

Urbecon Ltd

*Local and Regional Economic
Development*

An Introductory Course

Course Outline

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Introduction

This is a short introductory course in Local and Regional Economic Development designed by Urbecon Ltd, consultants in economic development. The Course is designed as a seminar and workshop for people who are new to economic development but also for people in cognate disciplines who would benefit from an understanding of economic development matters.

All of the materials for the course are tried and tested. The course is based on a three-day residential course which Urbecon has provided, on behalf of the Institution of Economic Development (IED), to staff from local authorities, regional development agencies, consultancies and other economic development organisations in the UK for more than fifteen years. During this time it has been extensively developed and refined to meet changing needs and circumstances. The material has also been tested, successfully, with students from transition economies in eastern Europe. The course is designed to be deliverable over a two-day (sixteen hour) session but is of a modular design and can be provided in more, shorter, sessions if required.

Who should benefit from the course

The course is designed for people with limited knowledge and experience of economic development work who have recently started to work in the field or who expect to be engaged in or to be associated with such work in the near future. This includes new practitioners, policymakers and those in cognate disciplines for whom an understanding of economic development matters would be an advantage.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, a student should

- (i) Have a basic understanding of the fundamental principles of local and regional economic development;*
- (ii) Be able to identify the courses of action required to set up a baseline study to give understanding of a particular local or regional economy;*
- (iii) Be capable of preparing a simple SWOT analysis;*
- (iv) Be able to draft a simple outline of an ED strategy.*
- (v) Be aware of further learning/information sources.*

Critical Assumptions

It is assumed that each student will be

- (i) Literate and numerate – at least at or near undergraduate level;*
- (ii) Capable of using a computer to produce documents, manage a simple spreadsheet, access the internet and world-wide web;*

- (iii) *Have some basic understanding of economics;*¹
- (iv) *Have some familiarity with government systems and structures*

Course Materials

The course materials have been designed to enable delivery within a two-day time frame and by a single instructor though all are based on the contributions of a number of specialist practitioners. Materials comprise:

- 1. A set of notes which may be distributed to students after the delivery of each module;*
- 2. A `Powerpoint' slide show to accompany delivery of each module;*
- 3. A set of participative classroom exercises*

The Course should be delivered by an instructor who is an experienced economic development practitioner with teaching/training experience and good presentational skills. A suitably qualified instructor from the Urbecon team can be provided if required.

The group dynamics of a course of this kind work best if the most appropriate number of students is selected. Because of the participatory style of the course, it is strongly recommended that student numbers should be strictly limited to a maximum of twenty-four on each occasion.

Course Outline – the Modules

The Course comprises five modules which take the students from the basic concepts of local and regional economic development through a hierarchy of the means and methods by which economic development work is carried out, the evolution of an economic development strategy and the monitoring and evaluation of work that has been carried out. The modules are briefly summarised below.

1. Introduction: definitions, means and methods

Local/Regional Economic Development – What is it? Who does it? Why? How?

Some comparisons between different countries, means, organisational structures and delivery methods.

2. Key Activities for ED - `The Means'

¹ This may be simply at the level of an `intelligent layperson' who reads a good broadsheet newspaper

- (i) *Inward Investment*
- (ii) *Endogenous business growth*
- (iii) *Labour market interventions*
- (iv) *A competitive location*

3. *The economic development 'toolkit'*

- (i) *Investment promotion*
- (ii) *Business Retention and Aftercare*
- (iii) *Endogenous Business Growth*
- (iv) *Physical infrastructure*
- (v) *Trade and Tourism development*
- (vi) *Creating 'Attractors'*
- (vii) *Skills Provision*
- (viii) *Action against Discrimination*
- (ix) *Lobbying and Campaigning*

4. *Developing an ED strategy*

- (i) *Baselining - the information/knowledge base - Identifying partners and players*
- (ii) *Identifying the issues*
- (iii) *First stage consultation*
- (iv) *SWOT Analysis - Needs Analysis and Gap Analysis*
- (v) *The draft strategy*
- (vi) *Formal consultation*
- (vii) *Adoption and implementation*
- (viii) *Monitoring and review*
- (ix) *Sectoral analyses – global and local*

5. *Monitoring and Evaluation – measuring progress*

- (i) *Measuring change in the local economy (temporal and comparative measurements)*
- (ii) *Evaluating programmes and policies – performance indicators, outputs and outcomes*

Teaching strategy

- A. *The accent is on the practical, rather than theoretical, though some theory is essential to understand why specific actions may be taken. The emphasis, however, is on a 'how to' approach and the acquisition of technique;*
- B. *Sessions include slide/powerpoint presentation, case studies and brief practical exercises.*

C. The strategy is one of 'teach, try, test'. Students receive an oral presentation; they are then invited to carry out a simple exercise, to deploy what has been taught; they are then tested, through questioning and discussion.

The approach, for each module, is as follows:-

The presentation

The 'teach' phase

First, the module is delivered by means of one or more presentations, using the course notes and powerpoint presentation as appropriate. The presentation is participative –delivered as a series of questions for students to answer from their own experience and imagination rather than as a formal lecture. The course material is designed to be capable of contextualisation to meet the needs of students in a wide range of environments.

Participatory exercises

The 'try' phase

Within or after each presentation, there is a participatory exercise which enables students to demonstrate that they have understood what has been dealt with.

Such exercises serve a number of purposes. First, they give students an opportunity to apply what they have learned in the previous session, albeit in an artificial, classroom environment. This reinforces and demonstrates the points made. Secondly, they enable students to 'learn by doing'.

Discussing the results

The 'test' phase

After the exercise, the instructor leads a semi- structured discussion about how the students have learned from the presentation and the exercise. The discussion is built around a process of reporting back.

Giving out the notes

Students are provided with the module notes to keep. (Five volumes, c25,000 words)

Timing

The course is designed to be spread over a two-day period – amounting to a total of approximately sixteen hours work. But it is designed to be extremely flexible to take account of the availability of time with students.

Equipment

The Powerpoint presentation will require a PC or PC-compatible laptop computer using a current or recent version of the Microsoft Windows operating system (ME or XP) and running MS Office. Where this is unavailable, an OHP version can be used.

Use of a chalkboard, blank flipcharts or OHP is recommended.

Students will require supplies of notepaper and writing instruments.

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