Guidelines for Forming an ECG Local Chapter

**ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE ECONOMY FOR THE COMMON GOOD**

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These guidelines are designed to help individuals and businesses create and build up a local chapter. We illustrate various ideas and examples of what has worked well in other regions. These are guidelines and not regulations. You are free to immediately start your own ECG chapter.

# What is a Local Chapter?

An ECG local chapter is a group of individuals, which can include representatives of businesses and educational institutions, working at the local and regional level to help realize the vision of the Economy for the Common Good (ECG). By creating a local chapter, you will be helping to plant the seed of this growing movement.

Activities of a local chapter can include the following:

* Creating a core team and organizing regular meetings
* Public relations work: Events, distributing flyers, information booths, media etc.
* Creating and maintaining a network of public speakers, business consultants and auditors from your area
* Creating a local group of pioneer companies and supporting these companies in creating a Common Good Balance Sheet
* Initiating the processes to form a Common Good Municipality and a Common Good Region
* Distributing information and helping organize ECG speakers at schools, universities and other venues
* Close cooperation with ECG hubs
* Networking with other ECG local chapters in your region and with the global movement
* Organizing and facilitating peer evaluations
* Acting as a contact person for the region

# How to Form a Local Chapter?

As soon as you have found two or more individuals who want to actively support the spreading of the Economy for the Common Good, you can create an ECG local chapter. The formation proceeds in two phases; “Local Chapter in Formation” and later “Active Local Chapter”.

## Phase 1: “Local Chapter in Formation”

You can initially create a local chapter by sending in this application form (go to https://www.ecogood.org/en/english-downloads and then download “Application for the Creation of a Local Chapter”).

## Phase 2: “Active Local Chapter”

After three months your local chapter can apply for “active” status. Prerequisites are that at least five individuals in your chapter are members of one of the ECG associations. After acceptance as an “Active Local Chapter” your group will receive an email address, an email group and your own web site for your chapter.

# Active participants in a Local Chapter

Local chapters can consist of the following participants.

* Core Team
* Pioneer Companies
* Pioneer Municipalities
* Schools and universities in the region
* ECG Hubs
* Supporters
* Interested Individuals

## Core Team

Each local chapter should have a core team of individuals who make a long-term commitment to the ECG. The core team should be as diverse as possible in order to better communicate and cooperate with the community.

At the first meeting you can already create a list of jobs and responsibilities. Coordinating responsibilities should be taken on the core team.

Coordinating activities include:

* Contact person for emails, press, etc.
* Cooperation with the Vienna office of the Association for the Promotion of the Economy for the Common Good, also called ECG association in this text (contact person, participation in international meetings, etc.)
* Organizing core team meetings (invitation, facilitation, keeping the minutes)
* Taking care of the members, supporters and interested people in your area
* Making sure the central office has the correct data about your group and its members
* Administration of the local chapter’s email group

Informing members and the public about speeches and events by Christian Felber or other ECG speakers in your area. Christian’s speaking schedule is here:
www.christian-felber.at/vortraege.php

The local chapter should maintain communication with:

* Companies
* Local and regional politicians
* Media
* Schools, universities and other educational institutions
* Unions and works councils
* Civil society organizations and other NGOs
* Cultural centers
* City administration

## Pioneer Enterprises

An enterprise becomes a pioneer enterprise when it, in addition to creating a financial balance, also creates a Common Good Balance Sheet and registers as a supporting enterprise on the ECG association website. By creating a Common Good Balance Sheet, the entrepreneurs can immediately start putting the ECG model into practice. They are themselves responsible for the execution and are hereby pioneers of a values-based transformation of the economy.

## Common Good Municipalities and Regions

A municipality becomes a Common Good Municipality when it supports the overall process of the ECG through a municipal council decision, when it registers as a supporting municipality on the ECG association website and carries out at least one of the following five projects:

* Creating and publishing a Common Good Balance Sheet in public enterprises
* Inviting private enterprises to create a Common Good Balance Sheet
* Developing a municipal “Common Good Index“, a quality of life index for municipalities
* Promoting a „Municipal Economic Convention“
* Forming a Common Good Region with other municipalities.

## ECG Hubs

Within the ECG there are various hubs, which work internationally and coordinate specific areas of responsibility, for example:

* The Public Speakers Hub spreads the idea of the ECG in lectures, panel discussions, seminars and workshops.
* The Business Consultants Hub supports enterprises in creating a Common Good Balance Sheet. They also support the change processes which lead to better balance results and contribute to the further development of the Common Good Balance Sheet.
* The Auditors Hub checks the Common Good Balance Sheet results of the pioneers (in the same way that conventional auditors check the financial balance).

You will find further ECG hubs here:

<https://www.ecogood.org/en/general-information/ecg-movement/hubs>

## Supporters and Association Members

Private individuals, enterprises, associations, organizations and politicians can publicly support the ECG by registering on the website through this link: <https://www.ecogood.org/en/get-involved>

They will then be listed on the website as official supporters.

In July 2011 the „Association for the Promotion of the Economy for the Common Good“ was created in Vienna, with the task to support and coordinate the local chapters and hubs. Membership is open to natural and legal persons and can be applied for online: <https://www.ecogood.org/en/get-involved>

For natural persons, the minimum membership fee is 60€ per year. The contribution for enterprises is determined according to the number of employees. For details, see here: <https://www.ecogood.org/en/support-and-get-involved/business/become-member>

## Interested Individuals

Interested individuals can sign up for the newsletter through the website. They will receive general ECG updates. If they also sign up for news concerning a specific local chapter, they will be provided with important information from its coordination team.

# Cooperation and Activities within the Local Chapter

## Communication and Decision-Making

A communication culture based on honest and appreciative exchange has proven to be extremely helpful. Mindful communication methods such as dialogue, active listening, speaking from the heart, non-violent communication and innovative decision-making methods, such as consensus, consent, systemic consensus etc., can strengthen a constructive and rewarding cooperation. When the foundation for discussions is positive, it is easier to find consensus and to arrive at viable solutions.

## Managing Conflicts

The members of the local chapter commit to a readiness to solve conflicts, even when a conflict isn't seen at first.

Step 1: Commitment to talks between the conflicting parties

Step 2: Calling in a neutral person of trust from the local chapter / hub

Step 3: Mediation through the Facilitators Hub or external mediation

When 1+2+3 have not brought a solution:

Step 4: Exclusion from the respective local chapter / hub by the ordinary members of the local chapter / hub through systemic consensus

Step 5: If it concerns a coordinating person, finding a new person.

From step 4, the local chapter informs the concerned committees: Local chapters contact our internal coordinator. Hubs contact the International Coordinating Team (ICT).

If the local chapter is not able to carry out steps 4 and 5 on their own, the local chapter closed. Thereafter a new local chapter can be established.

In principle it is recommended that the local chapter seeks the support of the Facilitators Hub proactively.

## Meetings and Documentation

Regular core team meetings are essential for a tight cooperation within a local chapter. Core team meetings are for discussing and deciding on matters, which concerns all member of the local chapter. Individual issues can be worked on by subgroups and focus teams (see below).

Minutes and attendance lists at the meetings have proven useful.

## Division of Work

Concerning meetings, it has proven useful to keep the following separate:

* work meetings for established core teams and meetings for new interested individuals
* organizational issues and content based issues
* themes such as the economy (e.g. the balance process), society (e.g. events, media work), politics (e.g. municipalities)

For individual areas, it has proven useful to clearly define these areas of responsibility:

* enterprises
* municipality process
* events and public relations
* internal organization
* financial responsibility
* education

To be able to utilize synergy effects of regional activities, cooperation and coordination are decisive factors. They give the local chapters an added value, which benefits all participants and the whole region.

#  An Example of a Timetable for the First Year

## Starting Phase

In the first months the central task is to get the local chapter up and running:

* creating the core team, first meeting and formation of the local chapter
* formulating a common vision and mission
* creating a rough outline of an annual plan, with annual goals and milestones (events, number of pioneer enterprises and common good municipalities)
* forming relationships with the ECG association in Vienna and existing nearby local chapters
* creating a network of public speakers, business consultants and auditors
* making contact with existing and potential pioneer enterprises

## Establishment

A half a year after the first meeting a first public appearance can be planned. This can be an introductory event, presenting and strengthening the local chapter (e.g. a lecture). Thereafter the following can take place:

* public meetings for new interested individuals  enlarging the core teams
* contacting new pioneer enterprises
* accompanying the first group of enterprises through the process of creating a Common Good Balance Sheet
* finishing the balance sheet process with a press conference designed to attract further individuals and businesses → magnet effect
* enlarging the network with more public speakers, business consultants and auditors
* offering start-up help for the forming of further local chapters

## Further Steps

Nine months after the first meeting, further steps could follow, such as initiating the processes of Common Good Municipality and Common Good Region and preparing and carrying out workshops at educational institutions. You can also continue making contact with similar initiatives in the region.

## Conclusion and Outlook

A year after formation the local chapter you can maybe celebrate the creation of a first Common Good Report with a local business and the annual planning and regional strategy for the coming year can be confirmed.

# Integration into the International Movement

The International Coordination Team (ICT) is an organ of the Association for the Promotion of the Economy for the Common Good and is composed of ten members and sees itself as a support for all hubs and local chapters and works for the successful interaction of all participants.

## Coordination with the International Movement

The following key events are designed to strategically influence the work of the local chapters in accordance with the goals of the movement:

* Large meetings and events
* Press conferences
* New publications
* Communication sent to pioneer enterprises and common good municipalities
* Information about the development of auditing and business consulting
* Advertisement for other events/conventions/publications

## Participating in the International Movement

### External and internal newsletter

All local chapters are warmly welcome to contribute to the internal newsletter of the ECG association with news from their region. Short and significant paragraphs which are of interest to the general public can be sent to koordination@gemeinwohl-oekonomie.org. The newsletter is sent about every month.

### Delegates to the delegates' assembly

Local chapters can send a representative to the annual international Delegates' Assembly.

### Participating in hubs

Activists in a local chapter are also warmly welcome to participate in the various hubs in order to learn from one another and to coordinate the respective activities.

### Participating in working groups

All participants of local chapters are also welcome to actively participate in the international movement. With their ideas and know-how, they can join the various working groups of the ECG. They can also form their own working groups and find members for them.

### Participation on the website

Each local chapter can have access to their own and can thereby shape their own page. This includes putting news, photos and videos online, registering events, adding information about the team, the mission statement and activities. This way a platform is created for everyone in the region who is interested in the ECG.

### Exchange with other local chapters

It is beneficial for local chapters to engage in mutual exchange independent of the legal organization. The goal of this exchange and possible meetings (e.g. twice yearly) is learning and developing together.

## Support from the Association

The ECG association offers the following resources to the local chapters:

### Information

* a folder about the ECG (it can be ordered in paper form from at treiber@sonnendruck.com)
* the website of the ECG association with all the essential information for the ECG overall process: www.ecogood.org/en
* internal newsletter every 2 weeks. All participants of the local chapter can register directly at koordination@gemeinwohl-oekonomie.org

### Communication

* a local chapter email address, which can be managed by several people, for example, london@ecogood.org
* an email list for the internal communication within the local chapter, for example london@list.ecogood.org
* an email list for informing everyone in the region who is interested in the ECG about events, working groups, news, for example London-group@list.ecogood.org
* Access to the ECG website for all active people in the local chapter

### Further support

* Support through the pool of business consultants, auditors and public speakers
* Access to the backoffice database for member administration
* Access to all documents and lecture slides

## Help Getting Started

Concerning all technical and organizational questions, such as creating email addresses, mailing lists, website management and adding calendar events, our internal coordinator is glad to be of help at koordination@gemeinwohl-oekonomie.org

**We wish you much joy, creativity and successful cooperation in your local chapter!**