

Regions in pursuit of...

Competitiveness
Economic Growth
& Jobs

Europe's SMEs are critical for the economic development of Europe's regions. But, left to their own devices, most SMEs invest little in innovation and ICT, both important tools for growth, competitiveness and employment. In this framework, regional policies play a central role in encouraging SMEs towards paradigms such as ICT Networking for Businesses and digital business ecosystems that can help local SMEs to grow and compete at world level, while creating new jobs and new knowledge.

Innovation Ecosystems:

An integrated approach for development



The virtuous cycle activated by the digital ecosystems as represented by the DBE Integrated Project

Discover

- How **your region** could benefit by participating in **peardrop**;
- How **your region** could develop a policy and plan for digital business ecosystems deployment;
- How **your region's** SMEs can benefit from participation in a digital business ecosystems.



Consortium

Promoting Ecosystems And Regional Development

in support of

Regional Operational Programming

Coordinator



The European Regional Information Society Association (Belgium)

Partners



CSP - ICT Innovation (Piemonte, Italy)



Aquitaine Europe Communication (Aquitaine, France)



European Projects & Management Agency (Vysocina, Czech Republic)



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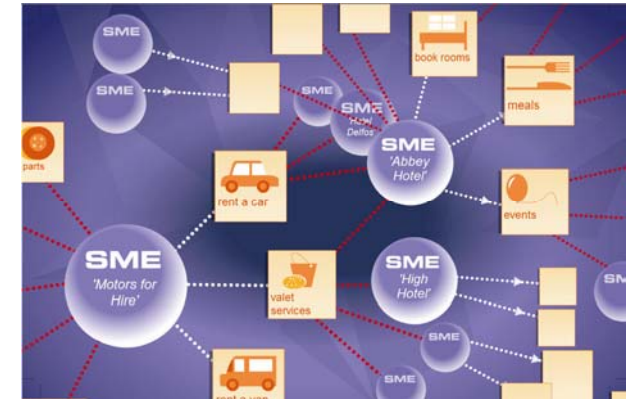
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Explore the Benefits of Digital Business Ecosystems for Regional Development



Source: www.digital-ecosystem.org

.... helping regional authorities and their development agencies – or other regional catalysts – to create an environment and improved support for the region's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to:

- adopt new information and communications technologies (ICTs);
- adopt new business models, processes and practices;
- develop new ICT-based solutions specifically targeted on the needs of SMEs.

better enabling them to

- reduce costs and enhance efficiency, thereby increasing their **competitiveness**;
- cooperate so as to be able to **innovate**, developing new products and services, and to compete more effectively against larger organizations;
- find **new markets** and new customers, increasing market reach in cost effective ways.

Imagine...



Imagine...

... an environment in which businesses can 'talk' to each other, expressing their demand for products or services without having to make a conscious effort to do so.

In the tourism industry, for example, a conference centre could advise local hotels and guesthouses to expect a specified number of delegates as guests just as soon as plans for a major event are underway.

Catering companies could, in turn, order the necessary equipment and stock. Airline seats could be reserved well in advance and bus operators and taxi firms could be put on standby to collect delegates travelling to and from the conference - and even be automatically notified of any delays or cancellations.

All of this could happen without the need for a member of staff to make a single phone call or input a single piece of data into a computer system.

In these environments, or **ecosystems**, SMEs can thrive because they are always connected to the marketplace. They can identify and respond effectively to clients' changing needs and adapt more quickly to changes, for example, in legislation or government recommendations.

And as the technology develops and the system 'learns', businesses will be able to operate far more efficiently.

Similarly, these businesses will be able to compete favourably with other firms across the globe as will not need to spend valuable time and resources getting to grips with the latest technology. This, in turn, will help to attract economic benefit to the region as a whole.

A **business ecosystem** is "the network of buyers, suppliers and makers of related products or services" plus the socioeconomic environment, including the institutional and regulatory framework.

A **digital business ecosystem** is defined as an evolutionary self-organising system aimed at creating a digital software environment for small organisations that supports regional and local development by empowering open, distributed and adaptive technologies and evolutionary business models for small organisations' growth.

Bringing Business Benefits

It is widely accepted that the number of SMEs using relevant digital technologies successfully will be of vital importance in development of the new knowledge-based economy.

For example, it is estimated that overall productivity can increase by as much as 40% if enough SMEs adopt ICT and eBusiness solutions*.

Similarly, the development of these enabling technologies will facilitate effective business networking throughout the region, thereby making these firms even more competitive.

However, unlike large corporations which have an integrated ICT support infrastructure, many SMEs simply do not have the time or resources to keep up to date with the latest developments in ICT.

This is where digital business ecosystems can help provide an evolving digital environment that helps SMEs:

- become aware of products and services available to them from other SMEs,
- promote their own products and services further afield,
- collaborate with other SMEs in developing new products and services, competing with larger companies, and finding important niche markets.

Both the concept and practical solutions for digital business ecosystem deployment have been in development over the last five years and a number of pilot regions are already seeing their deployment efforts bear fruit..

peardrop aims to

- **Explain** the digital business ecosystem approach – simplifying and clarifying the concepts, and raising awareness of its potential importance;
- **Promote** the digital business ecosystem approach to regions which are new to the concept – outlining the benefits & opportunities;
- **Assist** interested regions to successfully plan deployment of a digital business ecosystem – helping to identify pre-conditions, appropriate actions, critical success factors.
- **Create** a support network for regions seeking to deploy digital business ecosystem to share their experience and good practice.

peardrop will achieve its aims through publication of practical **toolkits** and **guides** to good practice, maintenance of **web-based tools**, support for a virtual **network** of cooperating regions, and by organisation of a number of international stakeholder **workshops**.

* As reported in the Lisbon Agenda



peardrop's principal focus is targeted at **regional policy makers** and other key local actors and to **make** the research and deployment results relating to digital business ecosystems **more accessible and more practicable** for them. In doing so, it will evaluate the current state-of-the-art regarding digital business ecosystems development and develop toolkits and guides to good practice relating to five important sub-domains:

- The **macro-economic impacts** – especially the benefits - of digital business ecosystem deployment on regional economies, and the regional policies that can enhance its deployment in different regional contexts.
- The **legal issues and challenges** arising from collaborative models of working, knowledge creation and sharing in the new economy.
- The **technological platforms** and associated network infrastructures that form the technical environment of enterprises operating in a digital business ecosystem.
- The **micro-economic benefits** (for SMEs), success factors, barriers and cultures of regional eBusiness models and programmes, associated with deployment of digital business ecosystems.
- Exploiting **financial frameworks** and developing appropriate programming perspectives.

Let peardrop help you to

- help SMEs in remote or less developed areas of your region participate in the global economy;
- help small enterprises overcome the digital divide;
- help foster public-private partnerships and new business models and processes;
- exploit the opportunities of the Structural Funds and other public sources of finance for ecosystems development;
- support your region's software and ICT-based service providers.

For more information on how your region can participate, contact:

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