

"Lotsendienste" – business start-up pilotage at local level in Brandenburg¹

Objective

Foster institutional innovation: integration, co-operation, transparent co-ordination and formalised joint working, also beyond administrative borders, are likely to positively influence start-up activity, entrepreneurial development and firm growth.

Contribute to the identification of hindering framework conditions that need to be addressed and to how procedures related to entrepreneurship development could be streamlined.

Description of the approach (aims, delivery, budget etc)

Business start-ups in Brandenburg have access to a wide range of support activities. However, not always the information on their existence and particular access modalities is not always easily obtainable, especially in rather rural areas. This has been tackled in Brandenburg by the establishment of a Land-wide network of 26 "Lotsendienste", local services attached to existing agencies that function as first-stop shops. Technology- and incubation centres, Chambers of Commerce and Trade, regional development agencies, institutes of higher education, and agencies focusing on social groups underrepresented in business start-up and business ownership, like women and migrants, are participating in this initiative and contribute with dedicated personnel to a one-to-one advice and counselling approach.

The package is tailored for different target groups, like pupils, youth, women, migrants and university graduates, includes first orientation about challenges and opportunities related to the start of a business, pre-start coaching, assessment centres and training needs identification as well as coaching in the post-start-up phase. Some tailored services for target groups are concentrated in some parts of Brandenburg. For instance "Lotsendienste" for young people has initially been established in the Potsdam area. At a later stage, a Brandenburg-wide outreach was made possible by the Land policy initiative "Junge Leute machen sich selbstständig" (young people get self-employed) implemented through specific programmes by the Chambers of Commerce and Trade in Potsdam, Cottbus and Frankfurt/Oder.

"Lotsendienste" is an initiative co-funded by the Ministry of Labour (MASGF) and European Structural Funds. It is an integral part of a Land-wide initiative to increase business creation and entrepreneurial activities, called "AGiL". The Ministries of Economy (MW), Labour (MASGF), Science and Research (MWFK), Education and Youth (MBSJ) in partnership with Chambers of Commerce and Trade and Chambers of Crafts concluded in 2002 an agreement on joining efforts in business start-up and entrepreneurship development. Later on the public employment services in Brandenburg, Land Council of Vice Chancellors (Landesrektorenkonferenz), the Zukunftsagentur Brandenburg (ZAB), public banks, like the Investment Bank Brandenburg and the Bürgschaftsbank, as well as the Landesagentur für Struktur und Arbeit Brandenburg (LASA) joined the partnership which today integrates most relevant regional stakeholders in the field of business start-ups and entrepreneurship development.

The "AGiL" partnership at Land level, together with its local outreach, ensured by the "Lotsendienste" initiative, can be considered good practice in addressing the often existing problem of fragmentation in entrepreneurship policy delivery, especially when it concerns business start-ups in regions characterised by demographic changes and high levels of unemployment.

Website for further information

Website: <http://www.lasa-brandenburg.de/index.php>

¹ Source: Discussion Paper "Entrepreneurship in the Districts Uckermark in Brandenburg and Parchim in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania", OECD LEED Programme, October 2006. Adapted in 2007 by Philippe Krott and Dario Montero, trainees at the OECD LEED Trento Centre for Local Development.