involved in the creation of a support network for entrepreneurs in rural sectors,
  
- **Protocol for a partnership with the Mayor's office in Aljustrel to regenerate the Municipal Centre for Micro-enterprises:** this partnership project has been operational since March 2009 and aims to develop and further synergies between local public structures and the ADL (Alentejo Coastal Development Association) promoting and regenerating entrepreneurial support infrastructures,
  
- **Council of PRODER (Rural Development Programme), Axe 3 (GAL AL SUD Esdime):** made up of approximately 50 public and private entities, this Council takes the form of a consultative platform for local and sub-regional support strategies for enterprise regeneration and job creation. This Council's action reaches beyond the simple management of funds offered by the FEADER and Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fishing,
  
- **Local Social Networks:** Esdime is a partner of the Social Networks in municipalities covered by its geographical field of action. Its role largely consists of helping to find answers to tangible problems, involving concerted solutions between the Social Security, the IEF, local authorities, businesses and the ADL (Alentejo Coastal Development Association).

## **DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED**

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- The entrepreneurial tissue is characterised by a high number of small-sized and family-based enterprises (a reality that is lessened to a minor degree by several verified exceptions in the extraction industry, civil construction sector, agriculture and wholesale and retail commerce),
- Low density of businesses,
- Generally, entrepreneurs in the industrial zone are in a high age bracket, have poor education and often, outmoded methods. They also have little capacity for innovation and development. They are not very enterprising, due to a lack of capacity and/or resources
- The weight of the past: a form of pessimism and a certain degree of resignation can be observed, a potential hurdle for the very entrepreneurship that is essential for the area's regeneration.

## **FACTORS OF SUCCESS**

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- Increase in the number of enterprises, in quantitative and absolute terms,
- Reduction in the time required to create a business,
- Existing financial tools to support the creation and development of micro enterprises in the rural sector. These tools are suitable for the realities of the rural world (National Strategic Reference Framework and, in particular, the PRODER's LEADER approach; Support Fund for Micro-enterprises),
- Increase in the volume of training programmes for the working population and entrepreneurs,
- Greater involvement from several partners in defining integrated assistance strategies for entrepreneurship in the rural sector.

## **RESULTS AND IMPACTS (FROM 1989 TO THE PRESENT DAY)**

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### **1/ Follow-up/Diagnosis of necessities for action**

- Assistance with writing up business plans – 400 entrepreneurs,
- Development of economic and financial viability studies – 400 entrepreneurs,
- Information on business opportunities and funding – 2,000 people,
- Production of theme-based seminars – 1,400 people,
- Support and referral to other institutions – 1,000 people.

### **2/ Consulting**

- Management – 40 enterprises,
- Accounting – 20 enterprises.

### 3/ Training

- Management (training and workshops) – 200 people trained,
- Technical and professional (training for employed and unemployed people) – 200 people trained,
- Entrepreneurship (training for unemployed people) – 70 people trained.

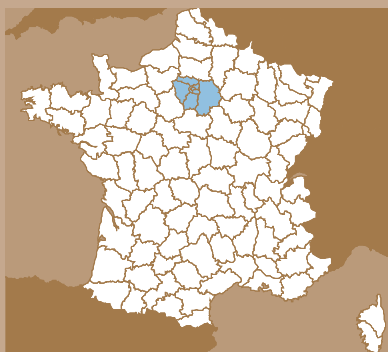
A selection of indicative examples of this task:

- Operating as an ILE d'Appui<sup>8</sup>,
- Initiation and development, in a permanent and continuous manner, of integrated training/promotion projects for self-entrepreneurship, in the form of a certified training scheme at a very early stage as well as a CRVCC (Skills Recognition, Validation and Certification Centre - and now New Opportunities Centre) since 2001,
- Creation of technical support tools such as the «Guide Pratique pour les micro et petites entreprises» (Practical Guide for micro and small enterprises), written and published in 1996,
- Development of transnational cooperation projects for promoting entrepreneurship,
- Implementation of the Network for Employment and Social Action project, in the framework of the PIPPLEA programme, managed by the Institute of Employment and Professional Training, between 1999 and 2001,
- Permanent support and guidance for entrepreneurs in the region through the development of investment projects and viability assessments (approximately 400 since 1989),
- Management of support and incentive funds for start-ups (LEADER II and LEADER+),
- Participation in the development of research studies such as «Etude d'Evaluation Prospective du micro entreprenariat au Portugal» (Prospective Evaluation Study for micro entrepreneurship in Portugal) in 2007, under the responsibility of INSCOOP (António Sérgio Cooperative Institute) and conducted in partnership with the Coimbra University centre for social studies; the CETRAD of the Université de Trás os Montes and Alto Douro, the ANDC (National Association for the Right to Credit), Esdime and the In Loco e association in Beira Serra.

*8/ Approval to operate as an ILE (Local Employment Initiative) meant that it could put together a technical team equipped to support and provide guidance for small-scale entrepreneurial projects and start-ups.*

## Fact sheet n°2

### COLLECTIVE OF PLAYERS IN FAVOUR OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE ÎLE-DE-FRANCE REGION



#### GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR

TITRE : Île-de-France  
 PRÉFECTURE : Paris  
 POPULATION : 11,694,000 inhabitants  
 NOMBRE DE COMMUNES : 1,281

#### CONTEXT

PROJECT MANAGER : AFIP

STATUS : Association

PHONE : +33 (0)1 48 74 52 88

EMAIL : [contact@afip.asso.fr](mailto:contact@afip.asso.fr)

WEBSITE : [www.afip.asso.fr](http://www.afip.asso.fr)

ADDRESS :

2 rue Paul Escudier. 75009 Paris

TECHNICAL PARTNERS :

AMAP IDF, Terre de Liens,  
 GAB IDF, Interafocg,  
 Afocg du Loiret,  
 CFPPA de Brie Comte Robert.

FINANCIAL PARTNERS :

Région IDF, Ministère de l'agriculture,  
 Vivéa, Agence de l'eau.

Île-de-France is one of Europe's largest urban areas, with almost 11 million inhabitants. It is also an agricultural region. 21% of this geographical sector is urban, while the majority of land is agricultural (53%) and wooded (23%).

A new-founded rural dynamic is emerging, with new inhabitants in the rural area and a new perception of these inhabitants. The area's benefits for the capital are increasingly acknowledged (preservation of resources, de-pollution, attractive countryside locations, etc).

60% of the 1,300 communes in Île-de-France have less than 2,000 inhabitants and 46% have fewer than 1,000 inhabitants.

Despite the new-founded attraction of country life, small shops are gradually disappearing: one commune in two has neither baker nor grocery store. Rural employment represents just 6% of regional employment.

Agriculture in France's principal region records a high level of performance: across 2% of the national agricultural surface area, 6,000 Île-de-France farms produce highest yields for cereal, oil-producing crops and sugar beets. Farms are growing in size and are larger than elsewhere in France, averaging out at 100 ha, which is cause for the disappearance of 200 farms per year, market farms being the most affected.

## ISSUE

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The Île-de-France region has been significantly affected by the trend towards centralisation and the increasing expansion of the tertiary employment sector, giving the region's outskirts a primarily residential function.

Nevertheless, due to the size of the consumption pool in this region and due to its strong attraction – particularly in terms of tourism – these areas have become a real breeding ground for employment and self-employment, particularly in agritourism, agricultural and cottage-industry sectors. Furthermore, significant evolution can be noted in terms of the demand for quality, local agricultural produce, in which Île-de-France is largely lacking. Demand is also high and increasing for «green» tourism here, with Seine et Marne being France's 9th largest rural tourist destination. Rural destinations are characterised by their non-seasonal nature and their attractiveness at all periods of the year. There too, however, the demand is far from being satisfied, particularly in matters of agritourism.

All this is set to change. Already, there are a number of potential project holders in Île-de-France for economic projects with high-added value (social, environmental, territorial). However such individuals do not always benefit from the potential opportunities offered by the capital region, or are discouraged by the host of problems encountered throughout the business creation process.

Supporting the creation of very small enterprises in this rural environment and maintaining and facilitating agricultural concerns are key elements for sustainable development in Île-de-France's rural sector.

Whereas at present, in the Île-de-France region, no clearly-established schemes are in place in the rural sector to encourage the concretisation of entrepreneurial initiatives, or to provide the resources to actively test an agricultural project in situ.

## PROJECT INITIATOR

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AFIP (Association for Training and Information for the Development of Rural Initiatives) initiated the grouping of structures that provide group support for entrepreneurs, and relations were already in place between three other founding structures providing individual advice for project holders: the IDF AMAP (French Association for the Preservation of Rural Agriculture), the GAB (Organic Farmers Association) and Terre de Liens.



## **OBJECTIVES**

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In order to meet the ambitious objective of providing guidance and support for entrepreneurs in a geographical sector with a distinct urban identity, several Île-de-France structures operating in the agricultural and rural sector have decided to work together. Such structures are called upon by entrepreneurs with different projects, however at present these mainly concern the agricultural sector. The need has also been felt to pool methods and practices in order to provide assistance for these people, the majority of whom is a long way off actually creating their business. One of the objectives is to encourage such people to set up their projects in the Île-de-France region, in order to bring to a stop a certain «leakage» of project holders towards other less restrictive regions (notably in terms of property).

## **THE PROJECT**

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Three main actions have been implemented since 2008:

- Reinforcement of interaction between structures and coordinators. Given that this collective is relatively new, this interaction phase was necessary so that the different structures could familiarise themselves with each structure's scope of action and specificities with regards assistance for entrepreneurs. This was an opportunity to establish the foundations of an assistance service, revolving around the many skills of the partner networks.
- Implementation of shared tools between the structures: individual monitoring files and references for project holders assisted by the collective. Such tools equip each coordinator with the means to monitor the project holder's evolution through the network.
- Coordination of the training course «de l'idée au projet de création d'activité agricole» (agricultural business creation: from idea to project), primarily coordinated by AFIP and the Loiret Afocg with more regular operations conducted by Terre de Liens, AMAPs of Île-de-France and the Île-de-France GAB. This 6-day training course took the form of 9 modules and was held between November 2008 and February 2009.

## **TARGET PUBLIC, FIELD OF ACTIVITY AND GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR**

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This collective's cornerstone activity is of an agri-rural nature with a high level of agricultural input. The public concerned therefore comprises project holders wishing to develop activities of a primarily agricultural nature. Nevertheless this field is not restrictive and evolutions are conceivable.

The project's geographical sector covers the whole Île-de-France region.

## **OPERATING PRINCIPLE**

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Five main structures are brought together in this collective: AMAPs of Île-de-France, Terre de Liens, the Loiret Afocg, the AFIP and the Île-de-France GAB. These players are the central entities of the scheme. They have designed and implemented the «de l'idée au projet» (from idea to project) training course and coordinate project-holder monitoring and follow-up schemes. They hold regular steering committee meetings for the scheme (two to three meetings per year).

Two partners are associated to this Île-de-France guidance scheme on a lesser scale:

- The Brie Comte Robert CFPPA, the managers of the BPREA for organic market farming. These players participated in launching the scheme, particularly during the needs analysis phase and operate in association with support organisations via the project holders, who have often had the opportunity to take both the BPREA training course and the «de l'idée au projet» training course in succession. Furthermore, those involved in the scheme also intervene in some of the BPREA training course modules, also during the administration phase of project creation.
- The Île-de-France Chambers of Agriculture: this partner is not as yet an official participant in the scheme; however relations have emerged since the project holders attend information days coordinated by the Chamber of Agriculture focussing on the farming profession. These relations will surely evolve, particularly in the context of the new process for setting up agricultural concerns in which the Chambers of Agriculture play an important role.

## **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

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- A region considered as «urban», with few structures offering assistance for agri-rural business creation.
- The somewhat slow process of launching the scheme, due to the time required for those involved to become familiar with each other and for reciprocal positioning between structures.
- Entrepreneurs who do not necessarily want to establish their activity in the Île-de-France region, due to the significant limiting factors relating to property and real-estate pressure.
- A lack of financial support for training schemes, very far upstream, which have led to the cancellation of training courses scheduled for 2009.

## **FACTORS OF SUCCESS**

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- A real demand from project holders who had no upstream assistance offer in Île-de-France.
- Support from the Brie Comte Robert CFPPA training centre; this has enabled relaying information to our target public.

## **RESULTS AND IMPACT**

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- Around twenty project holders assisted by the structures between 2008 and 2009.
- 25 project holders assisted in the framework of BPREA's «project» module.
- A 4-month training course with participation from 6 project holders. Two training courses scheduled for 2010.
- One project holder in test phase within an incubator implemented by the Île-de-France AMAP networks.
- Reinforcement of collective working methods between participating structures.

The scheme is relatively recent; it would therefore be premature to discuss its impact on the geographical sector.

## **PROSPECTS**

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In 2010, the Terre de Liens association will resume the general coordination of this collective of players.

Two «de l'idée au projet» training courses will be scheduled in 2010 over a 5-day period, targeting 10 to 15 participants for each training course.

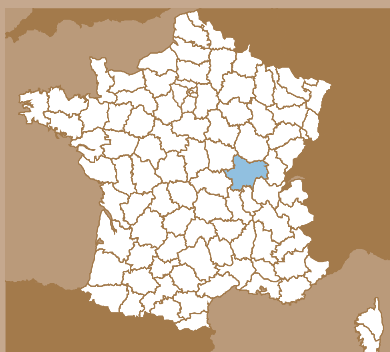
Intervention in the professional organic market farming training course will also continue, thus permitting awareness-raising with a group of 25 people in the context of the project.

All of these actions will be conducted regularly in the Île-de-France sector. Another objective is to expand the current partnership, notably by increasing communication with the Chambers of Agriculture and by working closer with the «classic» entrepreneurial process (information point for entrepreneurs).

## Fact sheet n°3

### COORDINATION SITE

### IN THE ÉTANG-SUR-ARROUX MUNICIPALITY



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Saône-et-Loire

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**ADDRESS:**  
46,rue de Paris - 71000 Mâcon - France

**TECHNICAL PARTNERS:**  
La Boutique de Gestion 71, Bourgogne  
Franche Comté AFIP, Coopérés network

**FINANCIAL PARTNERS:**  
Europe

#### **GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR**

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**REGION:** Bourgogne

**DÉPARTEMENT:** Saône-et-Loire

**PREFECTURE:** Mâcon

**POPULATION OF THE REGION:** 1 628 837

**DENSITY:** 52 hab/km<sup>2</sup>

**NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES:** 2,045

#### **CONTEXT**

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Three local social and solidarity-based economy coordination sites have been test run in the Saône-et-Loire département, in the framework of two European projects, COOPERES and Equal RECOLTES. The site examined in this document is located in Étang-sur-Arroux, a rural municipality in south-west Saône-et-Loire. Its geographical scope primarily covers the Beuvray Val d'Arroux district (6 municipalities and 3,430 inhabitants). Étang is the main town in the area, geographically centred between two medium-sized urban areas (Le Creusot, 23,000 inhabitants and Autun, 15,000 inhabitants).

#### **ISSUE**

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Rural employment is declining, but has the potential to develop through new, more cooperative forms of establishments. Bridges between economic matters and social matters are lacking in rural sectors and the job seeker pool is primarily considered as a «weight» rather than as a resource and a breeding ground for skills and initiatives.

## **PROJECT INITIATOR**

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The Saône-et-Loire MSA is coordinating the project. This organisation initiated the European COOPERES project, followed by the RECOLTES (Group Action Network for Solidarity-based Economy Sectors) project, calling upon a number of players in the framework of this project, such as the Bourgogne Franche Comté AFIP (Association for Training and Information for the Development of Rural Initiatives), La Boutique de Gestion 71, the Louhans mission Locale (public agency providing employment help and advice for 16-25 year olds) and social integration organisations.

## **OBJECTIVES**

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Local resources are scarce in terms of centres where the different players can meet up and discuss projects in view of nurturing cooperative initiatives.

Entrepreneurial culture is still very weak within non-profit organisations and social players.

A large number of women in rural environments are isolated, both economically and socially.

The solidarity-based economy therefore needs to be called upon as a vector for new impetus in the sector and to energize and give new meaning to group initiatives.

## **PROJECT**

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Three local coordination sites were set up in Étang-sur-Arroux between 2005 and 2008, in the framework of this project. The Étang-sur-Arroux site was supported by the council, which perceived this project as «an accelerator for development», with the potential to meet needs in terms of scheme implementation, needs which were not being met by economic development agencies: whereby entrepreneurs can meet, discuss their projects together and envisage setting-up projects as group initiatives.

## **TARGET PUBLIC, FIELD OF ACTIVITY AND GEOGRAPHIC SECTOR**

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Individual project holders are welcomed, informed, provided with guidance and support and where necessary guided towards other structures; groups are set up for entrepreneurs with similar aims and support is provided for cooperative initiatives.

## **OPERATING PRINCIPLE**

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Four main players participated in the project for a local coordination site in the Beuvray Val Arroux district:

- The Coopères network: site open to entrepreneurs and/or inhabitants. The main role of its facilitator is to provide support and advice and to coordinate work groups (twice a week) on council premises. The structure is extremely accessible to the public.  
A facilitator employed by the Coopères network is available for individuals, with or without appointment.
- La Boutique de Gestion 71: provides assistance and guidance for business entrepreneurs throughout all project stages.
- Bourgogne Franche-Comté AFIP: methodological support provided by the site facilitator. Co-construction of development schemes: 1 STEP (Stimulating local sectors through employment and initiatives) training course in 2006/2007, guidance and assistance for an artist's action group which resulted in a group exhibition in 2008. Coordination of inter-site meetings.
- MSA: overseeing the global coordination.

Other one-off schemes were conducted with Pôle Emploi, mission locale and PLIE over the three year period.

## **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

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Turnover of site facilitators (three different facilitators over a three year period): in rural sectors, a long period of time is required in order to identify a resource person and to develop a relationship with them. This relationship is essentially a human one. The same applies to relations with technical and political partners. Subsequently, starting this task of developing relationships with individuals from scratch three times over was a real setback for this structure. The time taken getting to know the geographical sector and the people left insufficient time for implementing more group action initiatives, despite significant potential to do so.

## **FACTORS OF SUCCESS**

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- The involvement of local players (MSA managers, delegates from local authorities, the département, social workers, consular chambers) within the steering committee for each local coordination site.
- Added value for the geographical sector: one resource person assigned to discuss individual projects, able to provide information and guidance, track the project's evolution and even chase up project holders, a power of persuasion in terms of group action schemes, acting as a relay for ESS tools and a relay for individual and group initiatives, favouring their development.

## RESULTS AND IMPACT

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- Added value for the local area: an open forum allowing people to meet other project holders, to discuss their projects with facilitators and to receive advice
- Experimental partnership schemes, having enabled interaction and relations across the fields of employment, economy, social integration and local non-profit organisations

These schemes resulted in a «mobility» mission implemented in the Pays Autunois area.

- A project which promoted the social and solidarity-based economy in the rural sector, Creation of innovation partnerships. Establishment of relations between existing resources, local development and local coordination services.

A few key group initiatives resulted from the three local coordination sites:

- A childminder service,
- A «mobility» platform: loan of mopeds,
- Support and advice for a group of artists and a two-day artistic and cultural event in the rural sector (attended by 600 people).

## PROSPECTS

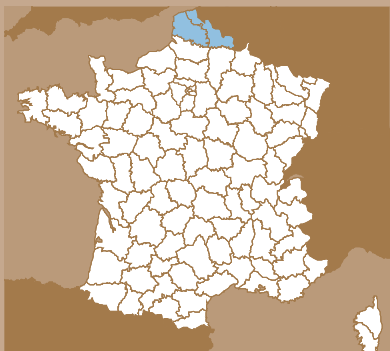
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This three-year experiment ended in December 2008. The Pays de Autunois Morvan was called upon to support the experiment's perpetuation but has not as yet followed up the matter. The project manager, MSA, will need to follow up this matter in the near future, which will entail new partnerships between players, in association with FRGS rural community centres.

The fact remains that, at present, there are no support and advice organisations available for entrepreneurs and for the geographical area. Discussions are currently underway, endeavouring to start the local coordination site back up with coverage for the Pays d'Autunois Morvan as opposed to inter-municipal coverage (Beuvray Val d'Arroux council).

## Fact sheet n°4

### "DE L'ENVIE AU PROJET" ACTION GROUP



#### GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR

REGION: Nord-Pas-de-Calais

DÉPARTEMENT: Pas-de-Calais

PREFECTURE: Lille

POPULATION: 4,048,000 inhabitants

DENSITY: 326 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>

NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES: 1,546

#### CONTEXT

The Nord-Pas-de-Calais region is strongly marked by its industrial background, notably coal mining and the textile industry, the area's two key development sectors in the 19th century. After the Second World War, the secondary sector underwent a real structural crisis as the mines were closed down one by one. This working class culture was deep-rooted in the region and remains so now.

Despite significant urban growth and a population density of over 320 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, Nord-Pas-de-Calais remains an agricultural region characterised by intensive farming (beets).

Despite the collapse of sectors characteristic of the region's social and economic affluence, Nord-Pas-de-Calais bounced back to become a pioneer in matters of social and solidarity-based economy and sustainable development (1st Regional Nature Park, implementation of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais solidarity fund, emergence of the first Cigales – Investment Clubs for Alternative and Local Savings –, development of wind-generator installations, etc.). The Nord-Pas-de-Calais AFIP operates within this new dynamic.

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TECHNICAL PARTNERS:  
AVENIR, A petits Pas, Accueil Paysans,  
MRJC, ADAGE, Graine de Saveur,  
Cap Vent, A Fil des Saisons

FINANCIAL PARTNERS:  
Europe, Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region,  
Terre de Liens, Fondation de France,  
Fondation RTE, etc.



## **ISSUE**

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The Nord-Pas-de-Calais region is not lacking organisations with the potential to provide advice and support for entrepreneurs; however such organisations are over-represented in the urban sector and under-represented in the rural sector. Integrated and identified organisations favouring entrepreneurship in the rural sector are therefore lacking.

## **PROJECT INITIATOR**

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The Nord-Pas-de-Calais AFIP is therefore a complementary entity for existing guidance organisations, with strong specificities:

- AFIP only intervenes in rural areas, where such organisations are lacking in terms of presence,
- AFIP intervenes on pluriactivity, innovative and unusual projects, closely-linked to the solidarity-based economy, which is not the norm in classic entrepreneur support organisations,
- AFIP supports the project, but also provides support and advice for the project holder.

## **OBJECTIVES**

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To develop entrepreneurship in the rural sector whilst reinforcing cooperation between the different players and local guidance services for economic projects in rural sectors in Nord-Pas-de-Calais.

## **SUB-OBJECTIVES**

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- 1/ To reinforce the coordination of players in view of sharing tools and professionalising facilitators,
- 2/ To organise and coordinate resource and experimentation centres in the identified geographical sectors (experimentally in one sector (2003-2004) potentially transposable to other sectors (2005),
- 3/ To set up and regulate procedures for group entrepreneur guidance services and to adapt the process to the individual needs of project holders.

## **THE PROJECT**

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On the initiative of the AFIP, the «de l’envie au projet» (from concept to project concretisation) action group was founded in 2000 and the Nord-Pas-de-Calais AFIP still coordinates it and takes organisational responsibility for it. It brings together six non-profit organisations from the Nord-Pas-de-Calais (AFIP, AVENIR, A Petit Pas, MRJC, CMR, l’homme de terre).

Beyond their individual actions, these organisations found it appropriate to group together within an action group called “le collectif de l’envie au projet” (action group: from concept to project concretisation) for four main reasons:

- A desire to work as a team on something that would be hard to develop alone, given our individual missions. Cooperation is to be developed on identified needs to facilitate the complementarities of each organisation’s operating scope, which pooled together can be useful for all involved, also reinforcing and developing the missions of all involved.
- A need to step back and take stock of our practices by mutually questioning the value of our actions.
- Partnerships with other tools, other geographical sectors (notably urban sectors) on activities facilitating sustainable development and solidarity-based economy.
- Network activity in the rural sector to create dynamics and stimulate change towards sustainable development.

Nord-Pas-de-Calais AFIP was heading the project until 2004, with a focus on the emergence phase. Since 2004, AFIP wanted to progress to a new stage: test out innovative projects in the rural sector. In 2005, Nord-Pas-de-Calais AFIP purchased an estate, a farm in Ambricourt (62, near by Fruges). From June 2005, the head office moved to this new site, transforming the estate into an experimental cluster for new rural enterprises. This location is a test site for association projects, particularly SCIC (Group Interest Cooperatives) and Scop (Production cooperatives) projects. Indeed, a business incubator targeting unusual projects was created, as well as experimental land for agricultural projects, with four hectares of certified organic land providing a site for entrepreneurs wishing to set up organic farming concerns.

## **TARGET PUBLIC, FIELD OF ACTIVITY AND GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR**

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- Project holders currently living in the rural sector,
- Project holders living in urban sectors wishing to live in, or return to, a rural environment to set up their activity,
- 60% come from Pas-de-Calais, and 40% from the Nord département,
- Approximately 50% men and 50% women,
- Status of projects: associations, Scop, SCIC, sole proprietorships.
- Type of projects: educational farms, touring writing workshops, arts and crafts association, farming project, etc.

## **OPERATING PRINCIPLE**

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The NPC AFIP coordinates the group's work which revolves around advice and support in several phases (cf. table below):

**Phase 1:** Awareness-raising on starting a business (interventions in high schools, information stands). Associations involved: Nord-Pas-de-Calais AFIP, A Petits Pas and MRJC.

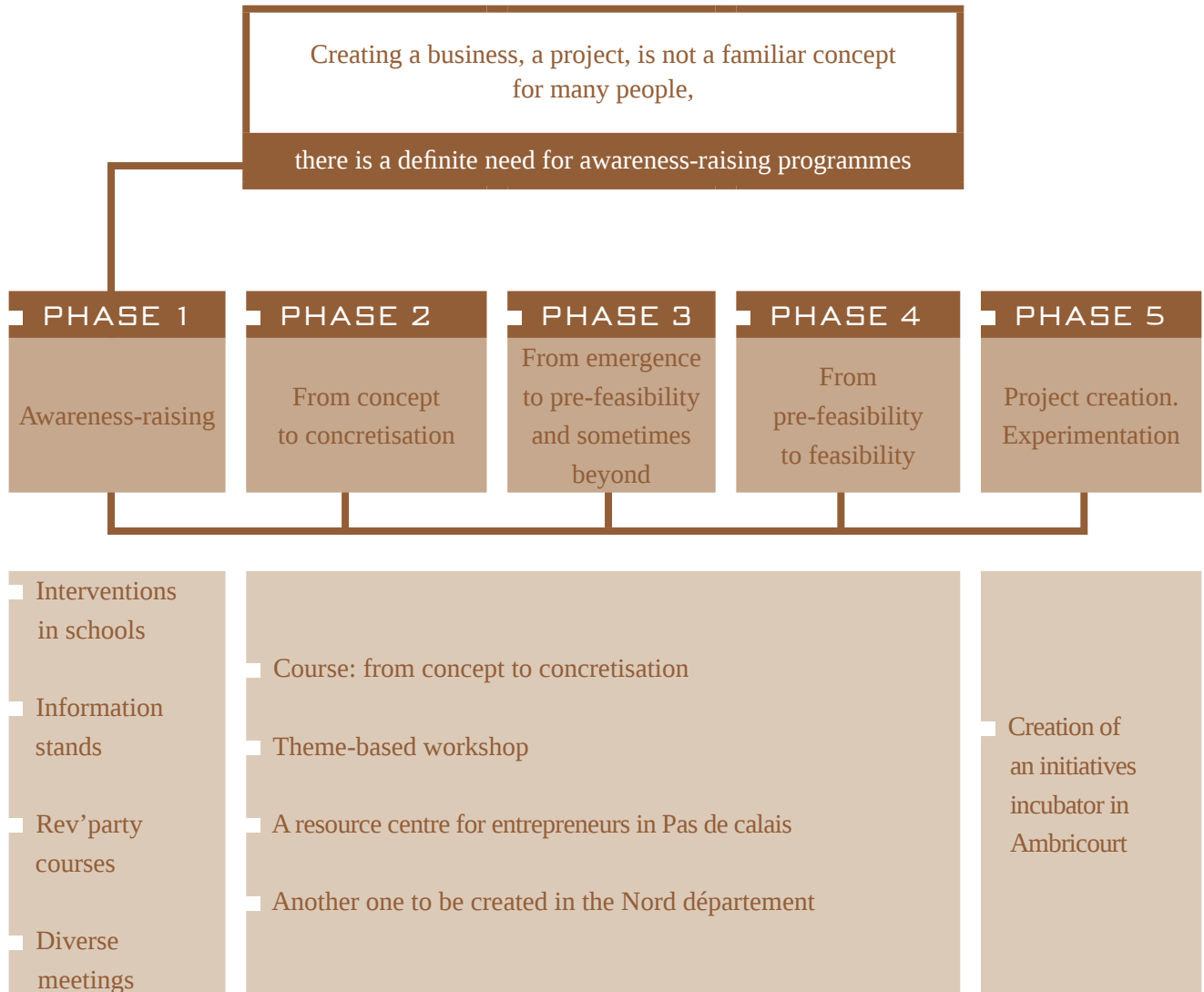
**Phase 2:** «de l'envie au projet» (from concept to concretisation) course organised by NPC's AFIP.

**Phase 3:** From emergence to pre-feasibility Organisation of workshops on company statutes, funding... These workshops are held on the premises of the A Petit Pas association. The different associations intervene in the workshops according to their area of specialisation.

**Phase 4:** From pre-feasibility to feasibility. As the projects progress, theme-based workshops are organised. Individual guidance is also available from Homme de terre and Avenir for project holders.

**Phase 5:** Project creation. An incubator project for initiatives is currently being set up in Ambricourt, on 6 hectares of certified organic land with a farm building. The aim of this scheme is to allow around a dozen entrepreneurs to test run their projects prior to the creation phase.

**THE "DE L'ENVIE AU PROJET" ACTION GROUP:**  
*a scheme that has been under construction for three years. Coordinated by AFIP.*



**RESULTS**

- Theme-based workshops: currently, over a hundred entrepreneurs in rural sectors go to these workshops every year;
- Implementation of new innovative tools in the rural sector:
  - The «Chrysalide» incubator providing legal hosting and a business test phase for over twenty project holders,
  - Le Gerموir: test site for organic market gardening activities on 4.5 Ha of land (3 entrepreneurs per year),
  - A business incubator on the Ambricourt site, hosting four enterprises (taste school, renewable energy, organic vegetable baskets, herbalist).

## **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

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- A change of posture, which has not always been fully understood,
- The organisational management for a relatively heavy project, in the form of re-purchasing the test site from the council,
- The role of coordinating and managing the network is never free of conflict.

## **FACTORS OF SUCCESS**

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- Political and financial support for the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region,
- Relocation of a portion of the schemes to an identified physical site - Gerموir (test site),
- Support from partner networks,
- Membership of a national network, which makes it possible to get through difficult financial hurdles.

## **IMPACTS**

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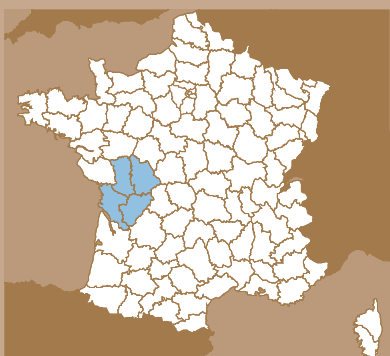
Today, in the village of Ruisseauville, on the location of the Gerموir site, almost 20 jobs have been created in a small rural village with around a hundred inhabitants.

## **LIMITATIONS AND PROSPECTS**

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- Continuation of experimentations in the rural environment, positioning ourselves as innovators in the field of social and solidarity-based economy,
- Contribution to reinforcing bonds, meetings, dialogue between the players of the rural world,
- Ensuring financial stability to guarantee project sustainability and transmutability over time.

**Fact sheet n°5**  
**ACTION GROUP FORMED BY PLAYERS IN FAVOUR OF**  
**AGRICULTURAL/RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**  
**IN THE POITOU-CHARENTES REGION.**  
**NAME OF RESOURCE: "TECHNICAL SET-UP COMMITTEE"**



### **GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR**

REGION: Poitou-Charentes  
 DÉPARTEMENT: Deux-Sèvres  
 PREFECTURE: Poitiers  
 POPULATION: 1,778,856  
 DENSITY: 69 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>  
 NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES: 1,462

PROJECT MANAGER: AFIPAR

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EMAIL: [afipar@wanadoo.fr](mailto:afipar@wanadoo.fr)

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ADRESS:

12 bis, rue Saint Pierre 79500 - France

TECHNICAL PARTNERS:

Member organisations  
 of Poitou-Charentes INPACT,  
 the AFIP network

FINANCIAL PARTNERS:

Poitou-Charentes region,  
 European Social Fund  
 (measure 10B and transnational ESF)

### **CONTEXT**

Poitou-Charentes is one of France's most rural regions alongside Limousin and Corsica. 39% of its population is concentrated in the rural areas, which represent 2/3 of the region's surface area.

These rural areas have an aging population (an estimated 30% of the population will be over 60 in 2015). This could be problematic in terms of employment renewal, as well as continuity for small enterprises and agricultural concerns. These rural sectors also have very low population densities (less than 31 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>, compared to a regional average of 69 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>) and are experiencing population decline (natural difference between 0 and minus 0.5%).

In terms of economics, the situation in certain predominantly rural areas (Mellois, Sud-Charente, Ruffécois, Loudunais) is particularly concerning with regards the lack of job availability and the high unemployment rate, with particularly high figures for long-term unemployment. This is notably due to weak dynamics in the industrial and tertiary sector and the decline of the agricultural sector (according to a survey conducted by the Poitou-Charentes DRAF - Regional Directorate for Agriculture and Forestry - in 2005, agricultural labour dropped 36% between 1988 and 2000. In some areas, this percentage has run to 40 to 65%). The rate of basic income support beneficiaries

is 3% higher than the national rate (source: Atlas social du Poitou-Charentes 2006). For the total population of the Poitou-Charentes region, the number of basic income support beneficiaries is double in rural sectors compared to urban sectors.

## **ISSUE**

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Poitou-Charentes' Accueil Paysans organisation conducted a study in 2007 in an aim to better understand the situation of people supported by the INPACT network. This study showed a lack of specific guidance for multi-activity project holders in the rural sector.

While organisations working on agricultural/rural projects do exist, none have developed a global project approach and they are restricted to a sector-based (consular chambers) and non-transversal approach. This diagnosis also highlighted the possibility of setting up a specific support and advice service within the INPACT network, since some associations already intervene in the setting up process (ACCEA +, ARDEAR, Haut-Bocage CIVAM , AFIPaR).

## **PROJECT INITIATOR**

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The Poitou-Charentes AFIP network and the Poitou-Charentes Accueil Paysans network

## **OBJECTIVES**

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In light of the above, Accueil Paysans and AFIPaR started work on the concept of a support and advice centre for agricultural/rural entrepreneurs. Initially, this work enabled definition of a specific sector-based guidance scheme, supported by a network of associations, to listen to agricultural/rural entrepreneurs, supervise their projects, provide them with support and advice and favour sustainability for new enterprises. The project was first named PAARI (Reception, Support and Advice, Resources and Information Centre). It has now been renamed CTI (Technical Set-up Committee).

## **THE PROJECT**

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In June 2008, AFIPaR and Accueil Paysan Poitou-Charentes embarked upon another study: «Characterisation of agricultural/rural entrepreneurs in Poitou-Charentes». Beyond the specific nature of its projects, often combining agricultural and non-agricultural activities (sales, craftwork, services for tourists, etc.), with broad production ranges, and with progressive implementation in mind, this research work notably revealed a lack of

coordination across the network's guidance offer, a difficulty in bringing existing complementarities into play and a lack of legibility for entrepreneurs who are often sent off without any real follow-up.

PAARI and then CTI therefore aimed to pool the skills and resources of local associations working in the entrepreneur guidance sector, in view of constructing a coherent, global guidance service.

- To facilitate collaborative practices throughout the guidance phase, by improving standards in terms of the skills and interventions of the different associations,
- Professionalization of facilitators,
- Set the foundations for building a guidance action group,
- Facilitate exchange of information within the network, throughout the project process during which the project holders are supervised by different CTI member organisations,
- To enable better complementarities for guidance at different stages of the process (emergence, official creation procedures, test phase, post-creation follow-up),
- To also enable better legibility of our guidance service offer,
- To provide guidance for project holders through group action.

## **TARGET PUBLIC, FIELD OF ACTIVITY AND GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR**

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This group action aims in the long-term to provide guidance services across the whole region (still under construction) for all agricultural/rural entrepreneurs at all stages of the enterprise creation process, with a particular focus on official project implementation. This task will particularly involve interaction between organisations and professionalization of facilitators and volunteers in the INPACT (Initiatives For Citizen-oriented & Local Agriculture) network – (plus CTI member partner organisations).

## **OPERATING PRINCIPLE**

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The group of players comprises around ten agricultural and rural development organisations (AFIPAR, Poitou-Charentes Accueil Paysans, ARDEAR, Terre de Liens, Poitou-Charentes Agro Bio, Solidarité Paysans, the Regional CIVAM Federation and the Haut Bocage CIVAM, ACCEA +, La Ruche and the MRJC (Rural Movement of Christian Youth). It is co-coordinated by AFIPAR (a rural training organisation) and Poitou-Charentes Accueil Paysans (rural hospitality network).

This technical committee meets regularly to:

- Coordinate entrepreneurship schemes in the rural sector,
- Improve facilitator skills,
- Cooperatively track and follow-up complex projects with input from several different organisations,
- Monitor current measures and regulations,



- Create shared tools,
- Organise one-off and group events.

## **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

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Difficulties or hurdles identified:

- Difficulty in terms of administrator/project management which is essentially borne by facilitators,
- Lack of time due to issues concerning funding, which does not meet CTI's defined objectives,
- Lack of certainty in terms of the scheme's prospects for the future,
- The long-term economic value derived from this scheme?

## **FACTORS OF SUCCESS**

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- All players are brought to work in partnership during project development (partner organisations and entrepreneurs alike) throughout this experimentation period,
- A cluster of complementary players rallied into action in the field of agricultural/rural entrepreneurship,
- Deep roots in the local rural area, based on the dynamics of the players who bring meaning to the project,
- Increasing demand from entrepreneurs for guidance from the action group,
- Positive feedback from project holders on past guidance projects,
- Stronger identification of the project, both by member organisations and entrepreneurs.

## **IMPACTS**

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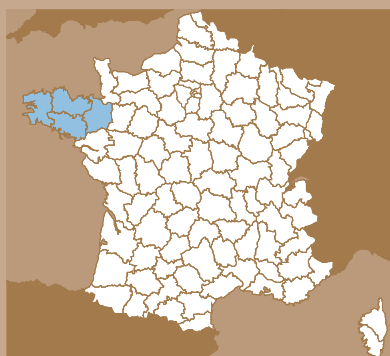
- Stronger links and interaction between facilitators,
- Development of a «shared culture»,
- Professionalization of facilitators.

## **LIMITATIONS AND PROSPECTS**

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- The project has been under development for three years and a degree of stagnancy has set in - difficulty in rallying the different players back into action,
- Position of administrators from member networks in the project,
- Desire to pursue the methodological construction approach and to develop a common training offer,
- Ensure the promotion and communication of the global offer proposed within the CTI.

**Fact sheet n°6**  
**PAYS DES VALLONS DE VILAINE**  
**EMERGENCE OF GROUP ACTION**  
**IN FAVOUR OF SUPPORT FOR PROJECT HOLDERS**



### **GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR**

REGION: Brittany  
 DÉPARTEMENT: Ille-et-Vilaine  
 PREFECTURE: Rennes  
 REGIONAL POPULATION: 3,103,000  
 POPULATION DENSITY: 114 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>  
 NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES: 1,268

### **CONTEXT**

PROJECT MANAGER: Culture Bio

STATUS: Association

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WEBSITE: [www.illeetbio.org](http://www.illeetbio.org)

ADRESS: Maison des associations  
 43, rue Fagues - 35580 Guichen - France

**TECHNICAL PARTNERS:**

Accueil Paysan,  
 AFIP,  
 FDCIVAM,  
 Pays des vallons de Vilaine,  
 Agrobio 35

**FINANCIAL PARTNERS:**

Pays des vallons de Vilaine,  
 CG 35, ACSOR

The geographical sector in question is the Pays des Vallons de Vilaine in the south of Rennes Metropole, covering 25 municipalities with 49,000 inhabitants in total. This area has emerged artificially, following its refusal to join the Pays de Rennes. It is too far away to join the Redon sector. It brings together two district councils: ACSOR/ Guichen (a canton), and the district council for Moyenne Vilaine and Semnon (two cantons).

The refusal of key players to join the Renne Metropole was guided by a concern of being «drowned» by this large group of districts. A concept started to germinate whereby this area should maintain its rural characteristics for the benefit of new populations working in the Metropole. This was expressed by an intention to combine traditional economic activities, such as agriculture, with the emergence of new activities, either to offer services for the new populations, or to increase the value derived from the area's very rich natural and architectural heritage, notably through hospitality services. With these newcomer populations, a number of people have seized the opportunity of creating activities in these niche sectors and for some, in organic farming.

As a result, the Guichen canton had the highest concentration of organic farmers in the département. It is seen as an 'intermediary' area between the prefecture and the very rural Redon hinterland.

This environment enabled the creation of the Culture Bio association, which was initially formed to organise the «Ille et Bio» organic farming fair.

The high concentration of ecological militants has enabled the growth of the Culture Bio association, leading to other developments and initiatives such as joint gardens and community restaurants. The people running the association are highly engaged in other organisations on a departmental and municipal level, particularly ones supporting start-ups (Accueil Paysan, Agrobio 35, The CIVAM - Departmental Federation of agricultural and rural initiative centres and the development council). Simultaneously, several producers have played a mentoring role for young people testing out their capacity in these activity sectors, welcoming them to their farms, often employing them or assigning them a few hectares of land to develop their own activity. The area has also started to focus on start-ups, via different programmes, in particular the Leader programme in which the association has engaged.

## **ISSUE**

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The investment of the «Culture Bio» association in a European programme concerning new enterprises has incited them to specify their objectives for action in this field. The question of setting up and launching new enterprises has therefore become a tangible concern. Culture Bio has intervened in this field in cooperation with other players.

## **PROJECT INITIATOR**

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The organisation piloting this dynamic is the Culture Bio association, in close relations with the Departmental CIVAM Federation. It organises the Ille et Bio organic fair (18th edition this year), which is designed as a forum providing resources and information on organic farming and ecology. Culture bio is a CIVAM organisation and is a member of the Departmental InPACT (Initiatives For Citizen-oriented & Local Agriculture) action group.

Other members involved are:

- Ille et Vilaine Departmental CIVAM Federation, which coordinates support actions for agricultural start-ups on behalf of InPACT.
- Accueil Paysan, due to highly pro-active local members
- AFIP, supporting the organisation of «de l'idée au projet» (from idea to project) courses

Close partners, but in a secondary circle:

- Le Pays (public-private union),
- The AVEC development council (environmental enrichment association in charge of developing group restaurant services in Bain de Bretagne).

Close partners, but in a third circle (informal partnership):

- The Rheu CFPPA (Centre for Professional Training and Agricultural Development), which is part

of the Théodore Monod EPLEFPA (Local Public Establishment for Professional Agricultural Teaching and Training) and which created a new organic farming training module in 1990. Since then, the CFPPA has been backing the network of organic farmers in the Guichen sector, particularly through internship programmes on farms.

## **OBJECTIVES**

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The general objective of this initiative is to encourage start-ups, particularly by providing advice and support for project holders, giving them access to resources and training upstream from the formal start-up process. This objective is inherent to each structure and has not necessarily been taken further collectively due to a current lack of organisation across this group of players (see «project» and «operating principles» sections).

## **PROJECT**

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The initiative is more a network of players, a group of operations conducted by closely-associated organisations, with greater or lesser degrees of coordination, within a precise geographical sector. There are no dedicated projects for group support services in the Pays des Vallons de Vilaine. Nevertheless, this geographical sector does benefit from a distinct dynamic, notably due to the high numbers of organic farmers in the area, who are both willing and able to provide technical and practical support and to thereby facilitate operations for new enterprises.

There are no explicit schemes as such. However, the actions conducted by this implicit network are recognised by other local players.

## **TARGET PUBLIC, FIELD OF ACTIVITY AND GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR**

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The target public can be divided into different categories, based on the needs of project holders:

- Participants in «de l'idée au projet» (from idea to project) training courses.
- Future organic farmers currently in training (CFPPA - Centre for Professional Training and Agricultural Development),
- People in test phase, receiving 'tutoring' or 'mentoring' on farms to discover the profession, either through their own small-scale farming production or by being employed by the farmer on site,
- Project holders who are in contact with Culture bio, in different and often newly emerging sectors, associated to these issues.

Assisted projects are qualified by facilitators for innovative agricultural / rural projects and generally have a strong agricultural angle, the majority of projects being farming-related ones. Nevertheless, the organisations still welcome entrepreneurs with other projects. Many projects are of a «non-family» nature, i.e. farming isn't a family trade.

## **OPERATING PRINCIPLE**

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The different organisations intervene at different stages of the project’s evolution:

- Mobilising project holders into action and initial contact is coordinated by the Departmental CIVAM Federation,
- Agrobio 35 (Departmental union for organic farmers) and Accueil Paysan provide complementary technical support for entrepreneurs when they move on to the next project phase,
- For less typical projects (a rural museum, for example) other structures in the cluster such as the AFIP can be called upon
- Accueil Paysan and AFIP provide «de l’idée au projet» training courses.
- Culture Bio is working on the implementation of a physical information and support centre for all project holders
- The forum for enterprises, which is run by the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry branch, will sometimes put project holders in contact with organisations from this cluster.

Not all structures follow up project holders throughout the full creation process once they have moved on to another structure, however the concept of being part of a network is very much present and the initial contact structure maintains relations with each project holder.

## **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

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- Project holders do not feel that the different support players are working together,
- Lack of legibility in the scheme,
- Lack of post-creation follow-up for project holders.

## **FACTORS OF SUCCESS**

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- A sector that is actively involved in entrepreneurship and one that takes on the role of a political relay,
- An important network of local players, with particularly committed farmers involved in active organisations supporting new enterprises,
- Strong local entrepreneurial dynamics, which also generate other projects and initiatives (revolving around renewable energy, health and cultural coordination),
- Awareness-raising tasks with delegates.

## RESULTS AND IMPACT

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- 7 trainees participating in the de l'idée au projet (from idea to project) training course,
- Projects for direct sales channels, craftwork production, alternative forms of hospitality services, etc.,
- Group restaurant at the Guichen high school,
- An organic food store opened by a former trainee, where a second workstation was created within three months.

## PROSPECTS

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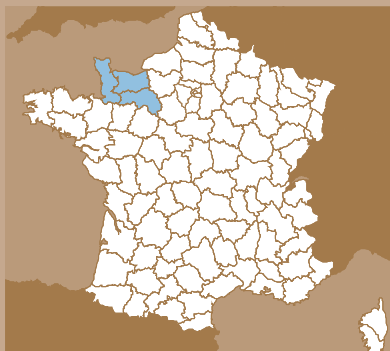
Would it be appropriate to structure entrepreneur support services in a more formal manner? The various different organisations have differing opinions on the subject; however some organisations and project holders feel that available support services are inadequate.

In the Pays des Vallons de Vilaine, some players feel that it would be appropriate for a designated organisation to take on the role of coordinating the scheme.

The Rennes le Rheu CFPPA seems to represent an important link in this chain of players (several instructors from this organisation play an important role in the Culture Bio association), one who's involvement could be beneficial to the dynamic and one that would be able to provide, in the framework of an official partnership, stronger support for local players (associations, locals, ...) setting up new enterprises in the rural sector, shedding light on issues underlying agricultural concerns.

## Fact sheet n°7

### PROJET'CTEUR SITES IN BASSE-NORMANDIE



#### GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR

REGION: Basse-Normandie  
 DÉPARTEMENT: Orne  
 PREFECTURE: Alençon  
 POPULATION: 1,456,793  
 POPULATION DENSITY: 83 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>  
 NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES: 1,812

PROJECT MANAGER: AFIP

STATUS: Association

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 10-18 Boulevard du grand parc - 14200  
 Hérouville - France

**TECHNICAL PARTNERS:**

Pivert (resource centre),  
 Crescendo (business and employment  
 cooperative),  
 Sées CFPPA, Rural player

**FINANCIAL PARTNERS:**

Europe (FSE - equal)

#### CONTEXT

This experiment is being conducted in a geographical sector which is marked by a strong industrial tradition, mainly revolving around activities such as mechanics and agri-food, with strong potential in terms of employment, and by a decrease in agricultural assets and cross-generation continuity issues. The urban district of Flers groups together 14 municipalities (including 9 rural municipalities) and has 30,000 inhabitants. Located at the heart of Bocage Ornois, the urban district is right at the centre of a large employment catchment area which is also a social catchment area that has always been accessible for immigrants. Unemployment figures showed a 27.2% increase in 2008. This increase was unprecedented and is far higher than figures for the rest of France (+ 11.7%), representing a reversal of the statistics for previous years which showed a significant decrease in unemployment.

#### ISSUE

Further to the overall necessity of providing advice and support, encouraging and favouring new enterprises to counter the lack of employment in the region, Projet'cteur sites aim to tackle the issue of the lack of advice and support organisations for entrepreneurs in the rural environment. In the urban area, the advice and support offer for entrepreneurs is relatively well structured, however is largely deficient in the rural sector. These sites therefore aim to create identified clusters, energising rural sectors and complementing the offer that is already available.

## **PROJECT INITIATOR**

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This project is initiated by the Normandy AFIP, initially with around fifteen partners, then with six partners for the official creation phase. The AFIP ran and coordinated the EQUAL technical programme «apprendre pour entreprendre ensemble» (learning through mutual entrepreneurship) between 2001 and 2007 (financial management by Coorace - Federation of Committees and Bodies for Assistance to the Unemployed through Employment).

The AFIP plays a double role in the project:

- Coordination of the project's regional dimension:
  - Representation of the «Projet'cteur» scheme on a regional level,
  - Sourcing funding,
  - Promotion, communication,
  - Running and coordinating meetings between facilitators from the different sites.
- Setting up, engineering and coordinating de l'idée au projet (from idea to project) training.

## **OBJECTIVES**

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«To reach out to people who are not entrepreneurial in spirit, who do not have the required capital (financial, social and cultural) but whose idea at the very least warrants constructive attention».

## **PROJECT**

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Operations at the Projet'cteur sites can be divided into four main actions.

### **ACTION 1/ AWARENESS-RAISING, PROMOTING, DETECTING**

This action aims to publicize Projet'cteur sites to bring in a wide public. It has involved establishing a network of partners well-positioned to detect entrepreneurial ideas, entrepreneurial willingness and projects, and to provide guidance services. This partnership was set up with the employment centre.

### **ACTION 2/ ACCESSIBILITY FOR PROJECT HOLDERS**

The Projet'cteur scheme is open to anyone with an idea or project, regardless of their social status (age, sex, profession, level of qualifications). These sites do not specialise in a specific type of guidance (i.e. specific activity category or specific project holder profile). The principles fostered by Projet'cteur prevail throughout relations with project holders: all projects are in principle viable and therefore admissible, the person is at the centre of the project - Projet'cteur «assists without acting on behalf of».



### **ACTION 3/ INDIVIDUAL GUIDANCE FOR PROJECT HOLDERS.**

An original professional position based on five fundamental values:

- To listen and encourage in an unbiased manner,
- To support: to work on the project presentation, putting it in writing, defining a plan of action and reworking the project if necessary,
- To inform: to provide information directly, but above all to direct project holders to suitable organisations well-positioned to provide them with information,
- To guide: towards technical advice and support, towards training... this requires broad knowledge on the part of the facilitator,
- To train: the AFIP offers group training courses to both complement and reinforce individual guidance sessions.

### **ACTION 4/ ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR A GROUP SOLIDARITY-BASED ECONOMY PROJECT**

Projet'cteur sites also have the vocation of providing advice and support for group projects in the field of social and solidarity-based economy which, if they are completed, are a source of affluence in terms of human and social value, whilst bringing a plus-value to the geographical sector. Three phases are observed: the constitution of the action group and of the project holder group, the geographical positioning of the project and its implementation.

The originality behind the Projet'cteur sites lies in positioning the creation process very far upstream, and in its capacity to provide support and assistance throughout the project's official creation phase.

## **TARGET PUBLIC, FIELD OF ACTIVITY AND GEOGRAPHICAL SECTOR**

Project holders have very different profiles, often far removed from the typical profile of a company manager, but with ideas which «at the very least warrant constructive attention», in compliance with initial objectives. Based on this fact, a very distinct typology can be distinguished:

- Young people (sometimes couples) who want to launch themselves into a solidarity-based economy project (in the agricultural/rural sector, in the cultural sector, etc.)
- Women, who want to get back into the professional world as their children grow older,
- People (men or women) who have been confronted with an «obstacle» upon their initial meeting with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for example,
- Some project holders have been more successful than others. A strong attraction for arts and crafts, rural tourism, human services (childcare, etc.).

Entrepreneurs using advice and support services fall into the following categories:

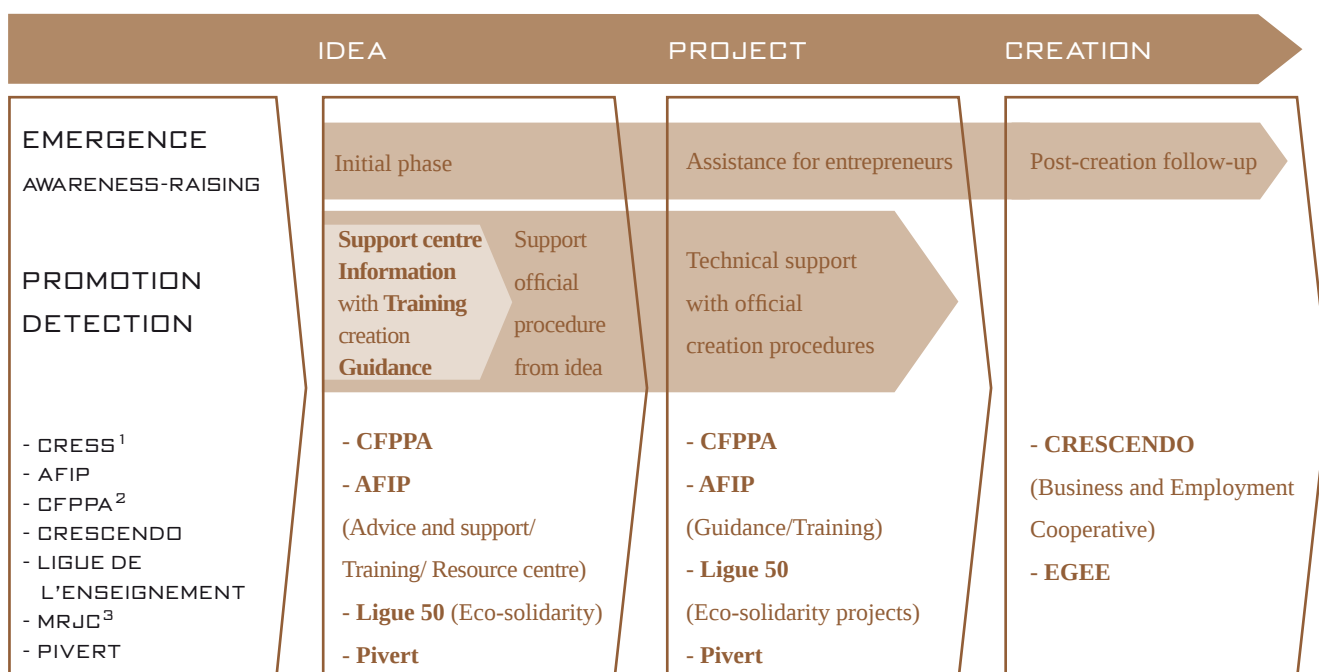
- Arts and crafts and trade: 26 %
- Sale of goods and services: 24 %
- Culture: 19.5 %

- Leisure and agricultural tourism: 11.5 %
- Human services: 10 %
- Sustainable development: 9 %

For the full first period (2002/2007), 50% of all projects were presented by women.

## OPERATING PRINCIPLE

For the geographical sector in question, players currently fall into the following categories throughout the entrepreneur advice and support process.



<sup>1/</sup> Regional Chambers of Social and Solidarity-Based Economy

<sup>2/</sup> Centre for Professional Training and Agricultural Development

<sup>3/</sup> Rural Movement of Christian

## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- One of the main difficulties is funding: the project is having a hard time getting over the discontinuation of European funding programmes (EQUAL) which enabled: partnership work (mandatory project component), legitimacy of regional coordination as well as multiannual European funding, levers of local public co-funding,
- The turnover of facilitators does not facilitate long-term adherence,

- The lack of available tools for tracking people who have come to the support centre (no contact profiles, no shared document systems in place with other organisations, no assessment of the operation, etc.),
- The scheme is poorly publicised, particularly locally (La Carneille),
- Insufficient relations with other players in the advice and support sector.

## FACTORS OF SUCCESS

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- An organisation with potential (the AFIP and its PIVERT resource centre) that is in sync with the project,
- Awarded the «Point Envie d’agir» seal of approval with the Youth and Sports Directorate, making it possible to diversify the people on the programme and types of projects,
- Facilitators and administrators who are engaged in the project,
- A close Pivert-AFIP partnership and complementarities in matters of training and regional coordination,
- Well-recognised by its key prescribers (Pôle emploi, Missions Locales, Maisons de l’emploi) in Flers.

## RESULTS AND IMPACT

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### RESULTS

Overall statistics for the 4 Projet’cteur sites in Normandy for the period 2002 and 2008:

- Number of people assisted: 1,300
- Number of business started up: 87
- Number of associations (1 job minimum) created: 40 (27% of group projects)
- Number of businesses started up by women: 55
- Number of people taking training courses (in the framework of the scheme): 150
- Number of people who found a professional «solution» within six months (job, training course to qualify): 745

### EVOLUTION OVER TIME

	YEAR N	N + 1	N + 2	N + 3	N + 4	N + 5	TOTAL
SUPPORT CENTRE	200	210	270	230	200	190	<b>1300</b>
GUIDANCE	100	100	150	120	100	80	<b>650</b>
FEASIBILITY	50	60	70	65	60	40	<b>345</b>
STATUTES							
LAUNCH							
> 1 YEAR	18	19	23	23	18	16	<b>147</b>
> 2 YEARS	12	13	17	14			<b>56</b>

## IMPACTS

Different impacts of this Projet'cteur scheme have been observed locally:

- Inclusion of the term «start-up» in the regional vocabulary, conveying a more open and broader perception of entrepreneurship (Social and Solidarity-based Projects),
- Inclusion of the notions of project emergence and initial start-up phases throughout universities, organised by the region.

For project holders, Projet'cteur sites are characterised by:

- The quality of attention received and recognition of individuals and their projects at all stages,
- Personal advice and support,
- Assistance with project formulation and attention to expectations,
- Channelling towards different partners or suitable services,
- The quality of training programmes,
- Discussions about projects during training sessions.

## PROSPECTS

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Provided that it receives long-term funding, AFIP and its associated partners plan to re-launch these dynamics across the geographical sectors in question.

Work topics are already defined:

- Implementation of a new AFIP platform in La Ferté-Macé (Orne) with its PIVERT Resource centre (resource, advice and support, forum for future projects, training, etc.),
- Work on initial contact with newcomers,
- Transposition to other geographical sectors: St Lô, Pays d'Auge,
- Work on the recognition of the support centre and advice and support for SSE (Social and Solidarity-based Economy),
- Reinforcement of complementarities with the CRESCENDO Business and Employment Cooperative in Flers,
- Reinforcement of complementarities with the DLA (Local Advice and Support) scheme at the service of associations (upstream/downstream).

## GLOSSARY

### ACCEA+

Accounting and Management Association focusing on agricultural and rural players.

### ACCUEIL PAYSANS

Group of agricultural and rural players who set up a tourist and social hospitality enterprise, revolving around their main activity (agricultural or other) or their place of residence.

### ACTEUR RURAL

Press organisation which inventories events revolving around essential questions affecting the rural world: health, countryside and heritage, and provides information concerning initiatives for newcomers to the rural sector. Editor of the «L'esprit Village» review.

### ADAGE [NORD PAS DE CALAIS]

Childcare assistance association. Regular or drop-in centre for children from 3 months to 3 years old.

### ADAGE [BRITTANY]

Sustainable Agriculture through Autonomy, Management and the Environment (groups of livestock farmers with predominantly pasture-based production; member of the CIVAM network).

### AFOCG

Accounting and Management Training Association. Organisation favouring the autonomy of its members (farmers) through training, particularly in management disciplines.

### AGROBIO

Regional federation representing farmers operating agricultural-organic productions.

### AGROBIO 35

Ille et Vilaine agrobiologist's union (Brittany).

### AMAP

Association for the Preservation of Rural Agriculture. A French CSA (community-supported agriculture) system promoting direct relations between producers and consumers with a direct production and sales approach.

### A PETITS PAS

Structure offering activities associated to eco-tourism, educational leisure, eco-construction, enterprise creation and citizen workshops.

### ARDEAR

Regional Association for the Development of Agricultural and Rural Employment. Its aim is to provide support and guidance for initiatives that have positive repercussions on employment in the rural sector.

### AU FIL DES SAISONS

Local development association (Nord-Pas-de-Calais).

### AVEC

Environmental Enrichment A. Local development association for the use of organic food produce in community restaurants.

### AVENIR

Local development association which provides support for project holders who are not entitled to national aid for new agricultural concerns, by offering individual or group meetings suited to their situation and requirements.

### BPREA

Professional Diploma in Agricultural Management. Required diploma for entitlement to specific rights for farmers creating or taking over agricultural enterprises in France.

### CFPPA

Centre for Professional Training and Agricultural Development.

### CONSULAR CHAMBERS

Organisation of trades in three main sectors, commerce, the craft industry and agriculture.

### CIVAM

Departmental Federation of Agricultural and Rural Initiative Centres. Social project: defends autonomy and equal opportunities in rural sectors, by diffusing knowledge.

### CMR

Christians in the Rural World. Popular education movement which trains its members in responsibility taking, coordination and implementation of individual and group projects.

### COOPERES

Association for the local development of social and solidarity-based economy dedicated to providing support and guidance for the development of initiatives concerning services of public interest in the rural sector.

## CRESCENDO

Enterprise and employment cooperative based in Flers in Normandy.

## DLA

Local Advice and Support Scheme. National French organisation which aims to provide advice and support for associations throughout their developments, with the objective of preserving paid jobs.

## DRAAF

Regional Food, Agriculture and Forestry Directorate. Regional representative of the Ministry of Agriculture.

## ESS

Social and Solidarity-based Economy. Vision of economy where the end-result is not of a financial nature (essentially cooperatives, mutual insurance companies and associations).

## FDCIVAM

Departmental CIVAM Federation.

## FONDATION DE FRANCE

Organisation that collects and distributes funds for supporting projects according to objectives determined by a board of directors.

## RTE FOUNDATION

Transport and Electricity Network. Organisation which collects and distributes funds for supporting projects in the rural sector.

## FRGS

Greater Sector Rural Community Centres. Popular rural coordination education association focussed on cultural accessibility for all members of the public.

## GAB

Organic Agriculture Group. Association grouping together certified organic producers and producers converting to organic farming.

## GRAINE DE SAVEURS

Association focused on taste and nutrition education.

## INPACT

Initiative For Citizen-oriented and Local Agriculture. Network of 6 associations promoting citizen agriculture, accounting for sustainability criteria and local integration.

## **INTERAFOCG**

National AFOCG network.

## **LIGUE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT**

Popular teaching organisation fighting for equal education rights, respecting the fundamental values of secular, compulsory state school.

## **MRJC**

Rural Movement of Christian Youth. Youth association running support actions and development schemes in the rural sector.

## **MSA**

Mutual Agricultural Fund. Organisation managing National Insurance and National Health contributions for farmers and employees in the agricultural sector.

## **PIVERT**

Resource centre for life and entrepreneurship in the rural sector; associated to AFIP in Normandy.

## **PLIE**

Local Projects for Integration and Employment. Scheme for bringing consistency in integration and employment actions in a geographic sector in association with local development strategies.

## **POINT INFO INSTALLATION**

Support scheme for new agricultural concerns.

## **PÔLE EMPLOI**

Semi-public organisation providing information and coordinating statistics, guidance and payment of job seekers in France.

## **RECOLTES**

Group Action Network for Solidarity-based Economy Sectors. Name of a European project in Burgundy (2006-2008).

## **SAVOIR-FAIRE ET DÉCOUVERTE**

Association allowing individuals to try out new rural professions with a range of internship programmes.

## **SCIC**

Public-Interest Cooperative. A cooperative company in which the employees are associates with the beneficiaries.



### SCOP

Production Cooperative. A cooperative company in which the employees are also the managers.

### SOLIDARITÉ PAYSANS

National association supporting farmers in difficulty, particularly concerning financial difficulties.

### TERRE DE LIENS

An association focusing on community-based and solidarity-based access to property (fund raising to build property reserves, cooperative farm set-ups).

### VIVEA

Training fund for human players. Organisation which collects and distributes resources for running training programmes for farmers, foresters and landscapists.



#### **Association for Training and Information for the development of rural initiatives.**

The AFIP association is a network of training programmes and facilitator schemes in the rural sector that aims to:

- strengthen potential for rural initiatives by rural workers,
- promote the development of collective practices and group initiatives,
- break down barriers,
- facilitate lateral links between those involved in rural development.

Its fields of intervention cover training, support and advice for group and individual projects and communication concerning current agricultural and rural affairs, particularly in the form of its «Transrural Initiatives» review. [www.afip.asso.fr](http://www.afip.asso.fr)



#### **Research and Networking Committee for Associations with Agricultural and Rural Vocation**

CELAVAR coordinates 14 French national associations that contribute to networking, training and local development within the rural community.

CELAVAR's objectives are set out in its charter, which is signed by its members and include:

- promoting the close analysis of problems and issues specific to associations working within the agricultural and rural sectors;
- facilitating initiatives involving analysis and exchange of ideas on matters of general interest;
- promoting cooperation and coordination between agricultural and rural sector associations and their representation within other organisations as well as before public authorities.

In such areas, Celavar enriches the practices of its members, resulting from the methodology for national and local players, supporting regional cooperation and providing players with information. [www.celavar.org](http://www.celavar.org)



#### **Local Development Agency for South-East Alentejo**

Esdime is one of the first organisations to have worked on the local development of rural areas in Portugal. Its objective is to support the development of professional projects. It is a social solidarity cooperative, developing projects in the following sectors: sector-based coordination, training schemes, technical support for associations and local organisations, promotion and support for local partnerships, psychosocial integration of women in difficulty, support with project management, lessons for adults and promotion of gender equality. [www.esdime.pt](http://www.esdime.pt)



The ESCALE project is co-funded by the European Union. Europe is committed to France via the European Social Fund.

