

# Growing a Smart Investment Ecosystem

Breakout Group C.  
September 22, 2010

# About the participants

- There were 17 participants in this breakout session
- Participants represented a cross-section of state economic development, federal manufacturing support, policy think tanks, investor groups, private companies, and higher education
- At least five states were represented

## Consensus around priorities

The following was a top priority among the group for supporting the Midwest's new energy economy:

- Creating a regional marketing plan that combines:
  - Collectively making the case for alternative energy investments in the Midwest versus the east and west coasts
  - Showcasing investment opportunities (e.g., investment events, competitions, etc.)
  - Making state and other resources more transparent/findable for entrepreneurs

# Creating a regional marketing plan

- Action items to consider include:
  - Idea crossing (jump start program)
  - Cross-training a core center of agency staff that are capable of promoting state and regional opportunities
  - Social networking (i.e., youngstown state university incubator reaching out to alumni re: eship and business development)
  - Establishing an e-ship infrastructure related to the quantity and quality of deals – focusing on getting people ready for venture capital – emphasizing deal flow and different initiatives that are being pursued

# Creating a regional marketing plan

Other things to think about:

- Regional mktg plan for whom? There are many potential customers and target audiences—there could be a multi-pronged approach:
  - manufacturers, technology developers, and investors
- Efforts should include messaging related to empowering entrepreneurs and helping them connect the dots, make matches – encouraging and supporting risk taking (creating a culture of e-ship around new energy)

# Creating a regional marketing plan

Key elements of a plan will consider:

- Promoting and leveraging all of the assets in the region – making these more transparent, raising awareness, talking about success stories
- Audiences: tech transfer offices, investors inside and outside Midwest, foundations
- Making the business case for why its a great region to invest in
- Pure Michigan campaign as an example of the type of effective one (Pure “Midwest”)
- Making a business case for state legislators and other policymakers re: need to work together as a region
  - Easily understood materials that can be shared with legislators and other policymakers regarding support for different policies (individual state and regionally aligned policies)
- Connecting state level business competitions into a regional promotional campaign

# Other high priorities

There also was significant interest around the following:

- Sharing exemplary practices/forming communities of practice (**8 mentions combined**)
  - How to address manufacturing in new energy/clean tech—building bridges between R&D and production
  - Removing technical and regulatory barriers
  - Common policies/practices that grow market demand
  - State investment policies and programs
  - NOTE: Should include a strong mentorship network (to implement programs and states and communities)
- A new regional investment mechanism (i.e., fund of funds) – leveraging practices from other states outside of the Midwest (e.g., ben franklin centers that integrate economic development and investment strategies) (**3 mentions**)
- Organizing investment groups (specific to new energy/clean tech; affinity network) (**3 mentions**)

## Other ideas people shared

- Establishing a goal to integrate new energy into solicitations and RFPs of all types (make the policy strategies ubiquitous)
- Organizing around low hanging fruit: federal legislation, r&d tax credits, state small business credit initiative
- Tax credit reciprocity across the region
- Programmatic environmental impact statements that would be region-wide; regional approach to streamlining regulatory requirements
- Requiring the inclusion of lending for clean energy in federal funding programs