

# FROM SHOES TO ICT: A DETERMINED PROJECT, BASED ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, SET FOR A LONG-LASTING FUTURE

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## Abstract

From shoes to ICT (Information and Communication Technology): how a rural area was given the chance to climb out of a crisis in traditional manufacturing industries and improve its prosperity.

Local development can be built on innovation through new technologies. In the North of Alsace, France, the ADEC, a local development structure, was created with this very purpose. Can ADEC be seen as a good practice? What are the limits of such a structure? What new steps must be taken to ensure its continuation and effectiveness in the future for all its stakeholders? The ADEC experience shows how a team of deeply committed entrepreneurs and politicians can build a collective project, in coherence with EU policies, over the long-term. Through drawing out some of the key guidelines from the ADEC story, it is possible to transfer partly to other territories some of the ADEC practice.

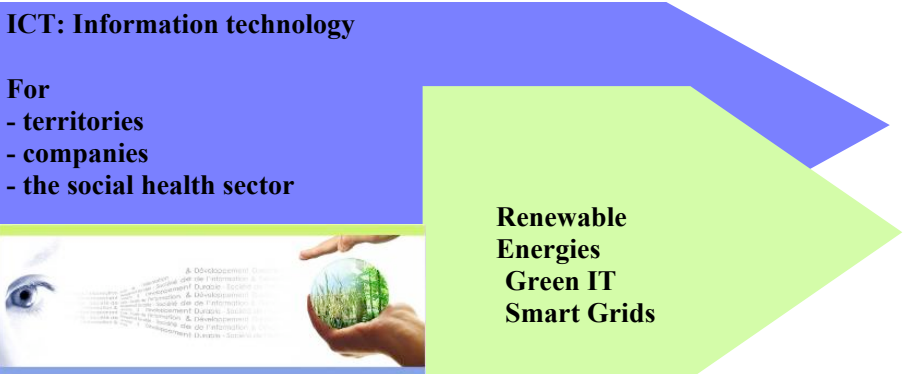
## Sumário

*Como pode uma região rural ultrapassar a crise da indústria tradicional e prosperar, e como pode o desenvolvimento local assentar em inovação baseada em novas tecnologias? A resposta é procurada através do exemplo da ADEC, grupo de desenvolvimento local do Norte da Alsácia. São discutidas as suas boas práticas, os respectivos limites, os passos necessários para assegurar a sua con-*

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*tinuidade e a participação efectiva de todos os actores. Desta experiência destaca-se a importância de se contar, a longo prazo, com uma equipa de empresários e políticos profundamente envolvidos na construção de um projecto colectivo, centrado nas políticas da União Europeia, e extraem-se ensinamentos parcialmente transferíveis para outros territórios.*



## 1. The original context

### Renovating a rural area thanks to information technology

The Val-de-Moder a community in North Alsace, France, was hit from 1990 by the first company relocations, leaving both the area and its inhabitants in a difficult economic situation. In particular, the tradi-

tional shoemaking industry was severely affected when the Adidas factory, a major local employer, proceeded to lay-off massively. The community authorities decided to take their future into their own hands and called upon their European network to find a “smart” way to challenge globalisation: positioning themselves on new activities. Several factors enabled the Val-de-Moder to design and initiate a political project for local development based on information technology. Not only did the rallying of the Val-de-Moder’s networks, initial goodwill and skills come together for the project, but the general context was also propitious, due to a national policy for the reorganisation of economic activities implemented through the DATAR,<sup>1</sup> and a territorial land analysis identifying ICT as a high vector for economic development. Indeed, local councillors and the “Friends of Val-de-Moder” worked together to propose a partnership agreement for the project to the company IBM France. The positive response of IBM France through corporate patronage, seconding a project manager for the first 24 month period, led to the project implementation in December 1993 and the creation of an association to lead the action: ADEC – Association pour le Développement des Entreprises et des Compétences. The project partnership gathered the community of Val-de-Moder towns, the Lower Rhine Council (Conseil Général du Bas-Rhin) who supported the Val-de-Moder action, and the company IBM France.

The central idea of the ADEC project was to create a telecentre and develop teleservices, in particular to support the redeployment of the former shoemaking workers on new activities. This activity was defined by the DATAR in two reports commissioned by the French Interior Ministry<sup>2</sup> (Reports made by Thierry Breton on telework and teleservices and published in 1994). These concepts can be found in the very first European projects working on telework.

## **2. Aims and stakes**

From renovation to support, to project consultancy and implementation in the fields of new technology and sustainable development, the ADEC’s missions have greatly evolved, grown and diversified as the years have gone by, with in particular a constant increase in added value. Today,

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<sup>1</sup> DATAR: Interministerial Delegation of Land Planning and Regional Competitiveness.

<sup>2</sup> French equivalent of the Home Office Department (NdT).

ADEC sees itself as a catalyst for initiatives through its dynamic project structure and skills transfer processes. Its principal activities are:

- to support the development of Lower-Rhine companies, especially through encouraging the emergence of ICT and/or sustainable development businesses on its site;
- to support innovative projects in rural areas, related to the deployment of ICT services for all or sustainable development;
- to lead cross-disciplinary actions such as competitive intelligence, international exchanges and studies. In particular, ADEC initiates, builds and leads European projects and manages the corresponding networks, with a specific emphasis on cross-border cooperation. ADEC has also established privileged relations with Strasbourg University.

### **3. Concrete stages of the ADEC construction, making it possible for the organisation to evolve consistently with EU policies and principles**

#### **1994-1995: The Val de Moder telecentre**

At its launch, the three original goals of ADEC were:

- to create a rural telecentre;
- to set up an e-learning programme in North Alsace;
- to promote the area and its local actors through ICT use.

Launched in 1995, the IBM patronage enabled the launch of ADEC through the transfer of a dedicated project manager to this project, whose mission was to design, build and define an adequate economic model for the telecentre, in light of the local context and situation. A former shoe factory was lent for a year by a local manufacturer to help start the new activities and host the telecentre. At the beginning, ADEC employed low qualified operators who had followed a training programme to enable them to acquire the necessary skills needed to be able to carry out these new jobs, and developed a training structure (training in office applications and first approach to the internet) as well as a club for the diffusion of micro-computing uses. A dedicated IT space was created for young people (with edutainment CD-ROMs, Internet access, a BBS platform

– one of the web’s ancestors – allowing the first exchange of local emails) stimulating grassroots interest in the project. In addition, in order to improve the attractiveness of the ADEC site and help balance the budget, a first offer of consultancy services was developed. Moreover, serious considerations about the qualifications linked to ICT became quickly necessary in order to imagine how economic activities can be concretely supported through ICT.

### **1996-2000: Improving on-site skills and diversifying activities**

The deployment of the Internet, the development of the Information highway, the first significant e-commerce and multimedia applications, made it possible to identify new development opportunities for ADEC which required an evolution towards new skills and an economic diversification. During this time, the ADEC staff profiles evolved to take account of these changes and multicultural “project managers” were employed in order to manage more and more complex projects. The Val de Moder community also purchased and refurbished the ADEC site, a former industrial wasteland, networking it and connecting it to the high-speed broadband network (2000) via dedicated optic fibre line. Furthermore, the ADEC became a business incubator, with a new role to welcome and support entrepreneurs wishing to develop high added value projects linked to ICT.

One of ADEC’s main assets at this time, and still is, was its involvement in European projects, whether they were part of the Framework Programmes for research and development, or territorial cooperation programmes in the area of ICT, e-business, e-learning or e-culture. Ever since 1994, ADEC has invested in its understanding of and has participated in the opportunities offered by European Union projects in order to accelerate its integration of ICT, build up a strong competitive intelligence system, and maintain a top class network of partners. European Community projects enable ADEC to gain time, stay a breadth of innovation and construct its own foresight.

### **2001-2004: Consolidation of the ADEC site, ICT activities and implementation of an industrial digitalisation facility**

As ADEC asserted its position, it became increasingly important to stabilise the ICT economic activities through the implantation of leading

companies on the site. On a regional level, a very important call for tender, issued by the public authorities, concerning the digitalisation of the Alsace Moselle Livre Foncier<sup>3</sup> led to the installation of an industrial dematerialisation platform on-site and the integration of ADEC within the operating chain of the winning consortium IBM France – Infotechnique (based in Luxembourg, subsidiary of Getronics) – CORTEAM.

The digitising operations took place over almost 5 years, until June 2009, and led to the creation of around 60 jobs for the busiest period. For several years, this technological platform was one of the most competitive in Europe (with page-turning scanners and the development of industrial data processing methods). However, for both market-related and also technology and usages maturity reasons, it was not possible to reinforce the digitising platform and Infotechnique did not diversify its activities to other digitisation public tenders (digital library, e-government/e-administration). The Infotechnique company has now been sold, and the digitising activity is in “stand-by” in the Val-de-Moder area, waiting for an hypothetical revival in case a new contract is gained.

At the end of this period, ADEC’s hopes for privately backed growth linked to major companies did not come to fruition. The association therefore looked for new alliances and tightened its links with its initial public partner, the Lower Rhine Council.

**2005-2010: Negotiation of a partnership agreement with the Lower Rhine Council and public partnerships, evolution of ICT towards Green IT and integration of sustainable development priorities with the launching of the PEREN centre for rural excellence on renewable energies.**

The Lower Rhine Council and the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*<sup>4</sup> decided to support ADEC in order to confort and support its public service missions through:

- management of the incubator and development of ICT-related economic activities in the Lower Rhine area;

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<sup>3</sup> The Livre Foncier is the name given to the land registration institution in Alsace Moselle. (NdT).

<sup>4</sup> Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, created in 1816, is a French financial organisation placed under the control of the Parliament. (NdT).

- participation in ICT-related European projects;
- technological competitive intelligence and technological dissemination.

At the end of 2005, ADEC asked local councillors to modify the strategic focus of the organisation by giving a stronger position to renewable energies and sustainable development. Seeing an opportunity through a national call for bids related to the set up of a Centre for Rural Excellence, ADEC, together with the ADEAN (Agency for the Economic Development of Northern Alsace), the Lower Rhine Chamber of Agricultural and private partners (De Dietrich Thermique, Electricité de Strasbourg, Roquette), responded with a project on “New Energies”, named PEREN. The aim of the project was to promote in North Alsace, projects in connection with Renewable Energies (deep geothermal energy, biomass, micro-wind energy, photovoltaic etc...) using local stakeholders. The role of ADEC in this project, beyond writing the bid, was to coordinate and oversee the accomplishment of actions, to share its methods and technological platform related to competitive intelligence and information processing, and above all, to transfer and spread its skills acquired through its involvement in European projects. The PEREN project has produced numerous outputs in terms of training, European cooperation, new energy technology uses thanks in particular to the exploitation of ICT through collaborative work and competitive intelligence tools. For instance, the RETS project (Renewable Energies Transfer System) an INTERREG IVC project, support to the Fibre Cluster, and the creation of the master diploma “Management and Law of Energies and sustainable development” at Strasbourg University in which the PEREN partners share their expertise and skills.

**In 2010, ADEC strengthened its links to the Lower Rhine Council on the ICT and Health theme.**

The Lower Rhine Council launched its programme “ICT and Health: innovation for autonomy” focused on the use of ICT to improve the autonomy and living conditions of the elderly living at home. A call for proposals was made by the council in January 2010, in collaboration with ADEC and the Caisse des Dépôts.

**2011-2013: Implementation, deepening and support to projects focused on ADEC's key areas, ICT and Sustainable Development (SD)**

**Implementation of good practices and tools arising from the dialectic ICT and SD**

In 2011, the ICT sector's ecological footprint is inversely proportional to its positive impact on the rest of the economy. With this in mind, ADEC, through the European projects RETS and Greenov,<sup>5</sup> aims with the help of all its partners, to help ICT become, through its mutation and adaptation, more sustainable and the tool to make the inevitable transition towards a low carbon economy.

ADEC fully understands the challenges and is skilled in Green IT, especially through its competitive intelligence and information-swapping activities, namely the exchanges with its European partners within the cross-border cooperation project IT2RHINE.<sup>6</sup> The period 2011-2013 will give ADEC the opportunity to explore further this new domain and more importantly to start to implement concrete projects.

One of the key challenges is to be capable of mastering the complex concept of Green IT, which covers both:

- cleaner technologies, achieved through eco-designing IT products, setting up new generation data centres (green data centres);
- and also the application of good practices, such as responsible equipment purchasing, implementation of environmental scoreboards, energy consumption management, process dematerialisation, adopting a mobility policy, developing telework, teleconferences, e-learning, management of end of lifecycle IT equipment, etc.

ADEC, already familiar with these new principles and processes, has the ambitious objective to contribute to the implementation of this sustainable development/ICT dialectic through the greatest number of actors, and most importantly, of the tangible tools which result from it.

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<sup>5</sup> RETS [www.rets-project.eu](http://www.rets-project.eu) and Greenov [www.greenov.net](http://www.greenov.net)

<sup>6</sup> IT2RHINE [www.it2rhine.com](http://www.it2rhine.com)



### **Development/reinforcement of the cross-border network**

The period 2011-2013 will see through the IT2RHINE cross-border project the renewal and consolidation of the existing network. The initial project finishes at the end of 2011, but ADEC, project lead, assisted by all the partners is currently working on a follow-up project. Through capitalising on work already completed, the new project will deepen issues explored in the current project as well as the practices implemented by and between the partners so as to consolidate this Upper Rhine cross-border network. Indeed, after many years of collaboration, the partners wish to continue what has already been started and also adapt it to other sectors in order to complete their understanding of the benefits of ICT for territories, thus multiplying the examples of good practices in the fields of cross-border e-commerce, e-government and smart grids. In addition, they plan to integrate and promote all the information through the creation of a regional observatory on ICT usage on the Upper Rhine level. It will be therefore necessary during 2011 and 2013 to optimise the proximity between these cross-border actors in order to strengthen the network.

### **Supporting the Lower Rhine Council in its efforts to exploit ICT for local policies**

Within the framework of its partnership agreement with the Lower Rhine Council, ADEC has a role to support the authority in its application and use of ICT within its local policies. During the period 2011-2013, ADEC will advise the council how to develop the use of ICT within the health area, and more specifically social health, such as facilitating the living conditions and autonomy of the elderly who wish to continue living at home. ADEC will be in charge of overseeing the evaluation of the different projects which have already been implemented, and will also assume the role of contact/ consultant for the implementation of new projects, especially concerning the dematerialisation of health care and services. Generally speaking, ADEC will continue in its assignment to raise awareness about the advantages of using ICT in different domains (e-health but also e-government, e-services...).

## **Education and strengthening of the ADEC/ University partnership**

ADEC has always had privileged ties with Strasbourg University and today, it is possible to say that a concrete partnership exists between the two entities. This is reflected, for instance, in the creation and design of Master diploma programmes (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year university studies) jointly with the Faculty of Law, Political science and Management. These programmes take into account current and potential evolutions in ICT as well as existing and future needs in recruitment and specific job profiles for the digital economy (e-skills and green jobs).

ADEC aims to match even more closely this equation between training/education and economic reality. The ETENA<sup>7</sup> project (Centre for Student Entrepreneurs in Alsace), in which ADEC is one of the leading partners perfectly, demonstrates this need to bring together the entrepreneur and the academic worlds. This recently launched project, running between 2011 and 2013, seeks to initiate genuine awareness-raising and entrepreneurship-training dynamics, as well as stimulate the creation of companies by students.

Finally, ADEC will continue to support students, tomorrow's players, by promoting the transfer of skills and methods through internships within the ADEC ecosystem. This has the added benefit of encouraging recruitment within this ecosystem.

### **4. A trust building approach based on values shared by the stakeholders**

#### **The project's actors: an embodiment of stability and trust**

The partners of the ADEC project include the Community of Val-de-Moder towns, the Lower Rhine Council, IBM at first, the investment company the Friends of Val-de-Moder (company which started this local development project), and of course ADEC which was created specifically for the project, and all its ecosystem.

The Val-de-Moder District (La Walck, Uberach, Nierdermodern, Pfaffenhoffen), which is now a community of towns, gave a long term com-

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<sup>7</sup> ETENA: [www.etenav.univ.eu](http://www.etenav.univ.eu).

mitment to support the telecentre experiment, managing to secure IBM France's support (seconded staff). Even today, the local authority is an active part of the ADEC site.

The Friends of Val de Moder investment company is an organisation made up of people interested by a venture-capital approach on a local scale. In addition, it has also invested in some of the private activities on the site from 1998.

The Lower Rhine Council, still present, supported the launching of the project and then strengthened its relationship with ADEC through three successive partnership agreements during the periods 2005-2007, 2008-2010 and 2011-2013.

ADEC is a local law (1908) association which was authorised to carry out commercial transactions until 2005. The association, which was run without any public funds from 1994 to 2004, is since 2005, tied to the Lower Rhine Council by three-year partnership agreements. As an association of public interest, it is no longer in the competitive field. As the years have gone by, an ecosystem has grown up around ADEC consisting of several on-site companies, local partners from the Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture, European partners, and students who have kept in touch with the people they have met through ADEC and on the projects they worked.

**Common values and a certain shared logic have made it possible to maintain cohesion and stay working together for more than 17 years.**

These **values** are based on:

- Land development;
- Use of local resources;
- Sustainable development, and CSR awareness (Corporate Social Responsibility);
- Equal access to knowledge;
- Raising awareness about ICT;
- Innovation;
- The right to experiment on an international level, even if we are only a small organisation;

and are motivated by the desire to promote:

- Public Interest;
- Economic development (incubator);
- Stable high added value jobs;
- Public-private partnerships;
- Networking;
- Local solidarity;
- Territorial brand.

## **5. ADEC's know-how: methods employed and toolbox**

ADEC works thanks to the coordination of dedicated actors who share the same values. These above – mentioned – values contribute to the development of methods and the creation of a toolbox which ensure the stability, the duplicability, and first and foremost the success of ADEC's projects. These elements, emerging from ADEC's know-how and actors, constitute the corner stone of the project's dynamics and singularity. To sum up, these tools and methods can be classified according to several different approaches.

ADEC's success, therefore, is based on a multi-faceted approach which could be explained as follows:

- Networking approach;
- Project-oriented approach;
- Exploratory and foresight approach;
- Structured and managed approach;
- "Prior understanding of technology" approach.

### **5.1. Networking approach**

The networking approach is the essential matrix at the heart of ADEC's operating procedure. It consists in both spontaneous and voluntary networking of actors and organisations. Such network building can happen on different levels: local, national and of course, European. ADEC masters completely not only its method for network building and optimisation, but also the tools required to manage and oversee these networks.

## **5.2. Project-oriented approach**

ADEC is made up of a series of singular complimentary profiles, with undeniable experience in the construction and management of European projects. This project-oriented approach reinforces the relevance of the networking approach. Underlying this practice, human skills exist allowing the preparation, the construction and the management of projects, particularly multicultural projects. Moreover, the success of a project is linked to the prior necessity of fully understanding the “multicultural” aspects. This is true for (i) the regional and/or European cultures involved (ii) but also as far as different professional cultures are concerned, in particular when completely different entities (economic, social, associative, cultural) and agents with fundamentally different but highly complementary profiles are brought together in the interest of inter-disciplinarity, openness and exchanges between partners. The capacity to manage such an approach makes it possible, for instance, to put an isolated idea or process into perspective, facilitating its implementation on a larger scale, thanks to the boosting effect of a network.

## **5.3. Exploratory and foresight approach**

This approach includes tools and methods such as benchmarking, competitive intelligence and the setting up or use of observatories. It consists of anticipating up-coming evolutions and comparing practices already in place in other towns, countries and/ or sectors. The heart of this approach is without a doubt the organisation of a systematic and structured competitive intelligence system. ADEC carries out both transversal and sector-based competitive intelligence, from which it is possible to guarantee the management of inevitable cross-cutting evolutions such as the rise of ICT and that of sustainable development. ADEC has acquired expertise in competitive intelligence, benchmarking and observatory practices and is involved in transferring these skills on a daily basis. Finally, in the interest of efficiency and optimisation, ADEC now possesses a platform and associated services which give it the means to develop relevant and honed competitive intelligence.

## **5.4. Structured and managed approach**

ADEC’s operating procedure is strictly supervised, enabling it to fulfil its assignments in an informed and controlled way. It is therefore

very important for ADEC to give a legal framework and backbone to its projects. ADEC itself benefits from legal advice in all its undertakings and integrates the legal aspect in every new project or area of reflection. In addition, fully aware that it is crucial to grasp the regulatory framework, both on the national and European level, ADEC counts among the members of its network, lawyers and university professors. They are automatically included in every project, very early on in the process in order to ensure the legal feasibility and the perfect command of the legal matters involved. ADEC makes sure that its network members are all aware of the importance of these legal issues.

ADEC benefits from comprehensive legal competitive intelligence in complement to its technological and market intelligence, and which includes both national and European law. In addition to this legal approach, ADEC makes sure that it is aware of the activities of the professional IT trade union (SYNTEC Informatique), an organisation which has a structuring role concerning ICT in France.

Finally, this methodical approach implies the perfect command of very specific vocabulary and glossaries (eg: renewable energies, e-health...). This is the reason why ADEC has created a way to elaborate and share common glossaries in order to make sure that actors understand one another and therefore to avoid misunderstandings: a sort of lingua franca for the network.

### **5.5. “Prior understanding of technology” approach**

ADEC favours a vertical approach to ICT and makes it a rule to only use those technologies for which it has firsthand experience. Furthermore, for more than 15 years ADEC’s choice as far as platforms, network administration and collaborative tools are concerned is open source. This approach means, for example, understanding not only the concept, but also the inner workings of the information system in question. ADEC also places great importance on the comprehension of computer security and ensures that the necessary tools and skills are used to guarantee it on the site. Finally, ADEC has totally appropriated the underlying principles, issues and practices of e-commerce. This enables the association to have, more than just a sector view, but a global perspective. Such a perfect command of technology enables ADEC to support the implementation of ICT, through diverse new uses, and in whatever the application field (e-business, web 2.0 applications, e-health, etc.).

## 6. 2011 Strategic Analysis

**A strategic analysis is useful to gain a better understanding of ADEC's principal characteristics**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Positioned on megatrends: ICT, renewable energies, sustainable development, innovation factors and sectors</p> <p>Undisputed experience in the field of EU/FR projects and fruitful cross-border activities.</p> <p>17 years of experience</p> <p>A knowledgeable team, rare resources, academic recognition and synergy</p> <p>Values</p> <p>A loyal team with a committed leader</p> <p>ADEC, as a technopole, is part of the RETIS Innovation network</p> <p>VHS optic fibre (very high speed)</p> <p>Toolbox and methods</p> <p>Strategic support and innovation engineering</p> <p>Efficient competitive intelligence</p> <p>Ecosystem and network</p> <p>Scientific and technical recognition</p> <p>Innovation culture and practice</p>	<p>Precarious regional positioning over the past 17 years, without leverage</p> <p>Mitigated political support</p> <p>Insufficient regional lobbying</p> <p>Scattered and divided regional actors, lacking coordination, with a limited to non-existent ICT political vision</p> <p>Asserted rurality</p> <p>Values</p> <p>Lack of marketing/communication (budget/resources)</p> <p>Very small team including rare resources</p> <p>Hard to manage profiles (due to their integrity, intellectual demands and openness to EU)</p> <p>No career, no clearly shaped future in the association, because it is so small</p> <p>No critical mass</p> <p>The infrastructure is no longer original, no competitive advantage compared to other regional business and scientific parks like Entzheim, Illkirch, Strasbourg or Schiltigheim</p> <p>Weak public transport</p> <p>Mismatch between the territory and the projects initiated (size, scale, ambition, innovation...)</p>

Opportunities	Threats
<p>Merger of local authorities</p> <p>Cross-border region</p> <p>Repositioning of the Strasbourg region (ICT, SD, cross-border metropolis)</p> <p>European programme, political necessity to do European “stuff”</p> <p>(ADEC, a European know-how to use)</p> <p>Necessity to bring companies, university and local authorities closer together</p> <p>Development of a Public Services House in the Val-de-Moder</p> <p>Anticipated savings</p>	<p>Drastic local authority budget cuts</p> <p>No foresight vision or regional strategy in the ICT domain</p> <p>Alsace /ICT chronic image deficit (cf. latest edition of Renaissance numérique)</p> <p>Rural land development is but an illusion</p> <p>Carbon tax is not favourable to rural settings, commuting and trips become a negative factor</p> <p>The private sector no longer has the resources to consolidate public commitments outside very attractive zones</p> <p>Weariness of the project bearers</p>

## 7. Impact – reproducibility– resilience

### Impact

42 companies were created from the ADEC site, of which only 15% have since disappeared and the number of jobs directly generated fluctuates between 170 and 200. There are numerous indirect effects and ADEC did its fair share to revitalise the area by showing that innovation and access to European networks are not reserved to urban areas. The Val-de-Moder also underwent a renovation in other economic sectors and by working together the local councillors and entrepreneurs have managed to create several hundred new jobs since 1995.

The economic and social fabric of the Community of towns can directly and indirectly benefit from the skills developed by the association:

- Knowledge of the local environment: local authorities, land development, actors;
- Maintenance and creation of high added value jobs;
- High-level and comprehensive ICT expertise covering all areas (training, production, organisation);



- Wide network of actors developed at the local, regional, national and European levels;
- Understanding of issues specific to local development (e-tourism, agriculture, renewable energies);
- Involvement in the cultural and European domains: European projects / local projects, numerous nationalities have worked on site since ADEC began (British, Belgian, German, Polish, Czech, Chinese, Portuguese...), understanding of European issues by the Val-de-Moder people and companies;
- Specific training courses and expertise in ICT usages: e-commerce, law and the Internet, project management, project management and law applied to energies and sustainable development;
- Experience in extensive networking, project management and technological competitive intelligence.



### **Reproducibility**

It is quite exceptional for a rural area to obtain regional and European recognition as a centre of competence and actually foster the existing economic fabric's evolution and the development of ICT oriented activities. It is also very difficult to duplicate this example with tangible results: it demands long-term unwavering motivation and support from both the local councillors and the leading project manager. Taken separately, elements of this project can be reproduced.

### **Resilience**

The resilience of such a project depends, above the personal commitment of its founding members, on the development of the structure's internal skills and on its constant ability to stay in tune with the market's demands and land development public policies. The cross-border commitment is a major asset which needs to be consolidated with the establishment of the Upper Rhine tri-national metropolitan area and the launching of concrete projects.

## ADEC Key figures

 	<p>ADEC: private law association status (local law – 1908) High-tech technopole 1200m<sup>2</sup> (1500m<sup>2</sup> including Infotechnique – of which 1000 m<sup>2</sup> are for rent, the rest being common spaces or basements) Available land 3ha The buildings and premises belong to the Val-de-Moder community of towns. Optical fibre: 50 mo symmetrical, upgrade to 100 under consideration R&amp;D Data centre 25m<sup>2</sup> Plans to extend its surface to 100m<sup>2</sup> progressively in 3 steps: (1: 37.88m<sup>2</sup>; 2: +42.00 m<sup>2</sup>; 3: +38.15 m<sup>2</sup>)</p> <p>ADEC employees: 8,5 FTE Annual budget: 750 000€ in 2011 Companies created since 1998: 42 companies created and incubated Companies wound-up since 1998: 8 22 companies moved headquarters and relocated outside the Val-de-Moder for the progress of their development.</p> <p>Over 300 interns received since 1995 Over 250 European partners in 17 EU and Mediterranean countries <a href="http://www.ade.fr">www.ade.fr</a>: 40000 unique visitors/year</p>
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## 8. Lessons learned

### 12 key points for a land planning and development project based on ICT and following a sustainable development approach

#### 1. A visible human and political will registered over time

- Inter-communality and a shared spirit among local councillors, capable of anticipation and taking risks;
- Development of a strong and resistant core network of partners;
- A dedicated project holder or project manager, with a pronounced sense of entrepreneurship, and the skills to create and manage a network;
- The ability to juggle time (planning > 10 years, elections 5 years, technologies and innovation less than 24 months, budgets 12 months);
- The ability to design and build a collective project over time.

## **2. High performance and controlled technical infrastructures**

- The existence of telecommunication infrastructures and an access to high speed broadband at competitive prices, adapted and evolutive in relation to needs;
- The existence and the necessary skill to manage a state of the art technical platform with high value services and back-up facilities to guarantee the continuation of these services;
- The possibility to expand the facility in order to keep the successfully incubated companies and their added value in the rural area;
- The possibility to access the area from urban centres with minimum amount of road and multimodal infrastructures.

## **3. An active devolution policy for public services**

- The existence of local public services within the territory, that are polyvalent and that have a strong level of intermediation have to be supported by an e-government access.

## **4. Direct access to training and ICT practices**

- Capacity to overcome the challenge of training and life-long learning through expert use of ICT and distance learning tools (confirmed positioning towards e-learning);
- Partnerships between initial and vocational training education and companies;
- Bridges between training systems/ and project development.

## **5. A global approach to markets in an environment favourable to innovation**

- Integration of the international dimension of networks and the decompartmentalisation of markets (adaptation to the value chain);
- Conceptual and organisational creativity (ability to dream and give oneself the means to achieve these dreams).

## **6. The existence of a mature demand for services around ICT**

- ICT challenges completely understood, managed and integrated;
- The capacity of existing enterprises to concentrate on their core trade while making use of available outsourcing services, through

further integration of ICT into their work organisation and their business processes, so they can export more efficiently.

**7. A high performance and targeted value added service offer thanks to skilled on the job teams**

- A capacity to develop innovative high value added products and services with a rapid questioning of their effectiveness (< 1 year);
- Qualified and competent teams on the ground;
- Networks of expertise working together in synergy;
- Ability to initiate and develop the entrepreneurial spirit in order to generate new activities through the “swarm” effect;
- Promote the attractiveness of the approach;
- Anticipate brain and skills drain.

**8. The development of E business**

- Become integrators in B to B, B to A, B to C and A to C relations.

**9. Innovate rapidly and continuously through the support of existing skills networks (clusters, European and International projects)**

- Active research and development >8%;
- Ability to attract, develop and retain skills (“intellectual attractiveness”);
- Ability to constantly reinvent oneself, both for positioning (ICT, SD, Social health) and strategy.

**10. Take into account sustainable development-related issues, energy consumption (energy efficiency), eco-designing of products, use of renewable energies, evaluation and implementation of the “Green IT” potential, and integration of the potential development of smart grids.**

**11. Help the rural territory reclaim the local experiences and skills** by investing in promising sectors such as renewable energies, sustainable development, health and social domains that converge with ICT. Promote the territory’s collective intelligence.

## **12. Identify oneself with the territory**

- Think “glocal” through cross cutting a global approach (European projects) and local needs (developing a rural territory, creating and anchoring added value in this territory);
- This is the Val-de-Moder;
- Create coherence with the higher territorial authorities: link to the Lower Rhine Council;
- Create coherence with the regional authorities and the cross-border region.

## **Conclusion**

Based on its strong experience, ADEC steps confidently into the coming years, centring its strategy on information technology and their positive contribution to a low-carbon economy.

This will be put into practice.

### **By the promotion of:**

- its approach based on solid know-how, constant adaptation and reinvention of its organisational processes;
- its human capital;
- its intangible assets resulting from its experience in data processing and networks in force in numerous projects.

### **By developing:**

- ICT Engineering related products, especially open source, as well as those linked to renewable energies, Green IT and smart grids;
- projects about ambient assisted living to enhance the quality of life of older people and strengthen new economic activities.

### **By reinforcing:**

- the economic and technological competitive intelligence through its European networks and its competitive digital collaboration and intelligence platform;
- the unbroken link between the public sphere (European projects, R&D, foresight) and private companies for the sake of the industri-

alisation and the creation of added value anchored to the territory (creation of high added value jobs, new job profiles, development of collective intelligence...).

ADEC's openness to the European and international world, crucial for the construction of a forward-thinking vision that takes into account economic needs, innovation and skills must be reinforced in priority through a cross-border positioning in the Upper Rhine tri-national metropolitan area.

### **Keywords**

Land development, economic development, ICT, innovation, sustainable development, digital economy, business watch, Web2.0, Europe, European projects, cross border cooperation, networks, training and education, territorial stakeholders, actor complementarity, good practices, benchmarking, openness.

### **For more information**

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## APPENDIXES

### ADEC – Association pour le Développement des Entreprises et des Compétences

Technopole du réseau Retis Innovation, l'ADEC est une association de développement économique spécialisée dans les **technologies d'information et de la communication (TIC)** ainsi que le **développement durable et les énergies renouvelables (ENR)**, **partenaire du Conseil Général du Bas Rhin**.

ADEC vise à **accélérer la réussite des projets TIC ou développement durable** au travers de différentes missions:

- **Implantation d'entreprises:** l'ADEC possède un environnement de travail convivial pour développer de nouveaux projets. Elle offre aux entrepreneurs 1500 m<sup>2</sup> d'espace de travail, avec des bureaux clés en main pré-équipés et pré-cablés. Des services bureautiques mutualisés ainsi qu'une infrastructure et des services informatiques high-tech, basés sur la fibre optique, sont disponibles, avec une réserve foncière de 3 ha.
- **Accompagnement des projets innovants et réseau de compétences:** positionnement stratégique, assistance au montage de Business Plan et aide à l'accès au financement, suivi régulier en lien avec le réseau de l'innovation alsacien. L'ADEC s'appuie sur des partenariats publics/privés combinant les ressources locales, transfrontalières (Allemagne/Suisse) et européennes notamment celles des clusters. L'ADEC est particulièrement engagée dans le programme d'actions TIC et SANTE du Conseil Général du Bas Rhin au service des personnes âgées pour leur maintien à domicile.
- **Service d'information stratégique:** définition des enjeux, expertise, gestion collaborative des connaissances. Nos thèmes prioritaires sont: TIC, logiciel libre, **e-santé**, e-administration, e-business, green IT, éco-matériaux, ENR...
- **Coopération européenne:** comme porteur, partenaire, l'ADEC a participé en 16 ans à plus de 30 projets européens. Dotée d'un réseau de plus de 250 partenaires dans 17 pays l'ADEC a

développé un savoir-faire en la matière. Pour 2010 à 2012, l'ADEC est coordonateur au niveau européen de IT2RHINE [www.it2rhine.com](http://www.it2rhine.com) et RETS [www.rets-project.eu](http://www.rets-project.eu) ainsi que partenaire du projet GREENOV [www.greenov.net](http://www.greenov.net).

- **Partenariat avec l'Université:** ADEC est fortement liée aux masters 2 suivants: «Droit et gestion de l'Economie Numérique» et «Gestion et Droit des Energies et du Développement Durable» à la Faculté de Droit de l'Université de Strasbourg. De plus elle est très impliquée dès son origine dans le projet ETENA Pôle Étudiants Entrepreneurs en Alsace, [www.тена-univ.eu](http://www.тена-univ.eu).

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### **ADEC – Association pour le Développement des Entreprises et des Compétences**

Technopole within the Retis Innovation network, the ADEC is an economic development association specialised in **information and communication technologies (ICT)**, as well as **sustainable development and renewable energies (RES)**, and is **partner of the Lower Rhine Council** (Conseil Général du Bas Rhin).

ADEC's objective is to accelerate the successfulness of **IT or sustainable development projects** through specific activities:

- **Business services:** ADEC provides a convivial working environment for developing new projects. Entrepreneurs can set up new businesses within the 1500 m<sup>2</sup> working space in ready to use networked offices. Shared secretarial services as well as a high-tech infrastructure and computer services, based on fibre optics, are available, as is a 3 ha real-estate reserve.



- **Support to innovative projects and skills network:** strategic position, help in Business Plan set-up and access to funding, and regular monitoring linked to the Alsatian innovation network. ADEC relies on public/private partnerships combining local, cross border (Germany/ Switzerland) and European resources in particular those linked to clusters. ADEC is especially involved in the action plan ICT and HEALTH of the Lower Rhine Council, developed to enable elderly people to stay at home.
- **Competitive intelligence service:** definition of the challenges, expertise, shared knowledge management. Our priority themes are: ICT, open-source software, **e-health**, e-government, e-business, green IT, eco-materials, RES ...
- **European cooperation:** as coordinator or partner, ADEC has participated over 16 years in more than 30 European projects. Endowed with a network of over 250 partners in 17 countries, ADEC has developed significant know-how in the area. From 2010 to 2012, ADEC is coordinator on a European level of IT2RHINE [www.it2rhine.com](http://www.it2rhine.com) and RETS [www.rets-project.eu](http://www.rets-project.eu), as well as being partner in the project GREENOV [www.greenov.net](http://www.greenov.net).
- **Partnership with the university:** ADEC has strong links with the following Master 2 diplomas: “Law and management of the digital economy” and “Management and Law of Energies and sustainable development” in the Faculty of Law, University of Strasbourg. In addition, ADEC has been involved since the beginning in the project ETENA, Pôle Etudiant Entreprenant en Alsace (Centre for Student Entrepreneurs in Alsace), [www.etenav-univ.eu](http://www.etenav-univ.eu).

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## Acronyms

ADEAN	<i>Association pour le Développement de l'Alsace du Nord</i> Agency for the Economic Development of Northern Alsace
ADEC	<i>Association pour le Développement des Entreprises et des Compétences</i> Association for the Development of Companies and Skills
BBS	<i>Bulletin Board System</i>
CG67	<i>Conseil Général du Bas Rhin</i> Lower Rhine Council
DATAR	<i>Délégation interministérielle à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Attractivité Régionale</i> Interministerial Delegation of Land Planning and Regional Competitiveness
DD	<i>Développement Durable</i> Sustainable Development (SD)
ENR	<i>Energies Renouvelables</i> Renewable Energies
ETP	<i>Equivalent Temps Plein</i> Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
PER	<i>Pôle d'Excellence Rural</i> Rural Centre for Excellence
PEREN	<i>Pôle d'excellence Rural Energies Nouvelles</i> Rural Centre for Excellence in New Energies
RD	<i>Recherche et Développement</i> Research and Development
RETIS	RETIS is the French Innovation network which has been mobilising all its members in favour of innovation development and innovative projects support in France, for more than 20 years. High-tech cluster Incubator EBIC, European Business and Innovation Centres.
RETS	Renewable Energies Transfer System
THD	<i>Très Haut débit</i> Very high speed broadband
TIC	<i>Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication</i> Information and Communication Technology (ICT)