

Introduction to the INDE project

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The Project INDE was approved on December 2003 within the Community Initiative Interreg III - Central, Adriatic, Danubian and South-Eastern European Space - CADSES and belongs to the strand B of the initiative which supports transnational cooperation. The most important aims of the CADSES programme are the following:

- to achieve higher territorial and economic integration within the co-operation area;
- promoting more balanced and harmonious development of the European space;
- establishment of a common understanding of the spatial policies;
- creating a unified vision of the transport and communication networks;
- protecting natural heritage and preventing its degrade – including flood and disaster prevention.

The CADSES Programme covers the largest and most complex area among the 13 transnational co-operation areas in Europe. From the coasts of the Baltic Sea, through the mountains of the Central Europe and the Hungarian plains, through the Austrian and Slovenian alpine landscapes, CADSES stretches down to western Italy and Greece, thus grouping the Balkan regions, including Moldova and part of Ukraine. The CADSES area comprises regions belonging to 18 Countries: 9 of them are EU-Member States (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia) and 9 are Non-EU-Member states (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine). Around 200 million people, more than 15 ethnic groups, in this lively framework, CADSES has collected new challenges: the enlargement and the Neighbourhood. As of 1st May 2004 Poland, Slovenia, Hungary, Czech and Slovak Republics received a new status, as members of the European Union. At the same time, the INTERREG III B CADSES programme was transformed into a Neighbour Programme (NP). These programmes are based on the existing INTERREG programmes along the border and give the opportunities to the new Member States to apply in a

projects with a contribution of ERDF funds. Euro Info Centre IT 378 is the Lead Partner of INDE Project and it heads a transnational partnership involving five of the 18 Countries: Austria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Serbia and Slovenia. In the specific the transnational co-operation is composed by:

1. Eurosportello Veneto - Union of Chambers of Commerce of Veneto Region
2. Venice International University - TeDIS
3. Treviso Tecnologia
4. Province of Vicenza
5. Service and documentation Centre for International Economic Cooperation – Informest
6. IAL of Friuli Venezia Giulia Region
7. Autonomous Province of Trento
8. Mind Consult & Research - GmbH
9. MedRegio – Kepemep
10. Public Agency of Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investments
11. JAPTI - EIC Ljubljana
12. Croatian Chamber of Economy – EIC Zagreb
13. Republic Development Bureau - Serbia

The aim of the project is to assist the Candidate Countries belonging to CADSES space in developing instruments for the transnational co-operation and in finding out solutions for problems related to enlargement process of the European Union. Such transnational cooperation should extend the geographical coverage of the project while dressing the social and economic imbalances caused by the Community enlargement through the promotion of new opportunities for economic growth.

The main strategic objectives of the INDE Project can be listed as follows:

- identification of the requirements and the conditions to spread productive clusters and local systems of SMEs in the involved geographical area;
- strengthening of sustainable developments and cooperation between intermediary institutions;
- the creation of assistance centres for small and medium sized companies through the Public and Private Partnership, with a strong territorial and/or sectoral scope providing basis and specialised services and businesses;

- development of methods of territorial and sectoral marketing for the promotion of the access to knowledge and exchange the of products through information and communication networks and ICT tools.

The project aims at exchanging of ideas and knowledge in order to offer all the participants belonging to selected sectors a unique chance to learn more about existing opportunities, solutions and approaches for building up new synergies and for the creation of a strong network of co-operation models in the CADSES area. How? By identifying successful solutions and standards, as well as sustainable business models for sustainable operations of such networks and by classifying best practices for business and social management in business planning, import and export and investments, loan conditions, tender and taxation procedures, marketing strategies and innovative information services. One the most important impacts of the project is to spread the utilization of the communication technologies (ICTs) to promote cultural and social interaction within the CADSES area in order to improve the accessibility and the educational level.

INDE Project is composed of five Work Packages that have been coordinated by the Project Partners, in particular:

- WP 1: economic development and transnational productive integration between regions of the EU and CADSES area in the ICT scenario. The Work Package has been coordinated by the Venice International University. The WP 1 was focused on the analysis of the economic dynamics and the level of productive integration between the European Union SMEs local systems and the Cadses area, in order to obtain an analytical framework to the relevant phenomenon of productive delocalisation activated by the industrial districts and SMEs network. The project aimed at developing a study about the diffusion of the network technologies between the enterprises through a quantitative research and thanks at the collaboration of the partners, and the use of the ICT as a key infrastructure for the knowledge sharing, the improvement of the efficiency and the transparency of the business process as a support to the interaction;
- WP 2: technology infrastructures for collaboration and integration among regions. The WP has been coordinated by Treviso Tecnologia. The main task of the WP 2 was the development of the platform www.inde-

network.org. The aim of the platform is to facilitate the growth of the virtual clusters, by directing registered visitors to the existing virtual clusters with their new models, know – how and best practice. To establish a virtual sectoral cluster chains matching subcontractors capacity and final producers at transnational level that will result in a strong added value of the project outputs; to link also itineraries on local products of the territory from Greece to emphasize the territories through the visibility of the itineraries of local products. Within this aim a spatial network is aggregated, starting from Greece territories up to Austrian territories and North Eastern parts of Italy. Moreover the portal contains different services for SMEs and stakeholders:

1. ICT services: a set of information and communication tools and platforms to support SMEs in internationalisation process;
2. Business opportunities: business cooperation events and on line opportunities database to find business partners, new markets and new technology;
3. virtual clustering: activities focused on four vertical sectors, that have been identified during the implementation of the project (wood and furniture, mechanic, plastics and tourism).

- WP 3: Spatial e-network for the development of entrepreneurship and competitiveness in the framework of a knowledge based economy. The WP has been coordinated by Kepemep – Greece.

The aim of the WP 3 is to establish a spatial “e-network of itineraries of local products, services and SMEs” in the South CADSES Regions. The main idea is to improve the competitiveness of the SMEs in the framework of the new economy, as a mean to promote the sustainable development.

- WP 4: know – how exchange and training activities. The WP has been coordinated by IAL FVG. The main aim of the WP is to exchange know – how and training activities about IT use for the personnel of INDE assistance centres selected during the implementation phase within CADSES partner area. The IAL - FVG developed a Web Based Training that allows to deliver basic ICT training over the internet. The E – learning modules are widely accessible, flexible, free of charge and easy to access for all the actors interest about e-learning.

- WP5: Information and dissemination. The WP has been coordinated by JAPTI – Slovenia. The main tasks of the project are the following: to support the Internet forum for the animation and reinforcement of the transnational cooperation among the stakeholders by regular exchange of the experience and best practices on services to business organisation and operation, management of the database for the dissemination of information on the enlargement process and opportunities for SMEs, including a monitoring and feed-back mechanisms. During the project different business matching events were organised in the sectors of wood furniture, mechanic, plastic and construction that involved more then 100 SMEs per each.

The results of the project can be summarized as follows:

- a. identification of the requirements and the conditions to spread productive clusters and local systems of SMEs in the involved geographical area;
- b. the identification of the trends in the processes of internationalisation productive integration of the Partners of the project;
- c. support to the creation and development of SMEs assistance centres, by the Public Private Partnership, with a strong territorial and/or sectoral scope providing basic and specialised services to business;
- d. development of a platform INDE-Network or www.inde-projectcadses.org, in order to promote the networking activities of the dynamics of internationalisation processes of the SMEs;
- e. development of methods of territorial and sectorial marketing for the promotion of the access to knowledge and the exchange of products by information and communications networks and ICT tools.

After the finalisation of a the Project INDE, the LP believes to guarantee a sustainability of the platform www.inde-network.org; www.inde-projectcadses.org. In particular the LP pays much attention to the dissemination activities in order to involve high amount of SMEs, that find a benefit in using services provided by the web platform. We believe to continue to implement an effective dissemination strategy that ensures maximum reach and visibility to project’s outputs at local, national and international levels.