

# Adapting Businesses to the Low-Carbon Economy

## New business models in the green economy

- Businesses concerned with continuous improvement and resource efficiency
- Businesses valuing preservation; extending life of goods
- Reuse, re-market, re-think, re-manufacture – *loop economy*
- Businesses selling utilisation of goods as services

## Financing businesses in the green economy

- De-risk businesses through public shares
- Public procurement
- Regulations: Incentives for prevention, taxing polluters; taxes on consumption of non-renewable resources and remove taxes on human labour
- Clusters to increase economies of scale
- Partnerships and participatory mechanisms (e.g. cooperatives)

## Foster firm creation: Opportunity creation as strategy

- Build entrepreneurial environments, not just niches: appreciation, celebration, role models, no stigmatisation of failure
- Promote entrepreneurship skills and competences from early on and interdisciplinary (link to youth employment )
- Strengthen local support networks and the role of universities: matchmaking for start-up teams, mentoring, business angels – avoid over-protection and pampering
- Breaking spatial (and cultural) barriers and globally connect local economies: attract talents, high skilled, entrepreneurs, venture capital, etc.

## Modernisation of existing firms: Training and knowledge absorption in SMEs

- Stimulate training of managers & staff: inter-firm networks, organisational learning & change, new means and methods of training
- Facilitate human-based knowledge and technology transfer: student internships, thesis collaborations

# Demographic change and local development

- Shared responsibility needed – among different actors but placing people first (government, social partners, etc.) .
- Lots of interesting programmes and initiatives, e.g. Ageing 50+ (connecting senior workers with employers, Germany); Case management (supporting older workers with on health issues, Austria).
- Policy interventions needed – multi-disciplinary approach essential (including skills intelligence amongst all age groups and adapting work places).
- Social inclusion not enough addressed.
- EU funding plays a key role, but co-financing is a challenge with shrinking finance base.

## What sorts of skills are needed today to help people access the best quality jobs?

- Debate about value of generic and vocational skills
- Universities could do more to ensure that graduates are ‘job ready’
- Employers should also have a role in building/advising on appropriate skills development

## Challenges in retaining and attracting skilled people and good quality jobs

- Balance between quality of education and quality of jobs to really build retention.
- Branding can be useful for smaller towns to market themselves.
- Public sector support for brokerage (intermediaries with employers, understanding employer needs, building links with economic development people).

## How to support better skills utilisation?

- Management training particularly for SMEs
- Clear career ladders and opportunities for progression in larger firms

# Breaking out of Policy Silos

- **2 key objectives to joining up** funding in a locality: giving greater value to the taxpayer and providing more individualised services.
- **Getting the governance right:** central government to set a coherent framework, but lead bodies should consist of the most appropriate organisation – including employers.
- Crucial to make the necessary investment to **identify** policy silos and **delivery duplication**; e.g. the UK ‘Total Place’ pilot project.
- **Multi-layered approach** to breaking down silos:
  - At local level: Working Neighbourhood Funds have added strategic leadership, aligned budgets and improved engagement with communities.
  - In areas of intergenerational worklessness and deprivation: Family Intervention Pilots are breaking new ground in ‘treating’ whole families.
  - At an individual level, Personal Budget pilots are testing out whether individuals can break through silos by using the individual to join up services.

## Barriers

- Fragmented career paths;
- Market will not sort this all out / Comprehensive place specific strategies are needed
- Flexibility in hiring/ firing to ease first entry in the labour market
- Different target groups: NEET; graduates, poorly integrated
- Jobless recovery: No jobs especially for youth

## What works

- Transform the ecology of engagement; Job search and placement should be much more sophisticated; Invest early on; close follow up and clear pathways to programmes
- Support business development
- Importance of social networks to get young out of isolation or remoteness
- Co-produce & engage youth from the inception; don't plan for the target group (MY GENERATION project experience); + involve employers (Denmark); the role of intermediaries; Informal skills (Antwerp)
- Universities should be encourage academic AND practical experience

# Innovative mechanisms to finance inclusion strategies

**Getting the mix and the measurement (recognise qualitative impact)**

**Combined financing (not mono-sectoral)**

- Public/private
- Social/private
- Public/private/social

**Level of institutional sophistication is important**

**Seed money for local community organisations**

**Investment in social cohesion is not marginal or an add-on**

**Rigour and evidence**

- **PLACE/ CULTURE SPECIFICITY of social innovation;**
- **Might not be transferable but still important**
- **Multi stakeholders empowered to co-produce innovation; Role of citizens & empowerment of local communities (what happens with their money)**
- **Need to establish innovation funds to support social innovation development either in specific fields in which social innovation can happen or to support experiments**



# What do social enterprises need to support inclusion?

- **Build enabling environment and implement supporting policies; governance should allow for co-construction; community embeddedness**
- **Management skills**
- **Provide sustainable adapted finance & training opportunities for social entrepreneurs and include social entrepreneurship in school and university curricula**
- **Support market development**
- **Consider social enterprises as a system not a sector**