

SMEs - Sustainability Minded Enterprise

Wood Quay Venue, Civic Offices, 8th March 2010



Workshop Transcripts

Links:

Q1: What must we do to ensure Dublin realises the potential of the Green Economy by 2010?

Q2: Could a Green Hub add Value in Dublin? Would a Green hub Work in Dublin?

Q3: How do we Utilise the Nation's/Region's Strengths? We want your help – How can we help you?

Q4: How Can We Kickstart Green Business Through Innovation Studios?

Q1: What must we do to ensure Dublin realises the potential of the Green Economy by 2010?

Sheet 1

- danger of 'Green' label being everywhere
- need of strong definition
- -ntegrating business, arts, green ideas
- community growing
- where is space? Vacant lots, using space we have
- Quality Mark for sustainability? Define.
- Not Greenwashing
- Support business, sustainable development- Lots of ideas/energy, little support for sustainability
- infrastructure helps to develop ideas
- sustainability/Green economy - define 'citizen-worker-parent-volunteer-commuter'
- Overuse of the word 'sustainable' - need a common understanding
- People don't understand where they fit it, what the Green economy is
- Too much focus on individualistic view for the Green economy
- Lot of Energy in Dublin
- Small companies have to have resources
- Business as lever
- Daintree Building

Sheet 2

- Move up food chain
- Production - design innovation. R&D
- Huge saving - Reengineering
- Turn weakness into strength
- Education/skills

- Enablers - Political/Law/Regulatory (NB)
- Regulation - open greed - export opportunity
- Test bedding - pilot schemes
- Infrastructure. Opportunity
- Round table - create collaborate planning (planning framework)
- Tweetivism
- Micro support for entrepreneurs
 - Physical
 - Educational
 - Emotional/Social
 - Financial

Sheet 3

- Comes from the bottom up
- Need for retraining and upskilling
- You need the people and a space
 - Combination of expertise and energy
- How can we leverage the presence of multinationals?
 - Social responsibility funds
 - Cohort of people inside Google, who are given time to explore other opportunities
- What are the main obstacles?
 - Changes in grants scheme
 - Red tape
 - Innovative
 - Green business falls in-between boxes
 - Small green market
 - There is no price for carbon
 - You are dealing with global markets
- Put a price on carbon
- Look at the Creative Dublin model, replicate for green enterprise

Sheet 4

- Facilitate creative thinking
- Not afraid of failure, learn by doing/ to succeed
- Access to funding- FAS money: reconvert to new green careers
- Simple support / sponsored sabbatical / graduate placement programmes
- Integral learning / shadow programmes
- Shape education into a new way of teaching / innovative thinking
- Revolutionise the way children develop disruptive thinking
- Primary level reprogramming / inspire creativity through design
- Need for multi level, new visible ecosystems

Sheet 5

- Definition
 - Broad
 - New...
 - Link to ICT, green meters..
 - vs Old / re-green
 - NO, good?
- Any, not only green jobs
- Biggest problem for SMEs now = access to \$
 - Banks – to convince green is €

- Education for green and use of new technologies
- Start your own business? Support info
- IE- slow on new technology
 - Good for bio, ICT, social media
 - Multinational base
 - Missing research!
 - PO(?) of small businesses
- CULTURE
 - Education for green and use of new technologies
 - Myth of the entrepreneur
 - Celebrating “ordinary” entrepreneurs

Sheet 6

- Green Eco is too big an area
- Define “Green”
- High / Low Tech funding Problems.
- Match (Irl.Content) – Fit to the Irish context?
- Low Skill / Minimal funding for reskilling available
- Sustainable Technology – Support from FDI?
- Technology vs Services – Move away from Services.
- Green Industry to Rebalance in Relation to Zoning?
- People : Startups
- Recycling Ideas – Trendspotters – Need for Networking (First Tue & Green Drinks)
- Ireland not a good place to start a business
- Not enough VC – Need Seed VC

Sheet 7

- Achievable Timescale
- Remove barriers to entrepreneurs
- What is the Dividend?
- Everyone's interest?
- Share of the Pie?
- Money?
- More recycling – fewer brochures
- Smarter use of IT
- Less Conversation / More Action
- Universities
- Unemployed people with expertise
- Business Partners
- Practicality
- Education – Universities need to educate green skills
- Prioritise Education
- Connect to 2nd and 3rd Levels to entrepreneurs – Future policy makers
- Strong Green Leadership
- No private transport between canals
- Policies – Hard to Categorise
- Social Investment / Community Awareness / Social Activities >> Capture their energy

Sheet 8

- We could be a leader in standards setting - like a rating agency (niche)
- What is the unutilised skillbase?
 - construction workers and professionals

- at Farmleigh, the Intel general manager said they had 19 reasons to come to Ireland, now they have only 1 left - low Corporation tax
 - very dynamic
- *Not enough practical supports* - DCC should do this
- No safety nets, if set up on your own
- DCC needs to use partnership approach

Sheet 9

- Conception of being green is outdated - need to make it cool - change the mindset
- Green IFSC - carbon trading - is it really the green economy?
- Renewables jobs will be in West, so Green IFSC is important
- Europe 2020 - 10 years - transformation won't destabilise.
- Won't be "Victorian Style" economic industrial change.
- Overblown how much energy we can produce
- We're good at agriculture, financial [businesses] etc - it will be the *greening of existing industries*
 - reduce what we use - retrofit - insulation
- *DCC could educate / communicate - academic but also PR e.g. home packs*
- Job retention is important - e.g. reorienting jobs
 - Where are our strengths?
 - Look internationally and see [what other nations] do
- do we have the capacity?
- what jobs do we want?
- ICT green jobs, green [illegible], transport efficiency
- Exports - get money in
- *Green economy not just harm reduction* [damage limitation]
- Dublin a great lab / test bed

Q2: Could a Green Hub add Value in Dublin? Would a Green hub Work in Dublin?

Sheet 1

- Define it more closely.
- worth?
- Yes, leveraging ICT, brand, renewable energy potential, energy en. council (universities)
- would work provided it is holistic + supported with many partners
- Will work if don't get bogged down (more action)
- Have workforce + skills, appetite is there - need to use colleges. Link teachers and do-ers
- There aren't enough micro supports as yet

Sheet 2

- undoubted potential
 - would increase societal + business awareness
- would be an exemplar. testbed
 - shift in individual values veer 2 years in business + society - includes lifestyle
- the natural step - create understanding
- Hub should use TNS as tool - it needs to educate
- What does Green mean?
- Hunger for values (+ business opportunity)
- Not about the space it is about the people (underlined)
- Need communication + exhibition space

- Even if it wasn't Green it would work
- number of entrepreneurs in Ireland is huge (microsoft survey)
 - Need to influence them to capitalize on 'Green'
- We are responsible (DCC) to create understanding of why resources is the right thing to do
- Build on existing ICT experience (clarity c-set)
- Lots of SMEs in IRL to create the clusters. Green isle Galway Bay project, spirit of Ireland etc
- More than 40 shades of Green
- Not either/or
- Tired of the rhetoric

Sheet 3

- Last 18 months -> green trend!
- Who provides the facility?
- Synergies and giving back to rest of network
- CREATIVITY
- Current start-up help is aimed at existing businesses
- Community; aspect: missing?
- Connecting – move past silo thinking
- Entrepreneurs
- 3rd level: spinouts?
- NEED

Sheet 4

- Safe Space; support and challenge model
- Ideas shop: pitch, questions, support
 - Put ideas in conjunction
 - Network: need to encourage ideas
- Connect business entrepreneurs with ideas / networking
- Isolate, (use) good ideas
- Green dragons' den
- Match idea + potential and ability
- Legal safeguards
 - Sign up- register idea- protect = IP issues
- Competence for running a business is lacking
 - GAP existing between idea and development

Sheet 5

- Would work; bridges the gap; poor outlets
 - Awareness and opportunities
- Lack of knowledge sharing!
- Central space for green supports / enterprise getting off the ground
- Network building- gap in Dublin
- Exists and works in other cities...why not Dublin?
- Systems-based approach to sustainability
- Education and training
- We are an island: = > this is essential
 - Social dividend
 - Young generation- educated
- Encouraging sharing of ideas
- Seedbed
- Green shoots / early stage

Sheet 6

- Dublin is the capital, prove model here and propagate across the island.
- Get the network together first, then meetings, then space.
- Space – move from chatting to working – how to get people working?
- Can you limit the hub by calling it a green hub?
- The focus is business – keep as diverse as possible. – silos limit potential – each participant adds value in a particular area
- International contact – Hub to Hub
- Hub offering – identify common problems and solutions
- Gap in the Market – Grassroots Foundations – Membership purely based on paying member rates.
- Need for an integrated value system based on “green” but linked to all industries
- Look at core needs of e-ship and how to provide this to hub participants.
- Bank donations of low rent on hub spaces.

Sheet 7

- Hub works in London
- What would make it green? - Beware of greenwashing.
- Credibility
- Charter of Principles
- Financial Incentive
- Peer support.

Sheet 8

[in centre]

- ****Green Hub - Added Value****

[as branches from centre]

- Dublin - emerging culture
 - Creative D Alliance
 - regulation
 - political strategy
 - SHORTFALL
 - venture capital
 - space no problem, lots of empty space
 - making use of existing space
- Virtual Spaces - making use of existing space [as above]
 - wrong emphasis now - on property
 - synergy
- Ideas - synergy [as above]
 - 1st Tuesday
 - V encouraging
- People
- Green - "evangelists" needed
 - explaining
 - adopting existing [ideas] too
- Added Value - lots of little networks, no big one
 - lots of different spaces, no big one
 - missing connections
 - but it has to be a Next Natural Step

Sheet 9

[in centre]

- ****Green Hub****

[as branches from centre]

- Need for realism
- create green identity *but* also need for a business plan
- like-minded people together *but* green might be isolated
- opportunity
- link to big multinationals / venture capital
- institutionalize links of green startups with the corporate world

Q3: How do we Utilise the Nation's/Region's Strengths? We want your help – How can we help you?

Sheet 1

- Intellectual enterprises
- New Market Partnership
- 5 Acres of buildings
- Do we have enough of a scale to focus on individuals
- Access to funding
- Space
- Agents of Change?
- What's the Hub's Story?

Sheet 2

- Universities (placements, sandwich years)
 - link to established links within universities between research + entrepreneurship
 - in a simulation game
 - in mentoring project
 - industry mentors
- many activities already there
 - need for coordination! in the Green area
 - for dissemination of natural steps
- Space
- Skills
 - Need to develop entrepreneurial skills
 - need for the Hub to be business-led
- Need for a virtual hub first?

Sheet 3

- Global idea that Ireland is "green" so can build on this perception
- "Green" is not a bubble b/c of focus on sustainability
- also b/c of financial break down recently there is a focus now on how does this affect everyone not just individuals
- now a realization that resources are limited so how to leverage what we have & how to be innovative
- Transformation: skills/training reskilling & also finding, example: green bonds
- skills/training & providing the space for this, example: hubs
- as a city: willingness to work together - allow the space to learn a skill & put it in place
- In Ireland there is a craving to come together so a hub suits the national ethic - so a synergy happen as/in a collaborative space
- donation of people's time so they could see different business deal w/similar issues - learn from one another across business lines

- a real need for business reps. to come together & on open days, have schools/public come in
- green school program: train students and have them go to businesses to help them turn green their offices
 - Shadow programs in universities
 - Way to link schools with these ideas
- Sharing experiences, bank of hours

Sheet 4

- Needs (for startups):
- (Adoption Scheme)
- Physical- spatial / building – coffee shop!
- Viable model - Is it something we can do without?
- Educational
 - Ongoing education /outreach capacity
 - Offer mentorship
 - Enable people to develop potential
 - Enabling environment
 - 2nd level, transition year
- Financial
 - Shopfront for private investors / venture capitalists
 - Articulate outputs
- Emotional
 - Connecting with people
 - Poetic and romantic stories
 - Young people need heroes
- English speaking population

Sheet 5

- Branding & Marketing – Mentoring and reposition
- Education
- Lots of smart young graduates.
- Highly skilled workers
- Small scale supports – give people a start
- Statement / Leadership / Brand (identify Dublin, enhances Dublin's offering)
- Strengths
- Good at networking
- Strategically (thinking?)
- Local to International
- Breaking down silos in industry
- Look at best practice
- Mentoring from members / network
- What pricing plans?
- Need a location quick!
- Get a package – value proposition

Sheet 6

- Resources - talked small, looked big
 - - needs to have state of the art facilities
 - - *needs to look cool / successful*
- hard to see Irish group doing what Canada did - *huggy-feely thing doesn't work here*
- More practical - transparent - need to show benefits (other societal benefits will come after)
- More economically beneficial would "sell" better

- *Seems "ageist", need to profile to ensure "balance" / diversity. Multi-sector is best*
- Ethos approach *is* appropriate
- First Tuesday
- *More Business Green, less Social Green*
- Huge appetite for it
- *It's a winner to brand it green* - USP
- What is a cool green space?
- Mustn't become a talking shop, but need to access / know about all other activity.
- Need to avoid early stage burnout.
- *Digital Hub* made space + networking + other supports available - was successful.
- Green Hub a good label.
- *Needs to be connected to transport - maybe not feasible to be in centre*
- Active, not just networking

Sheet 7

- communications
- need big business to synergise
- community mapping
- skills-based volunteering
- Community defined
- Advantage over other similar organisations, e.g. Digital Hub
- Buildings?
- Secondary schools
- 3rd level instances
- How do we work together (to make this happen)?
- What are the resource of the city?
- What are the examples of linking the resources?

[following as spokes of a wheel / arms of a star]

- International - Student - Colleges - Community - local business

Q4: How Can We Kickstart Green Business Through Innovation Studios?

Sheet 1

- Training in Hub and Outreach Training
 - Different needs; need to tailor training
- Experience; not just knowledge
- Entrepreneurism is about identifying a need, and having an idea; not just "rockstar" entrepreneurism
- SUPPORT entrepreneurism
- Matchmaking: people with skills and people with ideas
 - Eg: MIT - 'sistering' with them
- BITCI (Business in the Community Ireland)
- Leverage synergies between different actors
 - Focus on the individuals in the last years.
 - Need to stimulate the "entrepreneur" side of each individual
 - Risk of creating a "rock star entrepreneur".
- Need to stimulate the broader use of "entrepreneur"
- Diversity and access to success (-----?)
- Need to partner opportunities
- Connection with the people good at running business
- Link to venture capitalists

- Space open to public, eg: restaurant / café
- 4 needs: physical, educational, emotional, financial
 - PT of funding- window for angel investors

Sheet 2

- USP for Hub is training
- Education is important – must involve universities
- Mentors and people who have done it before – replicate success
- What about using DIT resources that are already there?
- Mentoring is a massive element
- Not so much support for indigenous non-tech businesses
- Skills / finance split – flexibility / ease of realisation
- Skill sharing – leverage other people
- VC funds
- Dragons Den event – DCEB doing one soon
- Ulster Bank green business division
- Financial Advice – MABS then high level support – need mid-range
- Would entrepreneurs share info?
- Get people out of silos – look at things differently e.g. Universities, spirit of openness
- Need to create space now with achievable goals in a set time frame
- Everybody needs to contribute
- Green business needs to maintain this focus – teaching people about green e.g. Upskilling other professionals.
- Use list to generate the seed capital – deadline, budget.
- EU funding – Interreg – Get capital from this.
- Biz opportunity to provide sustainability training

Sheet 3

- Sharing a mindset / like minded thinkers / ethics
- Diversity – Green is underlying, not exclusive. Sustainability ethos
- Networking & Mentoring
- Resource Centre – Capital – Connect to SME
- Education – volunteering your time
- Shadow programmes
- Need to be run by people with similar mindset / ethos (self organising).
- Vision – not just “eco-warriors” - has to be mainstreamed – change the mindset
- Anchor tenants – provide backbone

Sheet 4

- Open the Hub and make it happen
- Right combination of people
- Mixture of people
- Word of mouth
- Make it attractive
- Who do we market to?
- Mix of ages
- People who have had experience and failed
- Be very careful about the use of the word Green
- Be careful about the language
- More use of the word micro-enterprise
- Sustainable is a given
- Do / Don't restrict ourselves to green?

- One stop shop
- Social ends rather than financial ends?
- Access to other hubs
- Proactive people

Sheet 5

- Incubator?
 - where does this aspect fit in?
 - what does Ireland / Dublin need?
- Inclusivity?
- Green label
- *Define* - gives focus
 - not necessarily exclusive
- Innovation Space - Does this link to Green?
- Transient - avoid stagnation
- Energetic - ideas exchanged
- Ideas sharing - open source nature of business
- Innovation
- Softer skills to add value
- *must respond to identified business problems*
- exposure to VC [??]
 - progressing along financial scale
- training
- Structured - needs filtering and definition
- Sharing - spin out networking
- *hook*
- network

Sheet 6

[in centre]

- Learning
- Innovation Studios

[following as branches from centre]

- national?
- involve e.g. local regional authority
- training for entrepreneurs
- education for entrepreneurs
- dividend - different types
- spread thinking, e.g. teachers, council, constructive
- *tipping points*
- e.g. students trained to form business
- [be] aware and learn e.g. Natural Step
- expand, not [remaining] tiny
- opportunity - understand[ing] - market
- having people under the "green" label
- sustainability a defining feature - but may be assumed?
- get agencies on board
- e.g. sources through agencies - professionals?
- modules - hub for all universities
- collaborative
- island of Ireland
- other county councils
- opportunities e.g. Commissioner for Innovation is Irish

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