



Regional and Local Economic Development Course: Cluster Strategy and Regional Competitiveness

9 – 13 November 2026

Barcelona - Eixample district four-star



Regional and Local Economic Development Course: Cluster Strategy and Regional Competitiveness

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Introduction:

Regional and local economic development, covering cluster strategy and regional competitiveness, is a 5-day course for development authority, municipal economic development and chamber staff that ends with a costed Regional Economic Development Plan and partnership governance model for a case region. Many regions publish growth visions without reading their economic base, so support is spread thinly and lagging districts fall further behind. Nominees already prepare economic strategies, sector studies or business support schemes, and build location quotient, shift-share and costing models on case regional data. CoreConcept Training Center delivers this regional and local economic development course.

Course Objectives:

- Diagnose a region's economic base with employment, output and business demography data, location quotients and shift-share decomposition
- Map candidate clusters and screen them against specialisation, growth, linkage and capability evidence to select priority clusters
- Design cluster initiatives, supplier development and SME support schemes that address the binding constraints of each priority cluster
- Plan enabling economic infrastructure and skills supply against the demand that selected clusters and lagging districts will generate
- Cost, phase and fund a portfolio of regional development projects and test it for balanced growth between core and lagging districts
- Set up a partnership governance model with government, private sector and universities, and a results framework to track the regional plan

Target Audience:

- Development authority staff responsible for preparing regional economic strategies and sector priorities
 - Municipal economic development staff responsible for local business support, employment initiatives and job creation targets
 - Chamber of commerce and business association staff responsible for member sector groups and policy advocacy
 - Cluster and SME programme staff responsible for supplier development, enterprise support and business networks
 - Economic research and statistics staff responsible for regional data, indicators and impact evaluation
 - Planning and budgeting staff responsible for prioritising and costing regional capital and programme budgets
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Course Outline:

Day 1: Regional Economic Base and Competitiveness Diagnosis

- Place-Based Development Approach and Regional Disparity Indicators
- Regional Economic Profile From Employment, Output and Firm Data
- Location Quotient Calculation for Basic and Non-Basic Sectors
- Shift-Share Decomposition Into National, Industry Mix and Competitive Effects
- Regional Competitiveness Scorecard Covering Productivity, Skills and Connectivity

Day 2: Cluster Mapping, Specialisation and Priority Selection

- Porter Cluster Model and Regional Value Chain Linkages
- Cluster Mapping With Industry Codes and Co-Location Patterns
- Esteban-Marquillas Allocation Effect for Specialisation Testing
- Multi-Criteria Cluster Screening Matrix With Weighted Evidence
- Stakeholder Validation Workshop Design for Shortlisted Clusters

Day 3: Cluster Initiatives, SME Support and Skills Supply

- Cluster Initiative Charter With Facilitator Role and Membership Rules
- Supplier Development and Local Content Linkage Programme Design
- SME Support Menu Covering Finance Access, Advisory and Incubation
- Skills Demand Forecast and Training Provider Alignment Plan
- Enabling Economic Infrastructure Gap List by Priority Cluster

Day 4: Balanced Growth, Funding Risk and Partnership Governance

- Lagging District Targeting and Spatial Equity Weighting Rules
- Project Portfolio Costing With Capital and Recurrent Budget Lines
- Funding Mix Matrix Across Public Budgets, Partners and Users
- Government, Industry and University Partnership Board Terms of Reference
- Results Framework With Baselines, Targets and Attribution Limits

Day 5: Modelling Build for a Costed Regional Economic Development Plan

- Case Region Data Pack and Economic Base Model Build
 - Priority Cluster Selection and Intervention Logic for the Case
 - Phased Project Cost Schedule and Funding Mix Spreadsheet
 - Regional Plan Risk Register and Balanced Growth Stress Test
 - Costed Regional Plan Completion and Partnership Board Review
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Skills You Will Gain:

- Economic Base Analysis
- Shift-Share Interpretation
- Cluster Mapping
- Cluster Prioritisation
- SME Support Scheme Design
- Regional Skills Planning
- Development Project Costing
- Partnership Governance Design

Why Attend This Course:

- Deliver a costed Regional Economic Development Plan for a case region to the development authority board or the regional partnership council for approval
- Decide which clusters warrant public support and which sectors should be left to market forces, based on specialisation and growth evidence
- Avoid funding infrastructure, incentives and training that no priority cluster needs, and the widening gap between core and lagging districts
- Share location quotient and shift-share templates, cluster screening matrices and project costing sheets with research and planning colleagues

Conclusion:

Back at work, the participant presents the costed Regional Economic Development Plan to the development authority board, the municipal executive or the regional partnership council. They use it to confirm priority clusters, approve the first tranche of infrastructure, skills and SME projects and assign roles to government, industry and university partners. After the first annual review, the team should rerun the location quotient and shift-share models, compare employment and firm formation in target clusters and lagging districts against the baseline, and reallocate funding where results lag.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should participants know before the regional and local economic development course?

Participants should already work on economic strategies, sector studies, business support or capital budgets and be comfortable with spreadsheets. No econometrics background is expected. Bringing anonymised regional employment or business data helps them apply the modelling build to their own region.

How does regional and local economic development differ from an investment promotion or special economic zone course?

This course plans the growth of a whole regional economy: diagnosing its base, choosing clusters and funding skills, SME and infrastructure projects. Investment promotion courses focus on attracting individual investors, and zone courses focus on developing and operating a single bounded site.

Why do location quotients and shift-share analysis matter in regional and local economic development?

They show which sectors a region already specialises in and whether its growth comes from national trends, a favourable industry mix or genuine local competitiveness. That evidence keeps cluster choices and public spending focused on real regional strengths.

What do participants take back from the regional and local economic development course?

Participants take back a costed Regional Economic Development Plan for a case region, with an economic base model, cluster screening matrix, project cost schedule, funding mix and partnership governance terms they can adapt for their own authority or chamber.
