

Business cluster development in the BioValley tri-national area

The BioValley comprises South Baden (part of Baden Württemberg), Alsace, and the Basel area

High tech re-invigoration at Lörrach

Lörrach, a modern industrial city, is a cultural and economic focal point in the region where Germany, France and Switzerland meet - the BioValley area. Historically these three regions have experienced common economic conditions largely based on similar industrial development (textiles, coatings and dyes, automation processes and mechanical engineering industries). In the late 1990s the collapse of the textile industry created the same challenges for each region. For example, in the district of Lörrach, KBC employed 1500 workers in 1993, whereas today this figure is only 500. But by using foresight and concentrating on newer technologies Lörrach is now a major district town, only a few kilometres from Basel, with a population of around 47,000, providing jobs for approximately 18,300 people in a well-balanced local economy.

Part of this success has been the result of the Innocel Innovation Centre Lörrach,

which was established in 2000, following a decision by the government of Lörrach in 1998 to found an economic development agency. The concept was to:

- support the development of business in Lörrach (especially life sciences and IT);
- support young entrepreneurs (especially life sciences and IT);
- create an innovation friendly environment;
- increase the number of businesses and employees in Lörrach, with the aim to provide 300 new jobs within 5 years;
- establish a network between existing and new companies and economic developers;
- become the business and regional development agency of the city of Lörrach.

To achieve this, the city of Lörrach financed the infrastructure for a business cluster development including a building - the Innocel. By 2002 an old KBC building which had been used for textile printing since the 19th century was acquired. The building, which is classified as a historical



Innocel is based in a renovated historical building, now housing 30 companies

monument, was completely renovated and now offers 2600 square metres of space to be rented for offices or laboratories, and provides meeting rooms, kitchens, high quality technical infrastructure and administrative support.

The number of companies at Innocel has now grown to 30, providing employment for around 400 people.

One major effort of Innocel is to support entrepreneurs and employees by offering networking activities (meetings, round tables) for different target groups especially in the IT and life sciences areas (eg e-Business Academy, BioValley-Forum Lörrach). The BioValley Forum Lörrach has now held over 40 meetings, attended by founders, senior employees, teachers and attorneys from the life sciences field. Topics have included: medicinal technology (2005), diagnostics (2006), infectious diseases (2007) and systems biology (2008)

Next generation

A special project at the Innocel is the School and Economics project. Realising that advanced education of young students will benefit the development of the area, a research facility for high school students in the fields of physics, nanosciences, information technology, robotics, chemistry and biology was established. Known as the Phaenovum, it aims to provide a platform and laboratory space where young talents can develop their skills in theory and practice under the roof of an open minded atmosphere beside everyday school life.

The Phaenovum is financed by government and local industry, and was officially opened in September 2007.

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Freiburg BioRegion – a dynamic region in the BioValley

Freiburg BioRegion is located in Germany but is close to both France and Switzerland. It is a partner of the three-nation BioValley network which combines the biotechnological potential of the centres in Freiburg (Germany), Basle (Switzerland) and Strasbourg (France).

With more than 300 biotechnology companies, among them global players such as Novartis, Sanofi-SyntheLabo, Roche and Syngenta, and more than 200 research groups, the BioValley offers outstanding expertise. Four universities and a joint biotechnology study programme train young scientists to become highly qualified experts. Today, the BioValley is known worldwide as one of the most attractive biotechnology locations in all of Europe.

Diverse commercial and academic landscape

Freiburg BioRegion distinguishes itself through an outstanding and diverse landscape of companies and research institutes. These include the University of Freiburg, the University Hospital of Freiburg, the Max

Planck Institute of Immunobiology, the Tumour Biology Centre and the Fraunhofer Institute for Physical Measurement Techniques. Of particular importance is the very effective transfer of technology via Freiburg University, the portfolio of which involves many high tech companies.

With more than 100 biotechnology companies, among them approximately 40 R&D companies and over 45 start-up companies founded since 1996, Freiburg BioRegion is undoubtedly among the most successful BioRegions in Germany or even Europe.

Local coordinator

As a central networking agency of the region, Technologiestiftung BioMed Freiburg joins together politicians, researchers and industry representatives and pursues the aim of creating workplaces with a positive future. Being the coordinator of activity in the Freiburg BioRegion, it offers a broad spectrum of services.

The foundation also operates the BioTechPark in Freiburg which provides 4000 sq m of subsidised laboratory and office space for biotechnology start-up companies. InnovationsZentrum Freiburg provides 26,000 sq m for companies that are already established.

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