Cybermassif, an initiative dedicated to development of businesses ICT skills in rural areas

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Cybermassif is a Member of
EUROMONTANA

- Cross-sectoral network of 70 mountain organisations
  - Sustainable development
  - Improvement of mountain quality of life

- ICT considered as the key distance-shrinking tool

- Timely access to the latest level of technology is a crucial condition for economic development and quality of life
Developing digital activities: What is at stake in rural and mountain territories?
ICT & Rural development: Challenges

- Overcoming spatial constraints
- Maintaining and developing local employment
- Attracting new populations
- Fostering businesses’ competitiveness
Cybermassif: Massif Central network for fostering the uptake of ICT in businesses
Cybermassif: an ICT network dedicated to businesses and territories

- Agency created in June 2002
- Two main roles:
  - Support economic development actors in the creation of ICT resource centers on a given territory
  - Set-up tools and projects which allow actors to share knowledge and skills
- Today, 14 Resource centres in 4 Regions: Auvergne, Bourgogne, Languedoc Roussillon and Limousin
Cybermassif’s 14 Resource centres

- **Common goals:**
  - Bring ICT knowledge and skills to the territory
  - Allow local SMEs to catch up in their uptake of ICT when they are delayed
  - Foster development of businesses competitiveness through ICT

- **Their function:**
  - Raise businesses awareness on innovative digital uses
  - Offer tailored support for the development of their ICT projects
  - Develop the ICT market by fostering relations between offer and demand
Services provided by a resource centre

Two types of support:
- Individual appointments
- Conferences, practical workshops, awareness raising meetings

Businessmen benefit from a **free support and follow-up** at every stage of their ICT project:
- Support the writing of specifications
- Software demonstrations
- Individual appointment with the Project manager of the resource centre
- Linkages with experts from Cybermassif network or with suppliers
- Support in evaluation of tenders received
Benefits for companies

- **Productivity gains** thanks to a better knowledge of digital applications
- **Companies better trained** to interact with ICT and digital suppliers
- **ICT** = capitalisation of contents and know-how of a company and its employees = added value in the perspective of business transmission
- Exchange of experience during collective sessions that foster progress and territorial dynamism
How does a resource center work?

- **Carrying structure:**
  - Under non-profit organisation status (90% of cases)
  - Budget between 120 & 250 K€ depending on number of employees
  - 1 to 4 people depending on territories

- **Funding sources:** thanks to the mobilisation of all economic development actors
  - Europe
  - State
  - Region
  - Local authorities
  - Chambers of commerce
ICT in Allier: a successful experience initiated by a rural local authority
ICT programme in Allier

- **2006, local authority findings:**
  - 30% of companies in the Allier department will be potentially transferable within 5 years
  - A real cultural gap on the use of ICT in rural areas
  - The contribution of broadband is real but still wrongly perceived

- **Objectives of the project:**
  - To bring ICT knowledge to businesses that are geographically remote from Resource Centers
  - To maintain development of economic activities in this territory
  - To develop the attractiveness of the area for exogenous projects (outsiders)
ICT programme in Allier

- **Beneficiaries:**
  - VSEs and SMEs in the rural area

- **Programme actions:**
  - 2 meetings/canton/year in each one of the 23 rural « cantons » (LAU1) of the department
  - 100 businesses accompanied individually

- **Associated partners:**
  - The local authority administration and elected representatives (« Conseillers généraux »)
  - Professional associations
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - Municipalities
ICT programme in Allier

- **Impact on human capital:**
  - Professionnalisation of VSEs and SMEs
  - ICT = enterprise strategy = making staff members **responsible**
  - Better **transfer** of know-how in case of business transmission

- **Implementation:**
  - June 2006 - December 2008

- **Budget:**
  - 250 K€

- **Perspectives & challenges to take into account:**
  - Raise **awareness** of the entrepreneur on productivity gains to be expected from ICT development
  - Get the entrepreneur to agree to **share his know-how**
  - ICT = invest to **continuously innovate** (long-term)
Cybersudoe : a response at European scale
Context:
- Similar findings for the Sudoe area: Delay of VSE/SMEs in their uptake of new technologies as compared to North of Europe or USA.
- Lower competitiveness and increasing fragility of these companies

Partners:
- 3 FR, 5 ES et 1 PT

Challenges: Harmonious development of human capital in companies of the Sudoe area.

www.cybersudoe.eu
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