



European Union  
Regional Policy



# Regions for economic change

EN



## Sharing excellence



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## Foreword

European regions and cities are home to world leaders and trend-setters across all the themes of the Lisbon Growth and Jobs Agenda: in relation to innovation, research, exploitation of renewable energies, sustainable transport, health - to name but a few. One of the main objectives of Cohesion Policy is to encourage the sharing of the excellence present in those regions and cities throughout Europe.

The 'Regions For Economic Change' initiative, launched on 8 November 2006, brings together key tools to achieve this objective. Its aim is to ensure that the wealth of experience and good practice which exists in Europe's regions in a wide range of policy areas is shared as widely as possible and exploited fully to promote competitiveness, growth and job creation. This conference - 'Regions For Economic Change: Sharing Excellence' - is the second annual spring conference to be organised jointly between the Commission and the Committee of the Regions. It marks just over a year of implementation and will provide us with the first opportunity to recognise good practice in the regions through the presentation of the 2008 RegioStars awards.



A major achievement of this first year of implementation has been the adoption of the two programmes through which the networking activities of Regions For Economic Change will be supported (INTERREG IVC and URBACT II) and of the Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment and Territorial Cooperation programmes. It is through those latter programmes that the mainstreaming of the good ideas and practices emanating from the networking programmes will take place. 2007 also saw the INTERREG IIIC and URBACT I programmes take the initiative, in partnership with the Commission, to test out certain aspects of the 'fast track' approach with remaining funds, thus providing a valuable learning experience for the implementation of the 'fast track' through the 2007-2013 programmes. And, last but not least, the Commission has been making internal preparations so as to be ready to offer its support to a number of 'fast track' networks which will start their work during 2008.

The first calls for projects for the INTERREG IVC and URBACT II programmes are now closed and the programmes' selection procedures are underway. The first 'Regions For Economic Change' projects will start work under INTERREG IVC in early summer and under URBACT II by this autumn. At this conference our main aim is to provide a forum to help us prepare for this work and particularly the work that will take place in 'fast track' projects: to demonstrate how good ideas from networking can be translated into programmes and policy. We wish to highlight the positive synergies that can be created between participants in networks and managers responsible for deciding on investment projects in the context of cohesion policy. Our objective is that you will leave the conference having learned more about sharing excellence and convinced of the value of making that extra effort to translate good ideas into action.

**Danuta Hübner**

Member of the European Commission responsible for Regional Policy

## Regions For Economic Change in 2007: working together to lay the foundations for success

### Regions For Economic Change: Partnership in Action

On 8 November 2006, the Commission adopted the Communication on Regions For Economic Change<sup>1</sup> which aims to address together some of the core issues that Europe is facing and make a stronger link between the exchange of good practices developed in the interregional cooperation (INTERREG IVC)/urban development network (URBACT II) programmes and the main body of funding in the Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment and European Territorial Cooperation operational programmes.

To help achieve these aims, Regions For Economic Change introduces the following four elements:

- Identification of 30 **themes** focused on economic modernisation and the renewed Lisbon agenda. Regions will be asked to conceive and structure their networks around these themes, (but can still choose other themes if they prefer);
- Emphasis on a **two-way bridge** between thematic networking activities and the mainstream programmes of the Structural Funds (Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment and European Territorial Cooperation);
- An **enhanced joint communication effort**, including an annual conference, annual innovation awards (the RegioStars) and case studies of good practice;
- A **fast track option**, where the Commission will offer its expertise to a number of networks funded under the interregional cooperation (INTERREG IVC) and urban development network (URBACT II) programmes. The participation of mainstream programme Managing Authorities in the networks and the demonstrated commitment of network partners to the 'two-way bridge' will be essential requirements of the 'fast track option' ensuring proactive introduction of best practice ideas into these mainstream programmes.

2007 was the first full year of implementation of the Regions For Economic Change initiative. A major objective of this first year has been to ensure optimal conditions for the initiative's implementation through the 2007-2013 regional policy programmes. The Commission, Member States, regions and other partners, including the Committee of the Regions, have worked together to ensure that Regions For Economic Change is fully integrated into the programming context, that the Commission will be able to offer its support to those 'fast track' networks where it can add the most value, and that the initiative is widely publicised so that as many regions as possible participate and bring forward high quality proposals for networks to the INTERREG IVC and URBACT II programmes.

### The programming context: building the two-way bridge

The networking activities of Regions For Economic Change and its 'fast track' option will be delivered through the INTERREG IVC and URBACT II programmes, and the mainstreaming activities of Regions For Economic Change through the Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment and Territorial Cooperation programmes.

During 2007, the programming context for Regions For Economic change was established. The INTERREG IVC programme was adopted on 11 September 2007 and the first call for projects opened on 21 September with a deadline of 15 January 2008. The URBACT II programme was adopted on 2 October 2007 and the first call for projects opened on 3 December 2007 with a deadline of 15 February 2008. Both INTERREG IVC and URBACT II operational programmes fully integrate the Regions For Economic Change priority themes – 23 in INTERREG IVC and 7 in URBACT II - and the possibility of funding 'fast track' networks.



Cross-border cooperation in growing vegetables, Ravensburg, Germany.

<sup>1</sup> COM (2006) 675 / SEC (2006) 1432 of 8 November 2006



Tots After School Caring, Glasgow, United Kingdom.

The majority of mainstream Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment and Territorial Cooperation programmes were adopted by the end of 2007. Of these programmes, 130 include a specific Regions For Economic Change clause, while many other programmes, given their scope, can facilitate the mainstreaming of networking results. This means that there is willingness and enormous potential for taking the good ideas emanating from the network programmes and translating them into concrete actions funded through the mainstream programmes.

### **Transparent procedures: how will the 'fast track' work?**

The Commission has listened carefully to feedback from Member States, regions and other partners and worked hard in 2007 to ensure that Regions For Economic Change will work in a clear and transparent way, and that the Commission will offer its support to those networks where it can add the most value.

The usual programme procedures will apply for the selection of projects for funding under the INTERREG IVC and URBACT II programmes. Each project application will be processed by the relevant programme on the basis of quality criteria decided by the Monitoring Committee. At the same time, the applications will be

made available to all members of the Monitoring Committee, including the Commission.

In order to identify the 'fast track' projects to which it will 'opt in' and offer its support, the Commission has developed some assessment questions that we will use to guide us through the process. These have been posted on the Regions For Economic Change website and will be used flexibly in identifying projects as relevant for the 'fast track' option.

The two parallel strands – selecting projects for financing by the relevant programme bodies, and the Commission considering which projects it will offer to support – will be brought together when the Monitoring Committees decide on projects. The Monitoring Committees will know in advance whether the projects it selects will be labelled as 'fast track' or not.

One of the assessment questions to be used by the Commission to help guide its choice of networks it will offer support to concerns the theme under which the network application is submitted. The Commission is keen to ensure that it offers its support to the themes and networks where it can best add value. During 2007, and taking into account the particular features of both networking programmes, it undertook an internal exercise to designate around half of the 30 themes on which it would be particularly interested in offering support to networks during the first round of calls:

# Regions For Economic Change: Sharing Excellence

- Improving air quality
- Moving to a low-carbon economy
- Healthy communities
- Urban transport
- Energy efficient housing stock
- Improving monitoring of environment and security by and for the regions
- Improving the capacity of regions for research and innovation
- Bringing innovative ideas to the market more quickly
- Better ICT connections
- Meeting the demographic challenge
- Integrating marginalised youth
- Managing migration, facilitating social integration
- Managing coastal zones
- Reaping the benefits of the sea
- Achieving sustainable urban development
- Re-using brownfield and waste disposal sites



**New hospital providing a wide range of health care, Viseu, Portugal.**

As the description of the themes in the staff working paper is in some cases rather broad, the Commission has attempted to specify the areas of these designated themes in which it would be particularly interested in developing fast track networks. The Commission services have also identified on a sample basis existing projects, networks and source documents that may inspire potential partners in developing networking projects. For each of the above themes, the Commission has therefore developed a thematic fiche, available on the Regions For Economic Change website.

However, this list of themes is not exclusive, and the Commission will not hesitate to offer its support to projects under other themes where it feels in a position to add value.

## Fast Track Assessment Questions

(The questions and a commentary on them are available on the RFEC “themes and networks” web page)

### Question

#### Regions for Economic Change themes

- Is the project partnership built on a Regions For Economic Change theme?
- Has the Regions For Economic Change theme been chosen as one of the first themes for implementation?
- Does the project contribute to the aims of Cohesion Policy?
- At this point in time, is the Commission in a position to offer its active involvement and expertise on this particular theme?

#### Wider coverage and exchange of experience

- How many regions does the partnership bring together?
- Do they ensure good coverage of European Union territory?
- Do the partners have a coherent approach?
- Have some of the partners worked together on a network project before?

#### Two-way bridge

- Does each partner propose to include policy makers and decision makers in its delegation?
- Does each partner propose to include in its delegation those responsible for follow-up in the regional programmes?
- Do the Convergence and Competitiveness programmes in each partner region include a specific link to the proposed network activities?
- Is the project partner a member of the relevant Programme Monitoring Committee?
- Are working methods envisaged that lead to ‘mainstreaming’ in the sense of Structural Funds: for example, regional action plans and reporting, which lead to the implementation of ideas, tools etc. through the Convergence, Competitiveness or other programmes?

#### Transparency and Communication

- Is a transparent working method envisaged?
- Does the project proposal include a clear focus on communication and dissemination?
- What communication activities are envisaged?

## Enhanced communication: two Regions For Economic Change conferences and the Regions For Economic Change website

Two Regions For Economic Change conferences took place in 2007. These events aimed to showcase themes where Cohesion Policy

can support the Lisbon modernisation agenda, provide examples of good practice and provide a learning opportunity for Structural Funds Managing Authorities.

### **Regional Policy responses to demographic challenges (25 – 26 January 2007)**

The purpose of the conference was to raise awareness of demographic change as a driver of socio-economic change and demonstrate how European regional policy and its instruments allow European regions to respond to the challenges and make the most of the opportunities presented by demographic change. Key speakers included Commissioners Hübner and Špidla, Presidents Dimitriadis of the EESC and Delebarre of the Committee of the Regions, as well as ministers and experts from Member States and regions. During the conference a Eurostat representative announced the latest 25-year population projections while the Committee of the Regions launched an 'Age-proofing toolkit'.

### **Fostering competitiveness through innovative technologies, products and healthy communities (7 – 8 March 2007)**

This conference aimed to facilitate the exchange of good practices for pursuing implementation of the Lisbon Strategy at regional level through cohesion instruments. Through an 'exchange and networking forum' organised in cooperation with the French region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and the Committee of the Regions, the event offered learning and networking opportunities for participants. Nine workshops showcased examples of good practice and governance in European regional policy under three themes:

- Small and medium-sized enterprises, transfer of technology and governance;
- Innovative technologies, products and markets for sustainable growth; and
- Improved regions and cities for businesses and citizens.



Windmills in Cerova, Slovakia.



Brussels, Commissioner Danuta Hübner meets representatives of the region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur in March 2007.

The conference was also the first of the annual spring Regions For Economic Change conferences and the occasion for the launch of the 'RegioStars 2008: awards for innovative projects', which aimed to identify good innovative practices in regional development in EU regions.

### **Regions For Economic Change website**

In 2007 the Regions For Economic Change website was launched and regularly updated. All documentation relating to the initiative and events supported under its banner are posted on this site, which also includes sections on frequently asked questions and information about Regions For Economic Change themes and networks.

A section on the RegioStars contains information about the awards, criteria, applications and the jury and procedures for selection. The names of the winners of the RegioStars awards will be published on the site on the second day of this conference – 26 February.

Finally, the website contains a page dedicated to case studies for practitioners of good practice projects from the 2000-2006 period. The first 40 case studies from the innovative actions programmes published on this website in 2007 will be added to during 2008 with case studies of all the short-listed RegioStars candidates and many more from the Objective 1 and Objective 2 programmes.

**The website can be found at the address:**  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index_en.cfm)

## Regions For Economic Change in 2007: piloting fast track

During 2007, the INTERREG IIIC West and URBACT I programmes took the initiative, in partnership with the Commission, to test out certain aspects of the 'fast track' approach with remaining funds, thus providing a valuable learning experience for implementation of the 'fast track' through the 2007-2013 programmes. This testing phase was carried out by one project under the INTERREG IIIC West Programme – 'CLOE' (Clusters Linked Over Europe) – and two projects under URBACT I – 'MILE' (Managing migration and Integration at local LEvel) and 'URBAMECO' (Creating Competitiveness & Social Cohesion in Deprived Urban Areas). The three projects built on the experience of existing projects funded under the INTERREG IIIC and URBACT I programmes and tested the following 'fast track' aspects:

- Broadening the partnership, in particular to include partners from new Member States;
- Establishing the two-way bridge by ensuring the participation of Managing Authorities; and
- Development of methodologies to enable the translation of the good ideas into actions through the mainstream Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment and European Territorial Cooperation programmes.

### **'Clusters Linked Over Europe' (CLOE) – A European Network of Excellence for Cluster Management, Matching and Promotion**

CLOE was an INTERREG III C project led by the Office of Economic Development of Karlsruhe which gained prominence through its work on development and network arrangements created around clusters. In particular, the project developed a 'Cluster Management Guide – Guidelines for the Development and Management of Cluster Initiatives'; a practical handbook giving an overview of essential tasks to be undertaken within cluster management and designed to help regional actors, cluster and project managers and their supporting staff to develop and manage cluster activities.

The project was extended and a further budget of €800,000 (€472,000 ERDF) granted by the INTERREG West IIIC Monitoring Committee in March 2007 with the aims of increasing the number of representatives from new Member States, broadening the partnership to create 'deep delegations' (include the Managing Authorities) and establishing action plans to ensure the translation of the network's outputs into actions through the mainstream programmes.

Several Commission services (Regional Policy, Enterprise, Research and Information Society Directorates-General) were involved in partnership in the process on the following aspects: analysing the work programme, supporting the involvement of the Managing Authorities and helping to ensure links with the relevant operational programmes aimed at developing an action plan for each region to

support the development or consolidation of clusters, including an analysis of financial needs.

Eleven new partners, mainly from the new Member States, joined the seven initial EU partners to take part in the experimentation. The new partners came from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, and included an innovation centre, as well as Regional Development Agencies and city and regional authorities.



**Training of workers in double glazing production, Petrosani, Romania.**

Following identification of the new partners, Regional Policy Directorate-General desk officers played an important role in helping to establish the involvement of Managing Authorities and the link with the relevant operational programmes for both original and new partners, especially in cases where the project partner was having some difficulties in establishing the necessary contacts.

To consolidate these links, the project partners also developed a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding, setting out that both project partner and Managing Authority would make the necessary arrangements for the best practice identified through the work of CLOE to be fed into the Convergence or Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programme as appropriate (for example through participation of the project in meeting(s) of the relevant Programme Monitoring Committee). Most of the 18 EU partners and Managing Authorities signed their bilateral Memoranda of Understanding during a high level event organised by the Baden Wurttemberg Region in Brussels on 19 September 2007.

To ensure transparency in the procedures of the network and its actions as highlighted in the Regions For Economic Change Communication, the Regional Policy Directorate-General requested that the Lead Partner construct a specific area of the CLOE website dedicated to its 'pilot fast track' work. This new section contains the partners and regions, the CLOE work programme, progress reports, recommendation papers and action plans, as well as information on all the CLOE events, open to any interested participants.

**Lessons Learned:** The process has not been straightforward but has demonstrated the advantages of establishing a close relationship within and among regions, their representatives and the Commission Services. The organisation of extra 'regular' meetings, or 'steering committees' at the same time as the CLOE seminars has proved invaluable in helping to develop the relational capital, establish and check benchmarks, assess work done and establish a culture of peer assessment of partners' work.

The Lead Partner is required to perform more demanding activities in this kind of 'fast track' project because it has to act as an 'animator' of the activities, establish and check deadlines and disseminate results to all partners. The role and commitment of the Commission is instrumental in facilitating the establishment of dialogue with the Managing Authorities, offering expert support consistent with EU policies and targets, helping to establish milestones and the focus on a results-oriented process, and encouraging the culture of peer review.

## MILE: Managing Migration and Integration at Local Level – Cities and Regions

Building on the experience of the UDIEX-ALEP project, the MILE network addresses the issues of migration and integration in order

to assist partner cities in developing and identifying good practice project proposals for possible funding from ERDF, ESF or other EU or national sources of funding.

The partnership has brought together 10 cities and 10 Managing Authorities covering seven European countries from both Convergence and Regional Competitiveness and Employment regions; namely: the cities of Venice - Lead Partner - and Turin (Italy), the District of Charlois in Rotterdam (Netherlands), Vantaa (Finland), Timisoara (Romania), Komotini and Nea Alikarnassos (Greece), Amadora (Portugal), Seville and Herrera de los Navarros (Spain).

A mapping exercise was undertaken at both European Union and city/regional level in order to provide partners with an overview of policy development in relation to immigration and integration, and also to identify the specific needs of the cities in relation to these themes and the possibilities of funding within ERDF and ESF Programmes. The analysis of the local mapping led to the identification of four sub-themes: enterprise development for ethnic minorities, active inclusion in the labour market, cultural diversity, and access to education, health and housing services.

The methodological approach proposed by the pilot network is based on the development of an Action Learning Set (ALS) for each sub-theme. The ALS is a trans-national exchange programme for over 90 key actors from 10 cities and their Managing Authorities, organised around a first exchange workshop followed by the development of a specific action plan and a final workshop to present the results achieved. Each ALS is designed to last between five and six months and should ensure dissemination of the results both at local and European level.

**Lessons learned:** Demographic change linked to increasing migration flows is having a visible impact on all partner cities and there is a need to develop more integrated responses at local, regional and EU levels. Policy and legislative frameworks are determined at national level, however, the impact is at a local/regional level. There is a need to empower local/regional stakeholders to ensure more effective integration. The 'fast track' approach provides such an empowerment route for key actors.

'Fast track' has created for the first time a communication link directly between the URBACT Secretariat, the Commission and the Lead Partner. This has been critical in helping to define a clear structure of the pilot in both phases and creating a stronger "buy in" into the project.

The establishment of a partnership with the Managing Authorities as well as partner cities and regions has resulted in work to create local action plans which will have wider ownership and reflect agreed local/regional needs. This process has also helped to highlight the framework and possibilities afforded by ERDF and ESF operational programmes as well as other EU programmes.



Infrastructure investments, road from Riga to Russia, Estonia.



New tram in city centre, Valencia, Spain.

## URBAMECO: Creating Competitiveness & Social Cohesion in Deprived Urban Areas

Building on the experience of the REGENERA project, the URBAMECO network has brought together partners from France, Great Britain, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Sweden. In each of the participating regions and cities, there are deprived urban areas that are in need of integrated and sustainable regeneration.

The URBAMECO partners have designed an innovative approach that links the objectives of competitiveness and cohesion at a neighbourhood level. For each city and its surrounding regions, the first step is to undertake market research to identify sectors and potentials of growth. The next step is a structured analysis to define elements of potential growth that can be realised in the project's target areas. Local Action Plans are then prepared to design the way forward – a strategy to convert regional and local growth potential into actual growth incentives for deprived urban areas.

This approach is designed to lead to new job opportunities, more income and more money circulating in the project's target areas, making a contribution to the functional re-integration of these areas and their population into the economic life of the cities and their surrounding region.

The work of each participating Managing Authority and city is supported by international training (Market Research) and coaching (Development of Integrated Action Plans and Delivery Strategies) and will lead to new and innovative strategic approaches that can subsequently be applied across all participating cities and regions.

**Lessons learned:** Multi-level governance has brought real added value to the work of the URBAMECO 'pilot fast track' network. For the network partners, the close cooperation between cities and responsible regional and/or national Managing Authorities, along with the involvement of Commission services, has been identified as being crucial in the 'fast track' process. Partners are very confident that local action plans will help to connect jointly developed implementation projects with funding opportunities in EU Structural Funds programmes.

Furthermore, linking experience from the local and regional level with European policy development is expected to positively influence the current and future generation of Structural Funds actions.

Partners agree that, during the process, cities need to pay attention to the continuous involvement of Managing Authorities; a situation where these Managing Authorities are only presented with finalised Local Actions Plans at the end of the process should be avoided. At the same time, Managing Authorities need to bring the right people on board – officials in charge of the relevant themes or programme. Network partners would also appreciate a joint leadership between the Lead Partner city and its Managing Authority to visibly demonstrate the joint approach and facilitate the involvement of other Managing Authorities in the networks.

## RegioStars Awards 2008



RegioStars 2008 was launched by Commissioner Hübner in March 2007 during the first annual Regions For Economic Change spring conference. At the time, Mrs Hübner explained that the main objective of RegioStars 2008 was

to identify good innovative practices in regional development within the 268 regions of the EU. The aim was to highlight original and innovative projects which could be attractive and inspiring to other regions. The themes chosen for the RegioStars 2008 were Regional Economies Based on Knowledge and Technological Innovation and Sustainable Economic Development.

In total, 71 eligible applications were submitted by 18 Member States. These applications were examined by DG Regional Policy and by the RegioStars jury and as a result 26 applications were short-listed. DG Regional Policy has worked with these 26 projects in order to produce case studies which will be included on the Inforegio website. A brief description of all the short-listed projects is provided below.

The RegioStars 2009 Awards are being launched at this conference. More information on the themes and eligibility criteria can be found on the website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/regiostars\\_en.cfm?nmenu=4](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/regiostars_en.cfm?nmenu=4)

### **EnergiekompetenzPLUS – Energy Competence Centre Böbingen an der Rems**

**Baden-Württemberg, Germany**

The objective of EnergiekompetenzPLUS is to bring low-energy construction techniques to citizens and companies in the region through a show property, to demonstrate both residential and commercial innovation in resource-saving techniques for low-energy consumption. The project has also established a cooperation network of companies as well as a training centre for craftsmen and architects.

### **Floating Autonomous Environmental Friendly and Efficient Desalination Unit**

**Greece**

This is a floating platform in the Aegean Sea that uses energy provided from renewable sources to produce drinking water for the islands from sea water. The energy to desalinate the sea water is provided by a wind generator and a photovoltaic system.

### **Optimisation of the Socorridos hydropower station**

**Autonomous Region of Madeira, Portugal**

This project is based on the optimisation of the Socorridos Hydroelectric Power Station in use since 1995, with its transformation into a reversible system, to enable it to take advantage of the power capacity (3x8 MW) at any time of the year, regardless of rainfall. The system also provides for lower losses and higher reliability in both systems (water and energy), and contributes to the installation of additional renewable power.

### **SmartLIFE**

**INTERREG III B North Sea – Cambridgeshire – United Kingdom (Lead Partner), Malmö – Sweden, Hamburg – Germany**

SmartLIFE saw training centres set up, projects showcased and intensive research carried out into best-practice construction techniques in order to deliver affordable, energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable housing in the three regions.

### **ENERGIVIE**

**Alsace, France**

ENERGIVIE encourages the demand for renewable energies-related equipment through both a comprehensive communication campaign and advisory services for local authorities. It also contributes to providing a better offer in the region (e.g., upgrading existing professionals' skills and preparing future professionals in the solar, wood-energy and construction sectors), conducting experiments (e.g. low-energy consumption buildings in Mulhouse) and carrying out studies (biofuels, biogas and geothermal energy).

### **The Advance Project**

**London, United Kingdom**

The Advance project has provided SMEs across the London Objective 2 areas with comprehensive guidance and support services on environmental technology implementation, linking innovation and the environment and supporting the growth of the SMEs through improvements in product, process and environmental performance.

### **Arcelor Mittal**

**Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France**

The aim of the project was to make a contribution to the substantial reduction of atmospheric emissions from the Arcelor-Mittal facilities in Fos-sur-Mer by implementing innovative technologies both for replacing the incineration of ammonia stack effluent by desulphurisation and for dust extraction of iron ore.

## Øresund Science Region – Cross-border triple helix collaboration

**INTERREG – Øresund Sweden (Lead Partner) and Denmark**

The project is organised around innovation platforms that create linkages between 14 universities, regional authorities and companies around the Swedish-Danish border region of Øresund in identified core competencies. The platforms are established in the areas of life science, environment, ICT, food science, logistics, nano, digital entertainment and humanities.

## DIALOGUES (incorporating Nexxus)

**Western Scotland – United Kingdom**

The aim of the project is to work towards the creation of high-quality employment opportunities and collaborative ventures with strong links to the educational system. The objectives are to increase investment activities in R&D and the biotechnology sector, linking the research base with SMEs and encouraging academics to work with SMEs.

## Cluster Eco-construction

**Province de Namur, Belgium**

The development strategy for the eco-construction sector was initiated in 2002 in the Namur region with a view to swift expansion to the whole of Wallonia. The cluster manages exchanges of experiences and partnerships between companies, and puts together proposals for projects, investments and promotional policy. The project has made it possible to accelerate the market trends of eco-construction in Wallonia and other European regions.

## Regional Innovation System

**Upper Austria**

The aim of this Innovative Actions Programme was to further develop the region's innovation support system by setting up a number of cross-sectoral networks between companies and public actors in the existing clusters. The programme has brought together many parties from the public and private sectors and academia to network and run pilot projects in the areas of human resources, research & technological innovation, logistics and design & media.

## Mobient

**Oulu Region, Finland**

The objective of Mobient was to help the networking of content and media SMEs and give small-scale financing to pilot productions and marketing. The project supported product development, marketing, selling and distribution of digital media products, consulting and training for SMEs as well as the use of intellectual property rights. SMEs were assisted in product development and marketing projects as well as provision of networking.

## OpTIC Technium (Optronics Technology and Incubation Centre)

**Wales, United Kingdom**

This project aims to grow existing businesses and to attract inward investment to further strengthen the existing opto-electronics cluster in the region and thus to create high-quality job opportunities. OpTIC Technium offers business support and assistance to start-ups, incubator services to house new or relocating companies and a technology centre for innovating new opto-electronic products and processes.

## Region-Enterprises Forum on Logistics

**INTERREG – Emilia-Romagna (Lead Partner) Italy**

The Forum is a public-private interface between the relevant local, provincial and regional public actors, manufacturing and transport companies as well as universities, for better policy making and the promotion of innovation in transport and logistics. The Forum aims to enhance vertical and horizontal cooperation among enterprises to rationalise and pool their demand for transport and logistics services, thus reducing transport costs, pollution and traffic congestion.

## TECHNOFIT PRO 2005

**Styria, Austria**

Targeting a specific group – SMEs in peripheral Styrian areas less experienced with R&D partnerships – the project aims to provide innovation support and initiate new science-SME pilot projects. The TECHNOFIT PRO partners (representing the four largest Styrian research institutions) have achieved this through awareness raising events, 'on-the-shop-floor' audits, 'quick fix' meetings with academic experts and initiating first-time projects using existing R&D funding schemes.

## Embedded Internet System

**Norra Norrland, Sweden**

EIS (Embedded Internet System) relates to the production of smart products by adding computing capabilities and communication possibilities through the Internet. This means that, by including this technology in any product, information can be measured or received and systems overseen remotely through the web.

## CeRDT

**Province de Hainaut, Belgium**

The Centre of Research & Development Promotion & Technologies in Hainaut was launched to assist SMEs (all sectors) in the region in innovating and/or improving their products, services and methods. During the period 2002-2007, nearly 700 SMEs received personal support from the CeRDT, with 415 enterprises presenting one or more projects.

## HySy Vision

### Piedmont, Italy

The main goal of HySy Vision was to support the creation and strengthening of the hydrogen chain in the Piedmont region. The project has taken the hydrogen chain, broken it down into its component parts and looked at SMEs in the region that might be able to produce or innovate. Successful pilot projects have been run with the SMEs and the project's partners.

## Competence Centre of Wing System Simulation and Wind Tunnel Verification – CCTS

### Schleswig-Holstein, Germany

The focus of this project was the process development for aerodynamic investigation and optimisation of wing systems (e.g. wind turbines or yacht sails) in natural wind currents. One of the main products of the project was the design and construction of a new twist flow wind tunnel for testing sailing yachts and other wind driven systems.

## Innovation Assistant

### Lower Austria

Niederösterreich piloted a scheme to encourage SMEs to employ recent graduates in order to strengthen their technological and innovation competence. Targeting small SMEs and those in rural areas, the project provided support for an Innovation Assistant to work on a specific innovation project.

## EnviroINNOVATE

### West Midlands, United Kingdom

EnviroINNOVATE made positive linkage between innovation resources within universities and the region's SME population in the growing field of environmental technologies. It did this by enabling SMEs to link to specific expertise for developing innovative products. The programme assisted 116 companies and supported the economic regeneration of the region's industry.

## Centre for Technology Transfer (CTT) in Torun

### Kujavie-Pomeranie, Poland

The project addressed the issues of performance in the field of new technologies by SMEs, management and a qualified work force. It aimed to deliver affordable, high-quality office, technological and industrial space for entrepreneurs and establish continuous cooperation with higher education institutions in the region.

## Incubator-Technology Centre

### Lower Silesia, Poland

The main objective of this project was to stimulate the advanced technologies industry. The aims were to help increase the transfer of new technologies to existing and newly established business units, commercialise results of scientific research and promote regional pro-innovative entities.

## EpiCentre (Electronics, Production and Innovation Technology Centre)

### INTERREG, Northern Ireland (Lead Partner) – United Kingdom

EpiCentre aims to build innovation and technology transfer capabilities in the Northwest cross-border region of Ireland. The centre focuses on the development of a strong industrial research base through the integration of existing capabilities in the three tertiary level education providers.

## Matching Technologies and Opportunities (MATEO)

### INTERREG – Catalonia - Spain (Lead Partner), Noord-Brabant – Netherlands, Lombardy – Italy, South-West Bohemia – Czech Republic

The main objective of MATEO was to develop and execute collaborative subprojects that stimulate regional innovation through close cooperation between entities from the four participating regions. The eight specific themes of the subprojects are: food, biotech, aerospace, advanced materials, pharma & medical technologies, mechatronics, renewable energies and process & production technologies.

## Centres for Industrial Collaboration (CIC)

### Yorkshire and the Humber, United Kingdom

This project was set up to help businesses harness the intellectual strengths and technical expertise of regional universities. The CICs facilitate the transfer of skills and technology from universities to small and large companies, encouraging greater levels of industrial innovation, research & development.

# Regions For Economic Change 2008

## Sharing Excellence

The aim of "Regions For Economic Change" is to address core issues facing Europe by building a stronger link between the exchange of good practices in EU networking programmes (INTERREG IV C and URBACT II) and the main body of EU cohesion funding in national and regional operational programmes. To achieve this aim, Regions For Economic Change has introduced four elements: identification of priority themes focused on the Lisbon Agenda, emphasis on a two-way bridge between thematic networking and the mainstream programmes, an enhanced joint communication effort and a 'fast track' option, where the Commission will offer its expertise to a number of networks.

This brochure has been produced as part of the Commission's work under the third element above. It forms part of the second annual Regions For Economic Change spring conference, where more than 500 participants from regions throughout Europe will meet to discuss how European regional policy can help regions to learn from one another and translate network outputs into action through mainstream programmes. It describes the progress made in implementing Regions For Economic Change in 2007 and includes summaries of the 26 short-listed candidates for the 2008 RegioStars Awards, which will be presented during the conference.

## Info regio

Consult the Info regio website for an overview of EU European Regional Policy:

**[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/)**  
**[regio-info@ec.europa.eu](mailto:regio-info@ec.europa.eu)**



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