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DIGITAL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

Guidelines for identifying, approaching and communicating with key regional target audiences (Project deliverable 2.6)

This document is an output of the **peardrop** project (Promoting Ecosystems and Regional Development in support of Regional Operational Programming). **peardrop** is funded by the European Commission and aims at raising awareness among regional stakeholders on the specific policy domains. In particular form group of regions in the field of DBE deployment and ICT for Business Networking.

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Introduction

The promotion and the support for SME's sector have been for some decades an important goal sought by regional authorities and their development agencies, along with other related regional catalysts. Such intervention has been developed through **targeted policies** aimed at achieving: (i) regional growth (ii) competitiveness (iii) sustainable forms of employment. Moreover, over the past decade, many of these initiatives have focussed on innovation and on the accelerated adoption and exploitation of ICT in the innovation process.

For these reasons, **peardrop** suggests that any region or organisation looking at the possible deployment of a regional "Digital Business Ecosystem (DBE) should target and involve different actors – specifically:

- Regional public authorities and policy makers;
- Regional catalyst organisations and programme managers working on ICT adoption;
- Software developer and provider SMEs
- Open source developer and business communities
- Leading ICT companies.

At this stage of the project, each regional partner has investigated a specific target audience with a view to identifying, in each case: (i) who the key actors might be and (ii) how best to communicate with them in the most effective manner.

eris@ has coordinated this work and has prepared this synthesis version whose purpose is to guide the dissemination and promotion efforts of Phase 2 of the project. In particular, **peardrop** partners will use this work to identify and approach key actors in their own region as well as in the associated regions.

1. REGIONAL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND POLICY MAKERS

In order to create a local community actively involved in the implementation of DBE, strong participation is needed from regional key-actors such as local governments (and the public administration) and other regional stakeholders involved in the regional policy making process. CSP was the partner responsible for preparing the guidelines for this target audience.

Before getting into the detail, it can be useful to mention that, in the framework of a DBE deployment, public authorities and policy makers could be considered also as potential "regional catalysts". This typology of audience will be presented with more detail in paragraph 2.1.

1.1 Guidelines for identifying key target audiences: public authorities and policy makers

In general, experience has shown that:

- The person to be contacted in the local/regional government should not be the high level policy maker, but rather a person working for a regional intermediary organization or entity. Nevertheless, the role of the policy maker will be essential to ensure that DBE is included in regional strategies and frameworks;
- The "personal social network" can be a useful tool to make sure that the information are indirectly passed on to the key policy/decision maker;
- The identification of the right person to contact depends, in particular, on: (i) the interest and the knowledge that this "first contact/intermediary" person has of the regional system and (ii) on the guidelines detailed below.

Concerning regional policy makers to whom the indirect message should be addressed, we suggest:

- Making initial overtures to the Information Technology/Industry/Innovation directorate of regional government and to those departments that work with network and/or clusters (as the potential of DBE with these groups is quite significant); whilst the engagement and the communication process with such individuals will be more challenging, their influence is important to ensure a successful consideration of DBE as a regional development option;
- Recognising that it is difficult to identify the "perfect" or "ideal" directorate because DBE can be seen (i) as a software tool - enabling innovation in SMEs – for which case, the right directorate to refer to might be the Information Technology directorate, or (ii) as a local development model - using a web based platform - in which case the relevant directorates to be addressed might be that/those responsible for Industry and Innovation;
- That the person in the intermediary organization/entity should help in gaining understanding of how a DBE could match the region's development priorities and related strategies (and, consequentially, which directorate would be the best to target);
- That the contact in the intermediary organisation can help identifying the other specific regional bodies that are strongly involved in regional programming. Such bodies:
 - o could act as consultants in policy definition or in policy implementation;
 - o can be local (i) development agencies, (ii) competence centres with a clear focus on IT or SMEs, (iii) regional financial institutions;
 - o generally act as a competence centre for the regional government in domains that are related to DBE implementation and deployment; for this reason they can become the key audience;
- That trust in a contact person representing an intermediary regional organisation can be helpful: the level of the targeted contact(s) should not be too high in the government hierarchy. DBE has specific technical features and requires specific competences to be understood in its entirety. Nevertheless, the person representing the intermediary organisation should benefit of enough support, trust and funding from the regional government for the deployment of DBE.

1.2 Guidelines for approaching key target audiences: public authorities and policy makers

Within the context of the **peardrop** project and DBE deployment, we recommend some guidelines for approaching policy-makers based on the experiences that **peardrop** partners have had in the past months:

Since "personal networks" can help in

- (i) Identifying a suitable key target in the local/regional government – decision makers
- (ii) Approaching those key people
- (iii) Building a trustful relationship with them,

in the first place, we suggest presenting the DBE concept to those contacts in the relevant "personal network" and to rely on their commitment to present, in a second phase, the DBE concept to the key decision makers (target audience) that have been identified with their help.

The guidelines proposed below suggest how to approach the regional representatives:

- Take a direct and short mean of contact with the relevant actor – for example, a phone call or an informal exchange of views;
- Follow up the conversation by mail (attaching the relevant documents) in order to help the targeted actor to have a first idea of what DBE is. Namely:
 - o A **peardrop** project description (e.g. a 2-page document or the **peardrop** brochure);
 - o A short document on the DBE concept (e.g. an article on DBE, **peardrop**'s bulletins);
 - o A short but in depth document on DBE & **peardrop** focused on the targeted contact's domain of competence (e.g. one of the draft toolkit produced by **peardrop**);
 - o A list of useful links, such as that for the DBE Integrated Project website;

Most of this documentation is already available, free of charge, in the **peardrop** website (www.peardrop.eu);

- Meet again the contact person to discuss the DBE concept and its possible deployment with more detail and to identify possible collaboration opportunities.

In order to strengthen trust of such audience on DBE, it can be helpful to mention the "big" dimension of the DBE integrated project (IP) and of the Digital Ecosystem cluster - its economic dimension and the large number of members of the DBE IP consortium. For more information, see www.digital-ecosystems.org .

1.3 Guidelines for communicating with key target audiences: public authorities and policy makers

As the DBE is a complex concept that refers to numerous domains, the person who will present DBE should encourage the feedback (comments or questions) from the regional representative, in order to tailor the introduction on DBE to the specific competences and interests of the regional representative; moreover, the person introducing the DBE concept should have a broad competence on DBE: she/he could be asked to clarify DBE aspects which are not necessarily related to her/his main domain of competence.

For the first face to face meeting with regional policy makers, the DBE presentation should be short and clear. In a first stage, it is important to present a well structured framework - based on DBE and the benefits that the deployment of DBE could bring in the region.

In presenting DBE to regional representatives, the presentation should focus on:

- The concept of DBE as a model for local development based on well-known features (e.g. cooperation and open knowledge).

- DBE as a “tool” enabling a shift in the entrepreneurial mindset: moving from individualistic and low trust behaviour to a more collaborative and high trust attitude.

In presenting DBE to policy makers, a slide show presentation could be used structured as follows:

- A general presentation of peardrop and of the DBE cluster projects, focusing on the DBE IP and on its regional pilot project experiences (in Aragón, West Midlands and Tampere). The mention of the various organisations, regions and institutions active in the development of DBE will contribute in building the trust of the regional representative on the DBE concept.
- Some slides (3/4) explaining DBE and its macroeconomic impacts (or presenting DBE in the light of the competence domain of the specific target actors).
- Some slides concerning DBE implementation and policy guidelines (always in the light of the actors' competence domain(s)).

Once again, and to conclude, it could be useful when introducing DBE to refer to actual regional programming: presenting previous successful DBE regional activities (within the specific region or elsewhere in Europe). This can help policy makers to place trust in the feasibility and potential of DBE, bearing in mind that the DBE model presents different strengths that are important to highlight.

In general regional policy makers have enough experience to understand the limitations of DBE and to raise questions about potential obstacles. For this reason it is important to provide clear responses on these points.

2. REGIONAL CATALYST ORGANISATIONS AND PROGRAMME MANAGERS WORKING WITH ICT ADOPTION

A second target audience group for the deployment of DBE are: Regional Catalysts and Programme Managers supporting ICT adoption for business. Within **peardrop**, the analysis of how to approach this type of audience was coordinated by CMI.

As explained below, regional catalysts are institutional agents whose role enables them to raise awareness on DBE in general, while programme managers are responsible for encouraging ICT take-up and the competitive development of SMEs in their region. For their specific typology, programme managers could be regional catalysts as well.

2.1 Guidelines for identifying key target audiences: Regional Catalysts and Programme Managers

2.1.1 Regional Catalysts

A regional catalyst has been defined by the DBE integrated project as “an institutional agent whose role requires them to raise awareness of the DBE in their region and to recruit and develop SMEs”. The types of organisation performing the role of regional catalyst can be varied and could potentially come from the public, private or education sectors. The key requirement is that it needs to be an organisation - or body - of sufficient influence and connectivity (within the local innovation and development system) so as to be able to engage and motivate the players required for a successful DBE implementation. The table below presents some examples of candidate regional catalysts for a DBE deployment.

The following examples are drawn from the DBE experiences in regions like Aragón (Spain), West Midlands (United Kingdom), and Tampere (Finland).

Fig. 1 – Examples of regional catalysts

| Public Sector | Private Sector | Education Sector |
|--|---|--|
| Regional government department that engages with the private sector | Key player in a supply chain | University/College department that engages with the private sector |
| Regional Development Agency team/unit that engages with the private sector | Intermediary organisation such as Industry Association or Chamber of Commerce | University/College team/unit leading on research or technology development |
| Local Authority team / unit that engages with the private sector | Key 'Driver' company whose business model operates within an ecosystem | |
| | Service provider/developer | |

The regional catalyst has responsibility for the delivery of a number of services within a DBE implementation such as:

- Network or community building
- Building trust between the relevant stakeholders
- User & software developer recruitment
- Marketing & awareness raising of the DBE
- Communication between the DBE and local SMEs
- Training & support (including technical) to users and implementers
- Evaluation of training, community building and ecosystem evolution
- Evaluation of regional policy impact
- Identification of funding sources

In addition, and although one of the DBE features is to be self governing, the regional catalyst should also provide some initial overall project management of the implementation/deployment process of DBE in the region.

2.1.2 Programme Managers working in support of ICT adoption by SMEs/business

Generally, this target audience operates within the public sector, although there may be some instances of this type of role in the private sector also. The normal expectation is that these players can be found within units of public sector organisations, such as government departments, regional development agencies or local authorities, with responsibility for encouraging ICT take-up and the competitive development of SMEs in their region.

Generally, we expect that these programme managers would have a role to play within a DBE context, similar to that of a regional catalyst. In particular, programme managers can:

- Influence the policy development to ensure that the potential of DBE is included in regional policy priorities.
- Identify possible DBE implementations or deployments in the region.
- Raise awareness with relevant SMEs and intermediaries within the region regarding the benefits and opportunities offered by DBE.
- Engage user SMEs and potential implementers (e.g. software / web developers) in the region to come together to assess the feasibility and carry out deployment planning of a DBE.
- Support and mentor SMEs through the implementation phases of a DBE.
- Engage other key players in the region to ensure that all potential funding and service development opportunities are levered.

2.2 Guidelines for approaching key target audiences: Regional Catalysts and Programme Managers

2.2.1 Regional Catalysts

We suggest considering the statements presented below when approaching potential DBE regional catalyst organizations.

- Engagement with regional catalysts needs to be on a business need basis. An understanding of how the potential catalyst organisation currently engages with its clients and business partners is critical in order to present the option of DBE in the most attractive light and as a more effective option for engagement.
- It is important to assess the cluster & network models and approaches already in place in a region in order to identify where the most likely opportunities for potential DBE deployment exist.
- Mapping and assessing the key industry drivers and players in a region will also give a good indication of who the potential influencers are and who is in the most appropriate position to take on the role of regional catalyst.
- Given the key involvement of the regional catalyst, once they are identified and selected, there is a need to engage them on a one-to-one tailored basis to ensure their full understanding and commitment to a DBE deployment. The regional catalyst's role is pivotal in ensuring a successful implementation of a DBE.

2.2.2 Programme Managers working with ICT adoption

A similar set of guidelines as outlined for regional catalysts would be required for programme managers. Additionally, the following points needs to be considered:

- A sufficient working knowledge and understanding of how the DBE model works and is implemented is critical for programme managers to enable them to 'sell' the DBE concept in their host organisation and amongst their client SMEs.
- Programme managers can be engaged through similar mechanisms as for regional catalysts. However, as they are a more easily identifiable target audience, a more tailored one-to-one approach through mail-shot or direct contact should be considered.
- If a programme manager is to assume the role of a regional catalyst, then a similar one-to-one focused approach is required to ensure their detailed engagement.

2.3 Guidelines for communicating with key target audiences: Regional Catalysts and Programme Managers

2.2.1 Regional Catalysts

- The need for relevant case study examples (that can be presented to illustrate the potential advantages of the DBE approach) is important in providing the necessary 'hook' and motivation to engage potential regional catalysts;
- Regional catalysts can be initially reached through a range of approaches such as:
 - o One to one meetings
 - o Workshops to explore implementation opportunities in a region
 - o Mail shots raising awareness of DBE
 - o Speaking engagements at relevant regional conferences and events
 - o Following the inclusion of DBE elements in regional policy documents and frameworks
 - o Calls for engagement through regional media & press

2.2.2 Programme Managers working with ICT adoption

- A clear breakdown of the cost model involved is also critical to facilitate the planning and bidding for potential DBE deployment budgets within the region.
- The additionality and benefits of the DBE model over existing networking or clustering models is an important factor to help present the business case for DBE.
- If the programme manager's role is to be as a broader 'influencer', then potentially they could be engaged and supported through the delivery of very clear concise workshops or seminars and the provision of very user friendly support materials (case studies, PowerPoint presentations etc.) to be used in engaging their clients SMEs and working partners.

3. SOFTWARE DEVELOPER AND PROVIDER SMES

A third target audience group for the deployment of DBE are software developers and provider SMEs. Within **peardrop**, the analysis of how to approach this type of audience was coordinated by EPMA. The development and implementation of DBE needs some of the skills of software (SW) developers and the **peardrop** consortium considers that, generally, SMEs active in the development of software can be characterised as:

- Being typically present in the territory as numerous dispersed entities;
- Having a low territorial concentration and high diffusion over the regional territory;
- Having a narrow specialisation on a specific IT branch (or on a specific IT platform) and lack of expertise in other IT branches;
- Communicating mostly via electronic means (e-mail, ICQ instant messaging, Skype, mobile phone);
- Collecting information mostly from web portals (e-zins, web-zins, vertical portals);
- Being quite active in on-line discussions and web based forums.

In the framework of DBE deployment, and in addition to the above-mentioned characteristics, such software developer SMEs should also possess knowledge and expertise in the following areas:

- Open source;
- Internet service deployment;
- Peer to peer (P2P) architecture;
- Firewall independence;
- Distributed networks;
- Integrated development environment (IDE);
- Business to business (B2B) semantically interoperable modelling;
- Dynamic service composition;
- Focusing on business logic;
- Service-oriented architecture (SOA);
- Model-driven architecture (MDA).

The ability to create clusters and work in cooperative networks is an additional characteristic that software developer SMEs should have when envisaging the deployment of DBE.

3.1 Guidelines for identifying key target audiences: Software Developer and Provider SMEs

The most effective ways to identify the specific DBE target audience in the mass of software developer SMEs are considered to be the following:

- Collect information from SMEs (across all sectors) on who the providers of their personalized software applications are.
- Cooperate with local university actors that have a leading position on research and technological development (RTD) and find out the extent and nature of their relations with particular software developers.
- Cooperate with technology parks, centres of excellence, innovation relay centres etc., since these could be possible candidates for acting as the regional catalyst for DBE deployment.
- Cooperate with leaders of supply chains and/or leading ICT companies.
- Address the members of clusters (if they exist), especially those that are focused on software development and ICT.
- Address specialist professional associations of software developers (software industry action groups, associations and other networks), if they exist.

In addition, the identification process can be supported by:

- The undertaking of some desk research (for example, searching the web using the key words mentioned above to discover companies that offers such technologies and solutions).
- The selection of a bigger group of companies, according to: (i) the classification system for Economic Activities in the European Union (NACE) or (ii) other sectoral criteria (catalogues) and address them with relevant questions via e-mail.
- The insertion of announcements in webzines, local web portals and other internet-based media.
- Contact with Chambers of Commerce and other industry associations.
- A sound information campaign through the regional media and press as well as through the media specialising in the ICT industry, software development, internet applications, open source etc.

Concerning the publications of announcements and articles, in order to identify the part of the audience potentially interested, it is advised to include in the text published a clear request for response.

3.2 Guidelines for approaching key target audiences: Software Developer and Provider SMEs

In order to approach this type of audience, a "multi channel approach" could constitute the best choice, especially if the specific targets are software developer SMEs. In particular, the following actions can be undertaken:

- Direct mailing (e-mailing) with requests for feedback: it is probably the most appropriate for establishing first contacts with software developers and ICT providers.
- Face to face meetings and interviews.
- Information and promotion in webzines and "vortals" (vertical portals) offering the possibility for SMEs to provide feedback.
- Cooperation with leaders of supply chains, leading ICT companies, university teams leading on research or technological development.
- Attendance of relevant events organized by Chambers of Commerce, industry associations or other relevant networks.

- Organization of regional workshops with an agenda promoting attractive topics (e.g. *new business opportunities for software developers and ICT providers*).

3.3 Guidelines for communicating with key target audiences: Software Developer and Provider SMEs

For communicating with the specific software developers SMEs, **peardrop** recommends using the following communication guidelines and means:

- Direct mailing (e-mailing) as the most appropriate for software developers and ICT providers.
- Information, promotion and announcements in webzines and "vortals" (vertical portals) that are identified as crucial.
- The use of existing relevant regional or local web portals and web-based fora.
- Articles, information and announcements in newsletters and/or business papers that have been identified as crucial.
- Face to face meetings (F2F interviews) on the occasion of events organized by key leaders of SME groups (e.g. SMEs in supply chains, Value Added Resellers of leading ICT companies, university research teams etc.).
- Presentations and speeches at relevant regional conferences and events.
- Organization regional workshops (present new knowledge, case studies etc.).

4. OPEN SOURCE DEVELOPER AND BUSINESS COMMUNITIES

This fourth category of target audience was specifically analyzed by TCH on behalf of the **peardrop** consortium.

In order to better develop the communication guidelines, TCH and **peardrop** suggest splitting this group and consider it as comprising the following sub-groups: the open software developer communities; the business communities, and others.

4.1 Guidelines for identifying key target audiences: Open Source Developer and Business Communities

In general terms, software developers can take care of the development of the DBE technology platform, while the other groups work in the development of the software that would allow end users to use the DBE platform.

4.1.1 Open Software Developer Communities

The number of open source communities is almost impossible to calculate. However, for what concerns DBE deployment, only some of those are of specific relevance.

Most of the projects related to DBE technologies are run under SourceForge.net that is one of the biggest open source software development web sites (<http://sourceforge.net/>). SourceForge has developed its own specific requirements for hosting software projects. Thanks to this policy, and to the structure of its site, software projects and communities are quite easy to reach (for example, each project must provide a mailing list to reach the software developers involved in it).

Given the fact that the DBE technology platform was mostly created within the DBE project, to date, there are still mailing lists addressing the whole developing communities on the specific DBE topic (such as swallow-discussion@lists.sourceforge.net and dbestudio-devel@lists.sourceforge.net).

4.1.2 Business Communities

The DBE technology platform consists of a couple of specific application platforms. These are very easy to list and the related communities / companies behind them are almost as easy to target. According to SourceForge.net, (http://dbestudio.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Setting_up_your_Environment), the following software prerequisites are necessary for setting up a DBE-compatible environment:

- [Java 5.0 \(JDK or JRE\)](http://java.sun.com/) (<http://java.sun.com/>)
- [Eclipse 3.2.x](http://www.eclipse.org/) (<http://www.eclipse.org/>)
- [GEF 3.2.x](http://www.eclipse.org/gef/) (<http://www.eclipse.org/gef/>)
- [EMF 2.2.x](http://www.eclipse.org/modeling/emf/) (<http://www.eclipse.org/modeling/emf/>)
- [JEM 1.2.x](http://download.eclipse.org/tools/ve/downloads/index.php) (<http://download.eclipse.org/tools/ve/downloads/index.php>)
- [WST 1.5.x](http://www.eclipse.org/webtools/main.php) (<http://www.eclipse.org/webtools/main.php>)

According to the above mentioned prerequisites, it is therefore advised to identify those actors, open software developers, communities in the region that are able to work with such technology environments.

In more detail, the main actors in this category are:

- **Software distributors** - Software distributors like Linux are a specific type of audience: they can be considered as a more limited and, in the long run, more promising audience. If the DBE technology was directly available, for example, in Linux distributions it would be very easy to take into use by other companies. These companies are easy to find and easy to contact.
- **Open software consulting companies** - Open software consulting companies can be useful "advertisers" for DBE technology.
- **End user companies or individuals** - This group is very hard to "detect" beforehand. Almost any company that could potentially get involved in the deployment of DBE is part of this target group.

4.1.3 Other

There are several more organisations which, in the long term, could be "useful" for the deployment of DBE. The most important of those are universities or other schools.

Universities should be one of the target groups because whenever they consider and accept the DBE concept in their teaching programs, the multiplier effect is quite big (and powerful in the near future since students are potential future developers and customers of DBE). Generally, the risks that schools/universities face when introducing DBE in their course curricula are quite low - given the fact that DBE is an open source technology and it is easy and legal to introduce it to students.

Although public government and regional organisations are not yet open source organisations, they should be taken into account. In fact, they could:

- Have a financing role in the implementation and distribution of DBE between open source developers and business communities.
- Help defining some standard requirements for software development
- Be important procurers and users of the DBE system and platform.

4.2 Guidelines for approaching key target audiences: Open Source Developer and Business Communities

4.2.1 Open Software Developer Communities

There are several ways that can be used to get in touch with end user SMEs and software developers SMEs. Marketing tools are the easiest, since everyone is familiar with them. General marketing can be useful because it can inform open source developers as well as end users (who could be the ones requesting the development of software applications in line with DBE technology).

Depending on the budget available, publishing some information in regional IT magazines and/or newspapers could be considered.

A different way to approach local and regional open source communities is to organize "code camps". "Code camps" can be short courses where the audience has the possibility to:

- Have a close look at DBE technology and
- Create their own demonstration applications with DBE tools.

Quite often, open software communities organize this kind of thematic event: DBE could be the topic of one of these. Generally, these kind of "courses" are not very expensive (e.g. the ones held in Finland were organized with a budget of around 2,000 €) and in some places it might be possible to organise a code camps together with some other (adult education) project.

Companies that decide to get involved in these kinds of events constitute a potentially target audience.

4.2.2 Business communities

In order to approach this group, the **peardrop** consortium suggests the following for each of the three sub-groups previously defined:

Software distributors - The issue that can rise when approaching such companies is "what can be offered in return", in the case they adopt and distribute DBE. For Linux and other open source distributors, this might not become an issue (if they adopt DBE tools in their own distribution sets they can indeed benefit from a larger and better distribution channel than before). For proprietary distributors like IBM Corporation, Oracle or SAP AG, however, the arguments are more difficult but it could still be worth engaging their participation/representation in the dissemination process.

These actors could be contacted first by phone and/or email in order to find out who is the right contact person (in general, this is the person who the company's policy in terms of use of software applications).

Software distributors are generally powerful companies. If DBE is adapted by them, there are then good chances that it will become better known in the near future.

Open software consulting companies - Contacting open software consulting companies requires the same methods as listed above in the case of software distributors: direct e-mails, articles or advertisements in IT magazines and newspapers.

Quite often, these companies are members of some open source community and thus they can be approached through communities such as: Linux user groups, The Free Software Foundation, W3C (World Wide Web Consortium), Electronic Frontier Foundation, Open Forum Europe and so on.

Regional associations of open software consultants are quite easy to find (e.g. in Google or by collecting information from an open source company) and to be contacted (by e-mail and by phone).

End user companies or individuals - Most of these companies and individuals have often never heard about digital business ecosystem. For this reason, it might be wise to save time and resources to take this target group specifically into account (e.g. through awareness-raising activities, such as articles in magazines etc.).

4.2.3 Others

To have detailed guidelines on how to approach universities and public governments, please refer to previous paragraphs 1.3 and 2.3

4.3 Guidelines for communicating with key target audiences: Open Source Developer and Business Communities

In a wider view, IT magazines can be used to distribute software (e.g. including a DVD in the publication). Therefore, it could be possible to produce and publish a series of articles on "how to create

DBE software" in an IT magazine. For a matter of completeness, articles should cover the whole "DBE cycle of deployment": starting from how to model business logic and ending with the application coding. This approach can be considered as a more difficult "distribution path" than the one comprising the support of software distributors, but the audience covered in this case would be wider.

4.3.1 Communication with DBE technology developers

Normally, open source software is developed according to specific needs. For example, the Linux operating system "kernel" was developed by Linus Torvalds because he needed a better operating system than those that he had already available. Until now, most of the existing DBE technology has been developed by some EU funded projects. As a consequence, if the need for such technology does not emerge, then there is the risk that the development of this particular technology might confront a lack of resources. As described earlier, it can be quite easy to communicate with DBE technology developers through existing mailing lists.

In case the organization supporting DBE does not have the resources to sponsor the development of new DBE applications, such an entity could target its communication efforts towards the end users of such DBE applications (e.g. SMEs in the different sectors, see paragraph 2.3) and towards the regional policy makers (see paragraph 1.3).

To raise awareness, the organization intending to raise awareness on DBE can use newspapers advertisements, websites and other sources of information (for more details on relevant links and documents please refer to www.peardrop.eu).

4.3.2 Communities - Companies: DBE Software Users/Developers

There are plenty of potential DBE software users/developer companies in most of European regions. For this reason, this group is very difficult to target. One way to do it could be to target specifically open source community groups and associations.

Once communities and companies have been identified, the biggest effort will be to raise awareness through dissemination of specific materials.

- All of these organisations can be reached by sending materials by e-mail. Most of them prefer electronic material that is free for redistribution, such as:
 - o DBE information sheets (brochures)
 - o DBE Toolkits
 - o Links to other information
- The telephone is still a useful tool, even nowadays.
- Some of these companies might like to have a free working demonstration of the DBE platform (although, to date, a good solution for this does not yet exist.)
- The videos on the DBE integrated project website are useful tools for explaining the key concepts (http://www.digital-ecosystems.org/de/refs/ref_slides.html).
- Code camps with those companies that are interested to use DBE technology / platform.
- If a magazine is willing to cooperate and publish a series of articles on DBE and business application development, such a possibility should be taken into account.

5. LEADING ICT COMPANIES

The fifth and final target audience group are leading ICT companies and the analysis of identification of, and communication with, these has been undertaken on behalf of the **peardrop** consortium by AEC. Leading ICT companies could play an important role in supporting the development and the deployment of DBEs. In particular, the role of leading ICT companies is indisputable for the development of new visions and in transforming them into business assets. Moreover, leading ICTs companies are able to focus their research effort and to take fast technical and business decisions.

For these reasons, the implementation of DBE needs a strong complementarity between SMEs and leading ICT companies (in particular, of those active in sectors like telecommunications, Internet and data processing). In fact, SMEs can offer to leading ICT companies some flexibility for externalisation, their speed of response, and a greater adaptability to the market's evolution - particularly when in reference to local markets or market niches. On the other side, leading ICT companies can often support SMEs in helping them to open up national, and even international, markets.

To address these leading private ICT players, the **peardrop** consortium suggests focusing on two main points:

- The business need basis with a clear view and testing example of technical tools;
- The cost models relating to the implementation and maintenance of the technical tools.

5.1 Guidelines for identifying key target audiences: Leading ICT Companies

Mapping and identification of leading ICT companies is the first task to be undertaken. As applied to some of the target groups previously discussed, in this case a deep identification action can also be undertaken with trade chambers, poles of competitiveness, local productive systems and local public decision making bodies.

To give an example, in the region of Aquitaine (France), the following actors can be listed: France telecom, SFR, 9 Télécom, Thalès, IBM, Bull, Cdiscount, etc. It is important to note that, although all these companies have offices in Bordeaux - the major city of the region - the companies' policy decisions for all strategic actions are taken mainly at national level. It is the case that some of them are involved in the pole of competitiveness - or in other local productive systems - and have already come across the DBE concept.

5.2 Guidelines for approaching key target audiences: Leading ICT Companies

In order to approach leading ICT companies and to attract their interest in DBE, it is very important to present to them the potential added-value of DBE for them. In order to do so, some of the main points to be highlighted are as follows:

- DBE gives the possibility to build strategic partnerships and to operate in the company's local markets with higher value and more innovative products/services.
- DBE can support the creation of consortia with innovative SME's, universities and public research laboratories and to obtain finance for early stage research and development in fields of high growth potential and in key ICT applications.
- DBE helps prototyping and developing advanced technology investigation, in particular those aiming to reduce risks and to ensure competitive advantage.
- DBE supports the deployment of new ICT technical models in SMEs, which could represent a source of income and work for leading ICT companies.
- DBE favours the development of specific responses to user requirements (e.g. users' operational needs) that will support the deployment of new ICT and the migration of SMEs to different technologies.
- DBE offers the possibility to share a certain number of tools that makes them collectively more effective and useful for sharing experiences and innovate.

5.3 Guidelines for communicating with key target audiences: Leading ICT Companies

Actions aimed at raising awareness of the DBE model should be addressed to key actors within leading ICT companies. Such actors are normally in contact with trade chambers and local public decision makers and can therefore help raise awareness among those regional stakeholders as well. For example, leading ICT companies often collaborate in workshops and events organized by Chambers of Commerce. Such events can therefore represent an opportunity to approach such a target audience and to make some first contacts.

One to one meetings and speaking engagements at relevant regional conferences and events is another possibility. In those cases, a preliminary contact could be made informally before the event and followed up afterwards.

In the end, the benefits of the DBE model over existing networking or clustering models (such as poles of competitiveness or other types of local productive systems) is a real opportunity warranting deep communication. In fact, these existing structures can represent a good starting point for the early deployments of DBE in the region since they offer the possibility to approach a good number of SMEs concerning their potential integration in a regional DBE. In particular, this could offer a good starting point for the leading ICT companies' activities and act as an example for further DBE developments.

6. FINAL REMARKS

To conclude, communications with each of the different target audiences presented above may be planned according to the relevance of the target group for each topic to be addressed.

It is advisable to formulate priorities in the dissemination and communication plan, e.g.:

- Support of specific knowledge on DBE for public administration (personal discussions, seminars).
- Support the communication for different key players in the region ("map" them and inform them, for example, about **peardrop** activities and events).
- Propose DBE as a base for inspiring more SME networking in the region.
- Enrich the information flow and the internal communication inside the leading public body.

The best channels for dissemination and communication should also be selected according to the specific target groups. We summarize here a list of possible communication channels that could be used:

- Mass media (articles);
- Brochures/printed materials;
- Telephone contacts;
- Contact points , personal networking and face to face meetings;
- Web sites and online tools;
- Mobile supported communication (e.g. SMS);
- Newsletters (internal);
- Regional authority periodicals (for citizens or municipalities);
- Personal meetings (seminars, workshops) - to ensure personal interest of key people inside regional authorities dealing with business development issues.

ANNEX – USEFUL INFORMATION

The reader can find the documents mentioned in the text above in the **peardrop** website (www.peardrop.eu) in the section "DBE Library & Thesaurus".


The "DBE Library" offers to the user a direct access to:

- key documents and introductions on the Digital Business Ecosystem
- **peardrop** deliverables and documents such as: DBE brochure, DBE "toolkits", the electronic version of these guidelines and, in the near future, many other useful tools (as a DBE Deployment plan and some regional DBE Case studies).

The "DBE Thesaurus", on the other side, offers to the user a list of terms that are important for the understanding of a Digital Business Ecosystem.

Moreover, the **peardrop** "DBE Library & Thesaurus" proposes a list of useful links and a source of news.

For additional information, please contact:

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