



**European Union**  
Regional Policy



# **RegioStars Awards 2008**

Presentation of the 26 finalists

Brussels, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2008

**EnergiekompetenzPLUS - Energy Competence Centre Böbingen an der Rems, Baden-Württemberg, Germany**

*This project has brought low-energy construction techniques to citizens and companies in the region, as well as establishing a cooperation network of companies.*



**Floating Autonomous Environmental Friendly and Efficient Desalination Unit, Greece**

*This floating platform in the Aegean Sea uses energy provided from renewable sources and produces potable water for the islands.*



**Optimisation of the Socorridos hydro power station, Autonomous Region of Madeira, Portugal**

*This project has transformed and optimised the Socorridos Hydroelectric Power Station into a reversible system that can be used all year round, regardless of rainfall. It has also established a cooperation network of companies.*



**SmartLIFE - INTERREG III B North Sea, Cambridgeshire, UK (lead partner) - Malmö, Sweden - Hamburg, Germany**

*SmartLIFE demonstrates best-practice construction techniques in order to deliver housing that is affordable, energy efficient and environmentally sustainable.*



**ENERGIVIE, Alsace, France**

*This project encourages the demand for renewable related equipment. It also improves the offer in the region and conducts experiments and studies.*



**The Advance Project, London, United Kingdom**

*The Advance project has provided SMEs with comprehensive guidance and support services on environmental technology implementation. It has brought low-energy construction techniques to citizens and companies in the region, as well as establishing a cooperation network of companies.*



**Arcelor Mittal, Provence Alpes Cotes 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.*



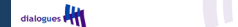
**Øresund Science Region – Cross border triple helix collaboration - INTERREG Øresund, Sweden (lead partner) and Denmark**

*The project is organised around platforms that create linkages between 14 universities and companies around the Swedish-Danish border in Øresund.*



**DIALOGUES (incorporating Nexxus), Western Scotland, United Kingdom**

*The objective of this project is to increase activity in investment in R&D, biotechnology sector, linking the research base with SMEs and encouraging academics to work with SMEs*



**Cluster Eco-construction, Province de Namur, Belgique**

*The cluster manages exchanges of experience, partnership between companies, as well as putting together proposals, investments and promotional policy.*



**Regional Innovation System, Upper Austria**

*The programme aimed to develop further the region's innovation support system by setting up a number of cross-sectoral networks between companies and public actors in existing clusters.*



**Mobient, Oulu Region, Finland**

*The objective of this project was to help the networking of content and media SMEs and give small scale financing to pilot productions and marketing.*



**OptIC Technium (Optronics Technology and Incubation Centre), Wales, United Kingdom**

*The project aims to grow existing businesses and attract inward investment to further strengthen the existing opto-electronics cluster in the region.*



**Region-Enterprises Forum on Logistics - INTERREG - Emilia-Romagna (lead partner) Italy**

*The Forum aims to enhance cooperation among enterprises, to rationalise and pool their demand for transport and logistics services and to reduce 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.*



**Embedded Internet System, Norra Norrland, Sweden**

*EIS relates to the production of smart products by adding computing capabilities and communication possibilities through internet to already existing products.*



**CeRDT, Province de Hainaut, Belgium**

*The Centre was launched to assist the SMEs in the region to innovate and/or to improve their products, services, and methods.*



**HySy Vision, Piedmont, Italy**

*The main goal of this project was to support the creation and the strengthening of the hydrogen chain in the Piedmont region.*



**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 (eg, wind turbines or yacht sails) in natural wind currents.*



**Innovation Assistant, Niederösterreich, Austria**

*Niederösterreich piloted a scheme to encourage SMEs to employ recent graduates in order to strengthen their technological and innovation competence.*



**EnviroINNOVATE, West Midlands, United Kingdom**

*EnviroINNOVATE has enabled SMEs to link to specific expertise for developing innovative products in the growing field of Environmental Technologies.*



**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 also delivered high quality office, technological and industrial space to entrepreneurs.*



**Incubator-Technology Centre, Lower Silesia, Poland**

*The Centre enabled the increase of transfer of new technologies to existing and newly established business units, and the promotion of regional pro-innovative entities.*



**EpiCentre (Electronics, Production and Innovation Technology Centre) - INTERREG, Northern Ireland (lead partner) - United Kingdom**

*EpiCentre has created a technology transfer capability focusing on the development of a strong industrial research base through the integration of existing capabilities in the regions' third level education providers.*



**Matching Technologies and Opportunities (MATEO) - INTERREG - Catalonia - Spain (lead partner), Noord-Brabant - The Netherlands, Lombardy - Italy, South-West Bohemia - Czech Republic**

*The main objective was to develop and execute collaborative subprojects that stimulate regional innovation through cooperation between entities from the participating regions.*



**Centres for Industrial Collaboration (CIC), Yorkshire and the Humber, United Kingdom**

*The CICs facilitate the transfer of skills and technology from universities to companies, encouraging greater levels of industrial innovation, research & development.*







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# **2008**

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## Foreword

Innovating regions and the good practices they share are key to improving competitiveness, increasing growth and promoting jobs across Europe. Innovation and applied innovative practices enable Europe's businesses to stay ahead in a globalised environment. It is in this context that we have launched RegioStars, DG Regional Policy's Awards for innovative projects supported through EU Cohesion Policy. These are annual awards that aim to identify and publicise the best regional innovative projects in order to promote the exchange of good practices across Europe.

RegioStars 2008 is the first of these annual awards, and I have been greatly encouraged by the response. The four categories in this year's competition are: "Supporting Clusters and Business Networks", "Technology transfer from research institutes to SMEs", "Energy efficiency and renewable energies", and "Environmental technologies". We have received 71 eligible applications from 18 Members States. 26 of these applications have been short listed by the jury and written up as case studies to be shared with Europe's 268 regions. This booklet contains summaries of the case studies. The full versions will be published on the Inforegio website (<http://ec.europa.eu/inforegio>).

RegioStars is part of the "Regions For Economic Change" initiative, which has amongst its the objectives the sharing of good practice. It is indeed vital that we work together, share our experiences and learn from them. RegioStars is a perfect example of how regions, irrespective of their size or location, can learn from each other. All regions can therefore consider themselves active and worthy participants, continually contributing to Europe's growth and competitiveness.

This publication would not have been possible without participation from the national and regional managing authorities, project managers and our jury which was chaired by Mr Pasqual Maragall i Mira. I would like to thank them all for their initiative and cooperation.

I hope that you will find the projects described in this publication a useful source of inspiration for your future innovative projects.

Dirk Ahner  
Director General  
DG Regional Policy



## **RegioStars 2008**

**The Awards for Innovative Projects** was launched by Commissioner Hübner in March 2007 during the “Regions For Economic Change” conference. At the time, Mrs Hübner explained that the main objective of RegioStars 2008 was to identify within the 268 regions of the EU good innovative practices in regional development. The awards also aim to highlight original and innovative projects that could serve to attract and inspire other regions.

The broad themes for RegioStars 2008 were "Regional Economies Based on Knowledge and Technological Innovation" and "Sustainable Economic Development". Under each of these themes, two categories were identified: "Supporting Clusters and Business Networks" and "Technology transfer from research institutes to SMEs" for the first theme, and "Energy efficiency and renewable energies" and "Environmental technologies" for the second.

In total, 71 eligible applications were submitted by 18 Member States, with 26 applications being short listed by an independent jury. DG Regional Policy has worked with these 26 projects, with the aim of producing a case study for publication on the Inforegio website.

## **RegioStars Jury**

The RegioStars 2008 jury of 6 members was chaired by Mr Pasqual Maragall i Mira (former President of the *Generalitat de Catalunya* and former Mayor of Barcelona).

The other members were:

- Mr Martti Huovilila, Senior Technology Advisor, TEKES, Finland.
- Mrs Marjorie Jouen, Member of Cabinet of President Delebarre, Committee of the Regions.
- Mrs Natalija Kazlauskienė, Director DG Regional Policy, European Commission.
- Mrs Elzbieta Ksiazek, Project Manager, Innovating Regions of Europe Network.
- Mr Örjan Sölvell, Dean of the MBA programme, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden.

## **RegioStars 2009**

Next year's awards are being launched on 26 February – more information is available at <http://ec.europa.eu/inforegio/>, or by contacting: [regio-stars@ec.europa.eu](mailto:regio-stars@ec.europa.eu).



## **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies**



## ENERGY COMPETENCE CENTRE, BÖBINGEN AN DER REMS

<b>Region:</b>	<b>Baden Württemberg, Germany</b>
<b>Programme type:</b>	Operational Programme
<b>Duration of project:</b>	September 2003 – July 2005
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €1,527,153, including €62,354 from the ERDF

**The Energy Competence Centre in Böbingen an der Rems has been set up in the rural area of Ostalb, Baden Württemberg as part of the region's Rural Development Programme. The Centre offers future clients, building companies, architects and other interested parties comprehensive information about techniques, products, support and trends in the sector of low energy construction.**

The project has established a cooperation network of companies as well as a training centre for craftsmen and architects. The project is based on 3 pillars:

- **Show property:** the Centre is a residential and commercial building constructed on passive design principles to demonstrate innovative resource-saving techniques in the area of low-energy construction.
- **Advice and competence centre:** around 220 m<sup>2</sup> of the building has been fitted out as an advice and competence centre, which offers future clients, building companies, craftsmen, architects and other interested parties comprehensive information about techniques, products, support opportunities and trends in this sector.
- **Training centre:** the Centre also offers training to craftsmen and architects from the local area and further afield, with the aim of promoting entrepreneurship and ensuring positive consequences for the competitiveness of the region.

The fundamental objectives of the project were to:

- save energy and/or switch to alternative energy sources
- promote wealth creation in the district of Ostalb by winning orders for local craft companies and architects
- network the various agenda groups in the area of energy
- implement training measures in the craft industries
- establish a cooperation network between companies, architects/planners and other organisations in order to facilitate a mutual exchange of experiences and know-how in the energy sector

The project is the result of a public/private partnership between the Ostalb district, the municipality of Böbingen, the district trade association, individual guilds and the district chamber of architects. The agency is run in the form of an association, which constitutes its main innovative character. This form of organisation is new and unique in the region and ensures that all the organisations and associations involved in the area of energy saving work together and pool their know-how, which is then passed on to citizens and businesses.

The cooperation network is working well, growing rapidly and expanding. Each participant in the network can arrange discussion sessions and information seminars either by themselves or with the management. Dates and activities are set out in an Internet diary. In addition to the events and actions organised on an ad hoc basis, a number of different working parties set up by towns, municipalities and districts on energy meet and work together regularly.

The Energy Competence Centre is the main contact point for information on energy and the environment for building contractors, architects and tradesmen in the district of Ostalb. Visitors receive comprehensive information about new investment techniques, products and sources of funding. So far, more than 1000 members of the public have already received advice on innovative and resource efficient strategies and energy efficient building techniques.

The project has succeeded in raising awareness of energy use and low-energy construction among companies and citizens. The Energy Competence Centre makes a significant contribution through advisory and planning activities and provides actual evidence of increased energy savings. In two vocational colleges in the Ostalb district, the installation of individual room heating and better use of lighting has resulted in a significant reduction in energy consumption.

The Centre is financed from investments and contributions made by members of the association, from grants by the district authority for staffing and material costs and from funds provided by third party sponsors. The economic sustainability of the Centre has been achieved by designing the energy competence building as a multifunctional residential and commercial property built on passive design principles.

## **FLOATING, AUTONOMOUS, ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY AND EFFICIENT DESALINATION UNIT**

<b>Region:</b>	South Aegean, Greece
<b>Programme type:</b>	Operational Programme Competitiveness
<b>Duration of project:</b>	September 2003 – June 2007
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €2,872,312, including €1,306,063 from the ERDF

**The University of the Aegean in cooperation with the Region of South Aegean developed a floating platform that uses energy provided from renewable sources and produces potable water for the islands. The drinking water is produced from seawater, while the energy to desalinate this water is provided by a wind generator and photovoltaic system.**

The main objective of the project was to find a cheap and ecological solution for producing drinking water for the water stressed islands of the Aegean by integrating a desalination unit with wind power in the same structure. The project also set out to:

- reduce the costs of connection between the desalination unit and the wind turbine due to the absence of a network for transferring energy
- offer the possibility of locating the platform far from populated areas in order to minimize disturbance linked to noise
- offer the possibility of moving the unit to different areas for optimal use depending on weather conditions

The system developed is environmental friendly and autonomous, meaning that the floating platform operates unmanned, that energy comes from renewable sources and that it does not have any adverse side effects. From an operational point of view, drinking water is produced from the seawater desalination unit with energy provided by a wind generator and photovoltaic system. The management system controls the operations and also handles safety issues.

It is the first wind powered floating desalination plant in the world, which is not only providing electricity (through a cable connecting with the land), but incorporates a seawater desalination plant and turns seawater to drinking water with the help of the wind and sun.

At the same time, the platform is an actual floating research laboratory, equipped with several sensors, data measurement instruments and logging units providing significant research data, where information regarding wind, water and operation related parameters is collected.

The system incorporates a number of innovative characteristics beyond its conception and originality. Innovation lies in the engineering of the floating platform, harmonized with the operation of the wind turbine, as well as the improved energy management in the desalination process.

The University of Aegean, which forms the project management team, and the South Aegean Region, have worked on problems in the islands concerning energy and water supply. They represented the core team that developed the initial idea. They then invited other

organisations, experienced in sectors such as desalination, energy, renewable sources and marine applications and subsequently formed a consortium. The role of the different partners was well defined by activity sector.

The interregional partnership was developed at the very beginning of the project. The consortium has very good relations with several water stressed islands and related organisations such as Islandnet.

The main advantages of the floating platform are:

- Easy transportation to the place of operation
- Potential to cover seasonal needs of water supply in the islands
- Minimization of installation expenses
- Minimization of disturbance for residents
- No adverse environmental side effects

The platform is able to produce over 70 m<sup>3</sup>/day, enough to cover the needs of approximately 300 people. Including maintenance, the payback time of the platform is only 3 years (the average is usually 10 years after investment.) After this period, the water production will be free of cost. The expected lifetime of the whole system is 20 years. Given the advantages it offers, there are plans for future developments of such a system on a bigger scale.

**OPTIMISING THE MULTIPLE PURPOSE FUNCTION OF THE  
SOCORRIDOS HYDRO POWER STATION FOR USE ALL YEAR  
ROUND TO PRODUCE WATER FOR PUBLIC SUPPLY, IRRIGATION  
AND ELECTRICITY**

<b>Region:</b>	Autonomous Region of Madeira, Portugal
<b>Programme type:</b>	Objective 1 Phasing In
<b>Duration of project:</b>	May 2004 – December 2007
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €34.7 million, including €17.3 million from the ERDF

**This project concerns optimisation of the Socorridos Hydroelectric Power Station in use since 1995. It is the largest and most important hydraulic system for production of water for public supply, irrigation and hydro energy in Madeira. The project represents an important step forward in the process of taking advantage of renewable energy sources, particularly of eolic origin.**

Equipped with three generator groups of 8 MW, this power station provides maximum power of 24 MW. The system includes a 15.5 km long succession of tunnels (underground canals) and canals (open air) as well as a hydroelectric power station. The joint coordination of these infrastructures makes it possible to transfer water collected in the northern part of the island (higher and mountainous where it rains) to the southern part of the island. The water is used for irrigation, public supply of water and energy production.

However, as the capacity of the primitive loading chamber was limited to a maximum 7,500 m<sup>3</sup>, which was not enough water, its production of electricity and guaranteed power occurred essentially during the rainy season (winter).

The Empresa de Electricidade da Madeira (EEM, the public electricity company of Madeira) carried out the project which transformed the Socorridos Hydroelectric Power Station into a reversible system, making it possible to take advantage of its power capacity at any time of the year, regardless of rainfall.

The project consisted of 4 main parts:

- Construction of the Covão tunnel
- Construction of the Socorridos storage gallery/reservoir
- Renovation of the Encumeada and Canal do Norte tunnels
- A pumping station at Socorridos

Together these elements ensured that more water was available for irrigation and public supply. Moreover, energy production all year round and also during the day at peak periods was guaranteed. Water was pumped back to reservoirs so that it could be reused for electricity production. By reusing the water, electricity production could be ensured all year round. The pumps are driven during the night, storing the water for use during peak hours during the

daytime. Additionally, the pumps can be connected and then can make increased use of wind power, thus producing more renewable energy during the night. This initiative, as part of the Socorridos Multiple Purpose Utilization Project, represented not only a significant investment in the management of the regional hydroelectric resources but also an important step forward in the process of taking advantage of renewable energy sources, particularly of eolic origin.

One of the objectives of the regional strategy of the Autonomous Region of Madeira is that of sustainable development, facilitating the promotion of social and economic wellbeing with the protection of the natural resources that sustain quality of life. Within the scope of this objective, the environmental dimension entails a strategic priority. The investment in this project, with low environmental impact, had the clear aim of contributing towards development of the Madeiran economy, giving it more and better energy, in other words, sustainable development.

## SMARTLIFE

<b>Region:</b>	East England, UK
<b>Programme type:</b>	INTERREG IIIB, North Sea Programme
<b>Duration of project:</b>	June 2004 – June 2007
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €11.3 million, including €4.3 million from the ERDF

**The fundamental aim of SmartLIFE is to facilitate the delivery of sustainable growth in the North Sea Region. The general aim of the project was to tackle the problem of affordable housing in growth areas and the shortage of trained staff and skills within the construction industry.**

SmartLIFE is co-financed by the INTERREG IIIB North Sea Programme. Cambridgeshire County Council in the East of England leads the project. The other main partners are the Environment Department of the City of Malmö in Sweden and TuTech Innovation GmbH Hamburg, Germany (a not for-profit organisation specialising in the transfer of knowledge, technology and innovation).

The project was divided into 4 Work Packages:

- Construction and running of the SmartLIFE European Business Centres
- Community Training and Education (led by UK Learning and Skills Council)
- Planning Policy and Practice, Research (led by the City of Malmö)
- Communications and Marketing (led by Cambridgeshire County Council)

As lead partner, Cambridgeshire County Council has been responsible for delivering a robust transnational communications strategy. However, the Work Packages have been organised in such a way as to allow expertise on common issues to be shared and to enable a transnational exchange to take place on all topics. All partners participate in all Work Packages. Although this is a transnational project, the actions carried out in each of the three partner areas are tailored to local circumstances. In Cambridgeshire, the emphasis was on developing a business and training centre. In Malmö and Hamburg, the project focused on enabling these cities to build on an existing track record in sustainable construction, exchanging best practices and fostering private/public partnerships.

SmartLIFE has been innovative in the regional context due to the wide-ranging issues of sustainability it has addressed and promoted. SmartLIFE delivered a total solution to growing cities and regions in a sustainable manner – training, education, marketing, community outreach, innovative design solutions, and building industry-leading, affordable demonstration homes. SmartLIFE has raised the profile of the urgent need for renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, sustainability, and modern methods of construction and has identified local

perceptions of growth area opportunities and an acceptance of 'modern methods of construction'.

The training programmes established in each country have proved innovative and unique. The international practice of "tutor and student exchange" is a new idea within the construction industry that has not been practiced on a regular basis. This opportunity for tutors and students proved to be a unique experience which facilitated the learning of different construction methods and techniques. This project has demonstrated an innovative approach to developing specialist professional skills in the field of sustainable and modern methods of construction.

SmartLIFE has managed to achieve its aims and objectives of delivering strategic solutions to sustainable growth areas by raising the skills level of the target population through training and promoting awareness of modern methods of construction. On the ground, SmartLIFE has achieved an international exchange of expertise, advice and best practice related to building innovation, sustainability and affordability, all of which is supported by technical and policy research.

All the project activities proposed in the SmartLIFE project application have been carried out. In addition to this, unforeseen partnerships and activities have also developed throughout the project's lifetime, further expanding SmartLIFE's input and contribution to sustainable growth in the North Sea Region.

## ENERGIVIE

<b>Region:</b>	Alsace, France
<b>Duration of project:</b>	January 2003 – December 2005
<b>Programme type:</b>	Regional Programme of Innovative Actions 2000-06
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €4.2 million, including €1.9 million from the ERDF

**Co-financed by the ERDF, the Alsace Region and the ADEME (French Environmental and Energy Efficiency Agency), the ENERGIVIE regional programme aims at developing regional innovative strategies for sustainable development through the promotion of renewable energies in Alsace.**

The activities implemented were designed to achieve the following three major objectives:

- Promoting the use of renewable energies in Alsace, in particularly for the solar and wood-energy sectors, by creating new partnerships (in particular with local authorities and economic stakeholders), setting up a system of regional facilitators, and conducting experiments with, for example, biogas, low energy consumption buildings, roof protecting systems incorporating photovoltaic cells.
- Developing a strategy to encourage the demand for renewable energies through a widespread communication campaign with tools adapted to the various sectors of the public targeted by the programme, strengthening the offer of renewable energies related equipments and services by training professionals and future professionals, and preparing for the future by undertaking prospective studies and implementing experimentation on low energy consumption buildings in Mulhouse.
- Using renewable energies as an economic development tool, particularly within objective 2 areas.

The principal innovations carried out were the following:

Encouraging the demand for renewable energies:

- Putting in place a system of regional facilitators to develop investments in renewable energy equipment.
- Implementing an ambitious communication campaign.

Strengthening the offer of renewable energies related equipments and services:

- Involvement of the private sector in the strategy of the programme and in the design of training.
- Investing in the presence of a French stand during the international solar fair INTERSOLAR in Freiburg.
- Organisation of the "Rencontres Energivie" (an annual fair for Alsatian actors involved in renewable energy), and integration of a national day and a special fair for low energy consumption buildings.

Preparation for the future of the programme:

- Study and creation of the first citizen-based funding operation (collective photovoltaic facilities in Lapoutroie) in France.
- Launching of the first projects on low energy consumption buildings, in particular regarding the modernisation of 12 old buildings in Mulhouse. These projects were carried out on the basis of a model which could be reproduced.
- Establishment of a cluster devoted to renewable energies (Cluster Energivie) at the end of 2006 following a study on the regional economic positioning in this sector.
- Participation of the Alsace region in launching an ambitious French labelling system on low energy consumption buildings.

The Steering Committee of the programme, chaired by the President of the Regional Council, was the centre of co-operation and decision making between the partners of the programme. Its members come from the private sector (for example, representatives of companies working in the energy and housing sectors, tourism and agriculture professionals) and public bodies, including State services, actors in research and training, and experts in the fields of energy, which were selected for representing the various sectors involved in developing renewable energies in Alsace.

The management of the programme was handled directly by the services of the Alsace Region. The proximity accompanying system made it possible to strengthen local partnerships, in particular with the communes and other local authorities in these areas.

In conclusion, the programme proved to be successful in its efforts to promote the use of renewable energy in the region and speeded up the regional policy for promoting renewable energies. The Steering Committee has been retained and widened to also cope with low energy consumption buildings, the work of the professional networks continues and the *Energivie Letter* continues to be published. Four people have been recruited to assist local authorities with implementing the content of the project, while the Energivie Cluster continues its work of networking.

## **Environmental Technologies**



## THE ADVANCE PROJECT

<b>Region:</b>	London, United Kingdom
<b>Programme type:</b>	Objective 2
<b>Duration of project:</b>	March 2006 – December 2007
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €2,086,728, including €882,149 from the ERDF

**The Advance project aimed to provide SMEs across London's Objective 2 areas with a thorough guidance and support service regarding environmental technology implementation, linking innovation and the environment. The project also aimed to support the growth of SMEs through improvements in products, processes and environmental performance.**

The project aimed to encourage and support a culture of environmental innovation among SMEs. The project had a particular focus on waste minimisation, increased levels of recycling, energy minimisation and awareness of renewable energy options. The overall aim of the project was to promote improvements through environmentally sustainable practices and to introduce and implement environmentally innovative technologies.

The ADVANCE project brought together London's key environmental delivery organisation and placed emphasis on partnerships. The Centre for Environment & Safety Management for Business (CESMB), Middlesex University, was the lead partner and the key delivery organisation in the Upper Lee Valley Objective 2 region. Similarly, the project had a number of specialist delivery partners covering Objective 2 areas across London in Inner East, Thames Gateway and the West (Park Royal/Wembley).

Through its delivery partners and associates, the project provided innovation and technological support which allowed businesses to access the most appropriate business solutions and to develop a strategic, coherent and co-ordinated approach.

Through the project, twenty-five qualified and experienced innovation advisors provided advice and assistance to 300 SMEs in London on issues relating to environmental improvement with specific emphasis on waste, energy and resource management and using innovative approaches to reduce their environmental impact. One hundred and fifty environmental audits were carried out by these advisors. As a result of the project support, 220 new environmentally efficient products and processes have been supported.

This approach of working closely with SMEs in this field was new for London. The project also took the lead in developing a new type of partnership which consisted of other innovation focused projects in order to create a fully comprehensive service to SMEs.

A Steering Group led by CESMB which included all project partners and was also represented by the London Development Agency and the Environment Agency was formed to ensure a balanced delivery of the project to businesses in identified parts of the Objective 2 area. As well as examining the progress and quality of delivery, the group also recommended and advised on future strategies, ensuring a good fit with relevant local and regional standards

and that quality standards are maintained. The group served as a platform for sharing information on the activity across the project as a whole, as it brought together the public and private sectors and the University.

During its lifetime, the project was able to genuinely contribute to the reduction of the environmental impact of several SMEs, which in turn has led to the diversion of several tonnes of waste from the landfill and the reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gas emissions. In financial terms, the project has made a significant impact by creating and safeguarding jobs in London. The project allowed SMEs to understand and implement a culture of innovation, which will provide them with long-term benefits. With increasing concerns about the environmental impacts of SMEs, the support provided has been appropriate and timely.

## ARCELOR MITTAL

<b>Region:</b>	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France
<b>Duration of project:</b>	February 2002 – December 2007
<b>Programme type:</b>	ERDF
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €19.3 million, including €2.4 million from the ERDF

**The aim of this project was to achieve a substantial reduction in atmospheric emissions from the Arcelor-Mittal facilities in Fos-sur-Mer by implementing innovative technologies to deal with ammonia stack effluent and reduce sinter emissions from the factory.**

The Arcelor-Mittal factory in Fos-sur-Mer is one of the biggest steel plants in Europe, producing ultra-low carbon steel used mainly in the car industry, the housing sector and the manufacture of electrical goods. The Fos-sur-Mer facilities annually produce 4.5 million tons of steel. The production of steel on this scale requires the treatment of 11 million tons of coal and iron.

The project consisted of putting in place two different innovative industrial processes for substantially reducing the emission of atmospheric pollution, while contributing to the sustainable development of the Etang de Berre area. The first process aims to replace the incineration of ammonia stack effluent by desulphurization. This involves the installation of a Claus-type process in the coking plant which decreases the emission of nitrogen oxide and therefore reduces ozone creation in the region. This process is particularly relevant during the summer, when heavy traffic and the sun boost the production of ozone. The second process aims to reduce the emission of dust produced by the agglomeration chain, which is the main polluting factor at the Fos-sur-Mer plant. This was particularly relevant as the Arcelor-Mittal facilities in Fos-sur-Mer were producing around 17% of French dioxin emissions before this investment. This process also led to a reduction in the emission of heavy metal, dust and sulphur dioxide.

With only two tons of carbon dioxide emitted for every steel ton produced, the Fos-sur-Mer facilities are now one of the least polluting plants in the world. Arcelor nevertheless decided to contribute substantially to the reduction of the industrial atmospheric emissions observed around the Etang de Berre by financing large scale operations.

The main innovative aspects of the project are the following:

The first part relates to replacing the incineration of ammonia stack effluent by desulphurisation. This was achieved by adapting a Claus type desulphurisation process from refinery to coking plant (where gas compositions are radically different: hydrogen sulphide is predominant in the refinery while ammonia is the main component in the coking plant). This was the first experiment of its kind ever carried out.

The second part uses the most efficient available technology for the reduction of sinter plant emissions. This was the first time that this technology had been used in France.

The project has been implemented directly by Arcelor. Arcelor and ADEME (French environment and energy efficiency agency) have been working closely together over recent years to limit the emission of atmospheric pollution. The bulk of the investments made (nearly € 29 million) were financed directly by Arcelor. As it was the first time that these technologies were used in France, each of the two parts of the project benefited from a public contribution of up to 30% of total investments, financed under ADEME's own budget and the European Commission ERDF 2000-06 funds.

To date, over 4,800 jobs (3,000 people working directly for Arcelor and 1,800 subcontractors) have been secured on the plant, representing annual turnover of €1.32 billion.

In terms of public health and the impact the project had on decreasing atmospheric emissions, the level of dioxin production of the plant has been halved, thus contributing to a 9% decrease in French dioxin emission and a decreased risk of cancer. The level of dust produced by the agglomeration chain has been divided by 8 and the level of sulphur dioxide produced by the chain halved. As a consequence, the acceptance of the plant by the surrounding community, which Arcelor is regularly informing through public commissions, has been reinforced.

In 2006, Arcelor Mittal became the number one producer of iron and steel in the world, with 320,000 employees in more than 60 countries. The experiment successfully carried out in Fos-sur-Mer will therefore set a good example of sustainable development to the worldwide group, hopefully leading to the adoption of these technologies in other steel plants. These processes also contributed to a substantial reduction in pollution, in fact more than what was required by the provisions of the LAURE law of 1996.

**Supporting Clusters and Business Networks**



## **ØRESUND SCIENCE REGION: CROSS-BORDER TRIPLE HELIX COLLABORATION**

<b>Region:</b>	<b>Øresund</b> , Sweden and Denmark
<b>Programme type:</b>	Interreg IIIA
<b>Duration of project:</b>	February 2002 – May 2005
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €3,862,219, including €1,931,109 from the ERDF

**The Øresund Science Region (ÖSR) is a cross-border initiative that aims to bring together regional authorities, businesses and universities. This so-called ‘triple-helix’ model is a focused approach to cooperation between universities and the surrounding society.**

Øresund Science Region uses and develops the Øresund Region’s unique strengths: a highly educated population and market-leading technology, 12 universities, 6 science parks, 2000 companies and some 12,000 researchers. These strengths are reflected by the region’s large number of researchers and high-technology companies.

The lack of synergy observed between research and industry across the Swedish-Danish border triggered the initiative. The ÖSR initiative therefore fosters the development of the cross-border region that gained momentum following the opening in 2000 of the bridge across the Øresund. The aim of ÖSR is to promote knowledge-based economic development in this cross-border region, as the creation and transfer of new knowledge to this society is one of the crucial competitive factors for the region’s future economy.

The initiative aims at bridging research and industry across the Swedish/Danish border which from the outset implies a number of challenges and problems due to the different arrangements which exist in each country; for example IP rights, funding mechanisms, capital requirements, business traditions and academic educational structures. The initial challenge was to construct an intermediate organisation able to bring together science and industry as well as two national structures framing such partnerships.

Øresund Science Region is a regional development project with innovation and research platforms and projects designed as tools to create links between authorities, industry and universities across the Swedish-Danish border, in identified core competencies. The following seven platforms are part of ØSR:

- Medicon Valley Academy (health / pharma)
- Øresund IT Academy
- Øresund Environment Academy
- Øresund Food Network
- Øresund Logistics
- Diginet Øresund (digital entertainment)
- Nano Øresund

The ÖSR secretariat is financially and staff-wise part of Øresund University and serves as an umbrella organisation for the different thematic platforms, and as project manager and promoter of the ÖSR at European and international level. The ÖSR is managed by a board

composed of university, enterprise and public authority representatives from the Danish and Swedish Øresund regions.

Øresund Science Region and the platforms are financed by the region's universities (combined in Øresund University), the Capital Region of Denmark, Region Skåne, the Danish Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs, the Swedish Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, and a membership of more than 2500 companies.

Two different programmes were financed by the ERDF / INTERREG in relation to the innovation strategy of the Øresund cross-border region. These are the "Øresund Science Region" project and "Medicon Valley". Many of the ÖSR projects receive co-funding from other EU programmes, such as the 6th Research Framework Programme (FP6) and Marco Polo.

The Øresund Model is a unique model of a "double triple-helix" for growth based on knowledge in a cross-border region as it brings together regional authorities, businesses and universities from two different countries, with their different administrative and legal cultures, industrial landscapes and languages.

## THE CLUSTER ECO-CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

<b>Region:</b>	Namur, Belgium
<b>Programme type:</b>	Objective 2 Rural (2000-06)
<b>Duration of project:</b>	September 2002 – July 2004
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €141,134, including €70,556 from the ERDF

**The Eco-construction cluster was created in 2002 in Namur where there was an urgent need to address the coordination of SME activities in 'up and coming' sectors. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry, assisted by the Economic Office in the Province of Namur, initiated this project along with ten SMEs from the eco-construction sector which were selected on the basis of their motivation and expertise. These SMEs have cooperated with public and private entities in order to develop new processes and products.**

The Eco-construction cluster was established in the context of a political strategy to concentrate efforts on the development of a few key sectors in the region. A study of the region concluded that the eco-construction industry and agro-alimentary activities (both already performing well in the province) had the greatest potential for further development.

The project pursued certain economic objectives:

- to make the eco-construction market in Wallonia more dynamic
- to create new jobs in Wallonia
- to increase turnover in the companies involved in this sector
- to create new businesses and new possibilities for development

and also ecological objectives:

- to reduce environmental pollution caused by the building industry

and social objectives:

- to encourage the reintegration of people into the job market by offering them specific training in new techniques of eco-construction
- to educate the general public about eco-construction

The project was innovative in different ways. An independent structure was created and represented various actors in the sector (for example; federations, associations, companies and universities). Moreover, a specific statute was created enabling less experienced actors to participate in the network.

The projects achieved the following results:

- The number of companies and organisations has increased rapidly, with 68 full members and 50 candidates in 2007.
- The geographical coverage of the cluster has spread from the province of Namur to the whole region of Wallonia
- The number and quality of the research projects has greatly increased.
- Cooperation in this field outside of Belgium has been established. For example, this project is an associated partner of the campaign for Sustainable Energy Europe and shares its experience abroad in countries such as France and the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg.

<b>MOBIENT</b> <b>MOBILE CONTENT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING</b>
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<b>Region:</b>	<b>Pohjois-Suomi</b> , Finland
<b>Programme type:</b>	Objective 2
<b>Duration of project:</b>	April 2004 – March 2007
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €510,000, including €165,000 from the ERDF

<b>The objective of Mobient - a mobile business development project - was to support R&amp;D and commercialisation of mobile contents as well as the development of content and media SMEs in the Oulu region. In the project, it was mainly digital content, services and technological applications for mobile user terminals that were created.</b>
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When allocating the R&D financial support, there was a special focus on state-of-the-art technology and commercial potential as well as the international market. Mobient was preceded by the Mobiart project (Regional programme for Innovative Actions) where the main focus was on R&D support.

Five calls for proposals were organised where SMEs applied for R&D funding to develop products or ideas. Mobient granted support for R&D or for commercialisation to sixteen projects. As a result, ten new products or services were created. In four projects, an existing product was developed further. Most applications found their place in the market and some are already in a further development phase.

Mobient granted funding to many different kinds of software applications for mobile services. Examples are: *Nextpark* - a mobile car parking service, *MobileCalories* - weight control application, *NexGolf* - application for appointments for golfers, *MobiOrder* - a picture ordering system for camera phones, *Dragon Slayer* - an adventure game, *Playtone* - a sound editing daredevil game, and *Backyard* - a gardening game for school children. The project also arranged seminars which focused on mobile issues and provided education and consultation to SMEs in addition to providing assistance for their participation in international exhibitions.

Mobient provided funding which was essential to developing this new business branch. In addition, it promoted the mobile content business to other sectors. As a result of the project, a new company was established and ten new jobs created. Moreover, a network of operators in the field of content and technology enterprises was developed.

The most important consequences for the enterprises which participated in the project were the development of new commercial products, the acquisition of new information and the opportunities for new experiences. The R&D phase of product development accelerated considerably as a result of participation in the project.

The Mobient project was carried out in collaboration with enterprises and public organisations. The project coordinator was Oulu University of Applied Sciences, School of Culture, Dance and Media. The project was co-funded by the Council of Oulu Region, the City of Oulu, Oulu University of Applied Sciences and the SMEs.



## **OpTIC TECHNIUM**

### **(OPTO-ELECTRONICS TECHNOLOGY AND INCUBATION CENTRE)**

<b>Region:</b>	Wales, United Kingdom
<b>Programme type:</b>	Objective One
<b>Duration of project:</b>	2002 – present
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: € 33.4 million (£ 23.3 million), including € 12 million (£ 8.4) from the ERDF

**OpTIC Technium is a technology and incubation centre in St Asaph (UK) that was set up under the initiative of the enterprises and universities in the opto-electronics cluster organisation in North Wales to provide support, knowledge and facilities for emerging technology businesses.**

OpTIC was conceived by the [Welsh Opto-electronics Forum](#) (WOF) and brought to fruition by the [Welsh Assembly Government](#) (WAG). WOF is an industry-led networking organisation which represents the business and academic members of the opto-electronics cluster in Wales. The WOF network was set up in 1996 under a business-to-business programme of REGIO that predates the Objective 1 funding.

Opto-electronics concerns electronic devices that interact with light (i.e. photons and electrons). This covers a variety of technologies (fibre optics, lasers and holography) and products (digital cameras, LCD's and DVD players). Opto-electronics is an important, strategic, highly specialised industry, with applications in many high technology products and markets including television sets, CD and DVD players and aircraft navigation systems.

The opto-electronics theme was chosen to build on existing industrial strength. Since the 1950s, a high density of enterprises in this sector had developed in North Wales around a large company called Pilkington. They represent today around 30% of all such enterprises in the UK. Some of the prominent companies in the cluster include Sharp, Corus Group, Phoenix, Leader Optics, Qioptiq, Tyco and Kent Periscopes.

WOF and OpTIC aim to build on this strength, in order to attract and to start additional companies in and around this sector by offering networking, advice and top-class research facilities to help them to become more innovative. This ultimately aims at creating demand for skilled labour and at increasing the competitiveness and attractiveness of North Wales.

OpTIC became part of an incubation network in Wales known as "[Technium](#)" which is located throughout West Wales and the Valleys Objective 1 area. The OpTIC Technium offers three specialist facilities dedicated to the needs of the sector:

- A business support centre to give advice and assistance to start-up companies coming from either industry or academia in the early stages of their development. This includes mentoring programmes, funding, intellectual property protection and marketing. There are also facilities to host workshops, seminars and conferences.
- An incubator centre of 24 units, with an option for further extension, to house new or relocating companies

- A technology centre, including a state-of-the art clean room facility, capable of rapidly innovating new opto-electronic products and processes through contract-based product development.

The close proximity of the OpTIC Technium to universities in the area and in particular the CETIC (Centres of Excellence for Technology and Industrial Collaboration) at the University of Wales, Bangor, adds value to locating companies in the area.

OpTIC is very innovative as its main activity is to foster research and technological innovation in the cluster. In addition, it is innovative in terms of its management structure as, unlike the other Technium centres, OpTIC is managed by a private not-for-profit company (Optpreneurs Limited) and designed to become self-sustained. It also includes some innovative features regarding the contracts with the start-ups that it hosts.

WOF acts as an advisory panel to OpTIC, providing board members and commercial collaboration with WOF members. WOF currently has 80 members from all over Wales including companies of different sizes and higher education institutes.

Beyond this, a key driver of OpTIC's success is its links with a wide range of partners, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, in both the academic and non-academic fields. OpTIC has developed a spirit of collaboration between industry, academia, the financial and legal professions and the public sector.

OpTIC has generated new, high technology businesses and quality jobs and plays a major role in sustaining and supporting the existing Welsh Opto-electronic cluster in the region. The cluster's economic performance and employment numbers have grown at an impressive rate since the launch of OpTIC. The revenues generated by the opto-electronics cluster in North Wales are now £ 236 million, representing some 38 companies with 2,045 employees.

The OpTIC building opened for business in September 2004 and is a model of excellence within Wales' Technium Network, which currently comprises 10 innovation centres in Wales.

The combination of OpTIC and WOF is a powerful one, enabling EU objectives to be met, and contributing directly to the Lisbon Agenda. An infrastructure for innovation and technology support is firmly established and major steps have been taken to develop the long term R&D capacity in the sector in North Wales. OpTIC's capacity to facilitate the commercial exploitation of academic and industrial research is receiving attention from regional, UK national and international organisations.

## REGION – ENTERPRISES FORUM ON LOGISTICS

<b>Region:</b>	Regione Emilia-Romagna, Italy
<b>Duration of project:</b>	October 2004 – October 2007
<b>Programme type:</b>	<a href="#">INTERREG III B: CADSES</a> and <a href="#">INTERREG III C West</a>
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €1,139,800, including €342,000 from the ERDF

**The Logistics Forum aims to activate and organise different private and public stakeholders to establish shared strategies for managing and improving logistics in the region in order to create an economic and environmental win-win situation.**

Emilia-Romagna not only has a strong and widespread industrial activity that generates traffic right along the supply and commercialisation chain, but is also at the crossroads of international North-South traffic, which reaches the Internal Market via Italian ports. This, together with the increasing need for "just on time" delivery to manufacturing companies, has practically outgrown the capacity of the road, rail and port infrastructure in Northern Italy. In addition, the environmental impact of air and noise pollution from road transport was significant. Therefore, the regional government decided in the late 1980s to look for possibilities to improve the situation.

This resulted in the creation of the Region-Enterprises Forum on Logistics, a public-private interface for policy-making and the promotion of innovation in transport and logistics. The work of the Forum is based on the identification of regional business needs in conjunction with environmental sustainability concerns. Its driver and manager is the *Fondazione Istituto sui Trasporti e la Logistica* (ITL Foundation), which also provides the platform for the Governance and Institutional network that brings policy-makers together with business representatives and researchers ("triple-helix" approach) in order to identify companies' needs with regards to transport and logistics and to develop policy responses.

The Forum operates through horizontal business networks (i.e. cooperation in logistics management between manufacturing companies or between logistics service providers) and vertical business networks (integration of the transport needs along the supply and distribution chain). The networks regularly include local and regional public bodies and cooperate with universities and consultants. A transversal activity concerns training in innovative transport and logistics tools. The networks define and implement pilot projects at a local and regional level for developing and testing new organisational, business and technological tools and models for optimising the transport organisation and cutting logistics costs, for instance:

- Software applications for planning inbound and outbound transport flows
- A procedure for developing a "milk-run" system, to coordinate the collection of goods from different suppliers, including questions of cost-sharing and timing
- A procedure for assessing a company's logistics efficiency
- A system for assessing the potential for savings in logistics costs in companies
- An ICT brokering system for pooling demand for transport needs and identifying the best offers

These instruments for logistics innovations are designed to be transferrable and are available free of charge to new companies and actors that join the networks. The ITL Foundation also promotes their adoption in other EU countries or regions.

As a result of the pilot projects, companies modified and rationalised their logistics processes while costs and environmental impacts were reduced. For example, the "milk-run" pilot project reduced the number of lorries entering a production plant from 14 to 2, transport costs were reduced by 37%, punctuality in deliveries increased from 50% to 92% and delivery time dropped from 5 to 2 working days. In other pilot projects, up to 40% savings in transport costs and an increase in vehicle load factors from 40% to 70% were achieved. Besides the direct impact on enterprises' transport management and the reduction of traffic flows and pollution, the Forum's networking activities had a positive impact on the cooperation of companies in general in the industrial clusters in Emilia-Romagna, in particular as regards horizontal networking and improved business contacts.

The Forum's activities and the business networks in Emilia-Romagna are financed from different sources, including regional and local funds, EU funding from different INTERREG programmes and projects (in particular I-Log, CORELOG, REDECON, MATAARI and ENLoCC) and private financing by the participating companies. The Forum is actively and closely cooperating with other European regions.

## DIALOGUES

<b>Region:</b>	Western Scotland, United Kingdom
<b>Programme type:</b>	Objective 2
<b>Duration of project:</b>	2002 – 2006
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €1.8 million, including €707,462 from the ERDF

**DIALOGUES is an initiative aimed at ensuring that the expertise and knowledge base of the University of Glasgow is accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) based in Western Scotland. Scotland underperforms in exploiting its strong public science base and historically has had a low level of business R&D investment. Its SMEs suffer from a low level of absorptive capacity and enterprises in Scotland undertake less than half the amount of R&D per worker than in the UK generally.**

DIALOGUES addresses these issues and has the following specific objectives:

- To break down barriers to SMEs working with universities and the research base
- To build long lasting relationships between SMEs and the University
- To create a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship

This project has a particular focus on biosciences, due to the strength of bioscience research at the University. The project is also working in an area with high unemployment and regeneration needs. There is no natural indigenous high growth potential SME population to demand R&D services. By linking to the regeneration agenda, the project is in a position to resource demand stimulation activities rather than just respond to existing needs. This is a long-term strategy designed to stimulate innovation potential.

DIALOGUES is funded through Scottish Enterprise, Glasgow City Council and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The ERDF contribution has been managed by Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP), which managed 2000-06 Funds Programmes in the Western Scotland region.

The project is implementing a range of activities in partnership with academics and researchers, economic development agencies, and business support organisations. These include:

- **Outreach:** including an extensive programme of visits to SMEs, close links with local companies, and using students to offer low-level consultancy support for SMEs such as product innovation and market research.
- **Research map:** an online database which gives access to information on research projects taking place at Glasgow University both from a subject and business sector perspective.

- **Nexus:** this is the West of Scotland Bioscience Network which runs events and consultancy services to support existing bioscience companies in the region. One of the main aims is to forge collaborative links with the research base.
- **Incubation:** DIALOGUES has business incubation facilities which can house new university spin-offs or start-ups wishing to exploit University expertise.

DIALOGUES provides support for innovation at a number of levels:

**Support services to help businesses innovate:** DIALOGUES maps current research, technology and licensing opportunities at the University which could be of interest to SMEs. It also provides support and consultancy services.

**Innovation links and knowledge flow between different actors in the innovation systems:** DIALOGUES is part of a wide range of services offered by the Scottish Executive. These services are linked through committees and networking activities.

**Enhancing strategy and policy-making capacity:** Lessons learnt from DIALOGUES are fed into the development of policy through the Scottish Funding Council's Knowledge Transfer Group addressing Economic Development.

There have been a number of interlinked key success factors relating to the planning and implementation of this project.

**Work with the University to facilitate communication and collaboration:** In order to stimulate demand for research services, the University needs to have a broad overview of its capabilities in a digestible form, which SMEs can understand, exploit and capitalise on. The research map has facilitated this process and is used by business support intermediaries to guide SMEs through the maze of university R&D.

**Governance and a joined up approach:** Scottish Enterprise and the University of Glasgow have already worked together on a number of programmes, and Scottish Enterprise is the main programme deliverer of knowledge transfer activities (including UK-wide initiatives) across the whole of Scotland.

## **RIO – REGIONAL INNOVATION SYSTEM, UPPER AUSTRIA**

<b>Region:</b>	<b>Oberösterreich, Austria</b>
<b>Programme type:</b>	<b>Innovative Actions, 2000-06</b>
<b>Duration of project:</b>	<b>2004 – December 2006</b>
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>Total cost: €5.1 million, including 50% from the ERDF</b>

**The programme "Regional Innovation System Upper Austria" (RIO) aimed to strengthen the regional innovation system of Oberösterreich (Upper Austria) and the innovation performance of the regional sectoral clusters, in particular by inter-connecting the clusters through cross-sectoral networks with horizontal competence.**

The main aim of the programme was enhancing collaboration between the regional public and private innovation actors, in particular enterprises, knowledge-generating and knowledge-disseminating organisations like universities, training organisations, R&D institutes, technology transfer facilities and professional organisations. The most innovative feature of RIO was to build horizontal bridges and thus critical mass between the existing sectoral cluster initiatives in the region. It set up thematic business networks, conducted networking and knowledge-transfer activities and ran innovative pilot projects.

RIO initiated four thematic networks as cross-sectoral platforms that bring together businesses and public actors (for example, competence centres, cluster initiatives and research institutions) from different sectors around shared interests and topics. These networks addressed areas such as human resources, research, technology, innovation, logistics and design and media. Furthermore, an innovative rural network was established. These networks not only encouraged networking activities between the actors of the Upper Austrian innovation networks, but also provided know-how transfer to and in between companies through best practice forums. This was accompanied by innovative pilot projects where experiences could immediately be channelled through to the enterprises in the networks

The networks complemented the sectoral activities of the cluster initiatives that manage project funding and act as intermediaries between SMEs and universities or public authorities. The relation between the RIO thematic networks and the sectoral clusters is conceived in a matrix model, which is also reflected in the membership conditions. Those companies that sign up and pay the membership fee for a cluster initiative receive a rebate on the membership fees for the thematic networks.

The RIO programme funded 38 projects involving around 130 participants from enterprises, research institutes, educational bodies, public authorities and support service providers. The pilot projects succeeded in enhancing the collaboration between schools and enterprises, attracting more students, in particular girls, into technical professions. This addressed one of the main obstacles to innovation in Upper Austria, the increasing lack of skilled labour in technical professions. Another outstanding example of a pilot project was a business-university platform for sharing non-damaging material testing facilities.

The networks were transferring competences to the companies via best practice events, newsletters and other means of communication. Three of those networks are now self-sustained (human resources, design and media and logistics). The Clusterland Upper Austria Ltd provides the secretariat for two of the networks, while a logistics association has taken

over the logistics network. The research and innovation network activities continue in a different format at CATT Innovation Management GmbH.

RIO was characterised by a systematic and early stage involvement of all relevant economic and public actors in the region, both in the steering committee and in variable geometries in the different networks and projects. Stakeholder ownership, which is vital to successful projects and active networks, was built up. The partnership also proved to be stable through the creation of structures that provide active support, and accumulate know-how on project management and analytical capacities.

In many ways, RIO prepared the ground for a range of actions in the new operational programme for Upper Austria and the strategic development plan through to 2010.

## **Technology Transfer from Research Institutes to SMEs**



## TECHNOFIT PRO 2005

<b>Region:</b>	Styria, Austria
<b>Programme type:</b>	Regional Programme of Styria 2000-2006
<b>Duration of project:</b>	April 2005 – March 2006
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €194,825, including €97,412 from the ERDF

**This project involved the main technological and engineering institutes of Styria (3 universities and the largest R&D institution<sup>1</sup>) active in the domain of engineering and applied/natural sciences. They agreed on a coordinated, standardised approach for supporting SMEs. They offered advice, mentoring and technology transfer to SMEs usually not involved in innovative processes and encouraged them to tap into the full potential of all support facilities.**

The objective of the project was to broaden the regional innovation basis and address the specific needs of SMEs established in peripheral regions of Styria with no or little experience in the field of R&D.

Innovation support was provided in several ways:

- events and seminars for innovation awareness and methods
- individual innovation audits "on-the-shop-floor"
- "quick fixes" by arranging expert meetings
- brokering of innovation projects with R&D partners

The four TECHNOFIT PRO 2005 partners agreed to intervene as a neutral, not-for-profit transfer network. The consulting and coaching services were offered at varying levels of intensity depending on the enterprises and their concrete needs or situation.

The project's economic benefits for the region were the following:

- diffusion of developed methods and dissemination to a broader target group
- strengthened cooperation channels between sciences and SMEs
- a broadened Styrian innovation basis, i.e. involvement of additional SMEs
- identification of new projects and enterprises for existing or future support instruments in the area of R&D
- pooling of resources

TECHNOFIT PRO 2005 was managed by a network of regional transfer institutions with a core group of seven actors (ARGE TECHNOFIT). This group represents the three largest Styrian universities and the largest R&D institution, together with a staff of 1000 scientists. Therefore, a very broad scope of innovation issues can be covered, including innovation management and organisational matters.

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<sup>1</sup> Technische Universität Graz, Montanuniversität Leoben, Joanneum Research Forschungs GmbH and Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz



## EMBEDDED INTERNET SYSTEM (EIS)

<b>Region:</b>	Norra Norrland, Sweden
<b>Programme type:</b>	Objective 1
<b>Duration of project:</b>	February 2001 – March 2007
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €7 million, including €3.75 million from the ERDF

**In the region of North Sweden, the Luleå University of Technology worked together with SMEs in the region to initiate a structural change to their products to include more embedded electronics capable of Internet communication.**

The aim of the project was to assist SMEs in developing their products from start to finish, providing the required competence for research and prototyping, and also providing assistance for design, risk capital and introducing the product into the market.

Most companies in the region are SMEs with less than 50 employees. Their ability to grow over time has proved to be limited. There are two major reasons for this. Firstly, there is a lack of new technology, and secondly a lack of marketing focus. The region has a comparatively small, but fairly healthy, electronic industry. At Luleå University of Technology, internationally renowned research competence focused on **Embedded Internet Systems (EIS)** had been developed since 1998.

EIS involves making products "smart" by adding computing capabilities and communication possibilities through the Internet. This means that by including this technology in any product, it becomes possible to carry out assessments, oversee systems or receive information remotely through the web.

A network was created within the region and involved all companies with an interest in EIS technology. Students at Luleå University of Technology worked on prototype development and had the opportunity to experience "real" professional projects together with industry. This gave companies a good opportunity to evaluate and recruit students once they had finished their projects and Master thesis work.

The project has also developed a cluster comprising of an Industrial Platform made up of product-owning, production and design companies, consultancies, and risk capital companies/bodies, as well as a Research Platform which provides a critical mass of university research within the field. More than 250 companies participated. By December 2006, nine products had commercial customers, with a market value of €7.6 million. In total, 43 out of 70 product prototypes were successfully finalised and are now ready to be launched into the market. In addition, 5 spin-off companies were created.

The EIS Research Platform at Luleå University of Technology continued and was further developed with 23 research degrees (Licentiate and PhDs) and 115 scientific publications. As part of the structural change, ten scientists are now employed in cluster companies in the region. Ten EU project applications were also created resulting in 5 approved EU projects.



## **CENTRE FOR PROMOTION OF R&D AND DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGIES (CeRDT)**

<b>Region:</b>	<b>Province of Hainaut, Belgium</b>
<b>Programme type:</b>	Phasing out Objective 1 ERDF programme (2000-06)
<b>Duration of project:</b>	July 2001 – December 2007
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €5.4 million, including €2.7 million from the ERDF

**Since the early 1990s, the Walloon region has been developing a strategy whereby the stimulation of innovation potential among SMEs was considered a priority. The CeRDT project is in line with this strategy. The project aims to accelerate the development of innovative initiatives of SMEs situated in Hainaut, a region which is lacking in innovative entrepreneurship and technical innovation.**

Given the situation, the Walloon Government with the support of the European Union through its Structural Funds (ERDF and ESF) expressed its willingness to deploy significant financial resources to help Hainaut accelerate its industrial conversion. Within the framework of the Phasing Out Objective 1 Programme, one of the priorities defined by the Walloon Government was to increase technological innovation within companies, with the ultimate objective of creating new goods and services and improving products and their manufacturing processes.

To meet this priority and provide a complete range of services around technological innovation, the CeRDT brings together the main players in economic development in the region: the Walloon Union of Enterprises (UWE), the Chambers of Commerce of Hainaut province, the associations of municipalities, the CEEI, the Directorate-General for Technologies, Research and Energy (DGTRE), two representatives of the ministers in charge of research and the Structural Funds, and actors involved in research in Hainaut province.

The CeRDT is a multi-disciplinary team of 12 people, including specialised engineers, a legal adviser and a person in charge of communication. The key objectives of the project were to:

- implement within companies in the Hainaut province a genuine innovation culture through a multi-criteria management system of technological innovation which would enable them to be autonomous.
- strengthen the technological projects of SMEs and very small enterprises by incorporating all the required and obligatory parameters within the economic actions implemented through the local coordination agencies.
- strengthen the CeRDT's management skills and knowledge of the different models of the process of technological innovation applied in different European regions.
- increase the number and size of R&D projects in the SMEs and very small enterprises.

The CeRDT has become a key player as regards advising on and managing technological innovation for SMEs. In the course of its operation, the CeRDT had to adapt and modify its approach, while keeping in mind its main awareness-raising and promotion missions, and build a team of internal experts able to help companies develop new goods, services and processes. The innovative character of the CeRDT is to be found in its management and internal organisation, ensuring a sound structure, long-term approach, reproducibility and continuous improvement of its activities. Since 2002, the CeRDT has been able to accumulate a wealth of knowledge and experience and has therefore been able to develop a culture of excellence and quality management.

## HYSY VISION

<b>Region:</b>	<b>Piedmont, Italy</b>
<b>Programme type:</b>	<b>Objective 2</b>
<b>Duration of project:</b>	<b>June 2006 – June 2008</b>
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>Total cost: €2.5 million, including €1.7 million from the ERDF</b>

**The main goal of the HySy Vision project is to support the creation and strengthening of the Hydrogen Chain in Piedmont and to prepare the regional economic system for the future challenges in the hydrogen industry sector.**

In 2002, Environment Park S.p.A., the Science and Technology Park for environmental technologies, set up a laboratory based on hydrogen technologies called Hydrogen System Lab. Today, the Lab is recognised in the region, nationally and across Europe as a centre of excellence in this field. By 2004, it had been working long enough to prove that hydrogen was a valid technological challenge.

The Piedmont region also decided that it was fundamental for the region to make the hydrogen sector a strategic feature given its industrial background and its strong and deep-rooted technical and technological know-how. It was believed that the structural assets of the manufacturing system could fit very well with the needs of the hydrogen chain<sup>2</sup>. A particular challenge for the region was to increase the number of SMEs operating in the hydrogen sector since there were already major players in the hydrogen sector such as institutions, universities, research centres, and large companies working in this area.

A key element of the project was to identify the hydrogen chain components and outline how the industrial Piedmont area could take part in this chain by supplying technologies, applications, and know-how already used and well developed in other industrial sectors. With this knowledge, the project managers set out to identify SMEs in the region (Objective 2) that would be able to provide components – it was understood that these companies would not be producing them already, but that they had the potential to do so.

The Piedmont region considers technology transfer as a consolidated and effective tool for the development of SMEs. The innovative character of HySy Vision has been to use the methodology of technology transfer in the innovative field of hydrogen, an industrial sector considered strategic for the future of the regional economy.

The project worked with companies already using certain technology in order to show how that same technology and the same processes can be utilised and transferred to the hydrogen sector. This had never been done in the region previously.

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<sup>2</sup> The hydrogen chain has three main stages: production, storage and application. Hydrogen is not a source of energy, but rather a means of storing it. Once the hydrogen has been produced, it is stored and distributed to where it will be used. A fuel cell is a hydrogen-driven electricity supply that converts hydrogen to electricity and where the only by-product is pure water.

HySy Vision is a project where many different players are involved and one of its objectives is to strengthen and to consolidate HySy Lab (Environment Park S.p.A.), the competence centre for hydrogen technologies where the manufacturing industry, institutions, universities and research centres could meet and plan development projects. The project is managed by Environment Park S.p.A., with the following Piedmont universities as strategic partners: Politecnico di Torino, Università degli Studi di Torino and Università del Piemonte Orientale. SMEs are also involved in the partnerships as and when they are involved in the project.

The project adopted a structured and systematic approach and carried out the following:

- Technology transfer
- Technology foresight
- Technology scouting
- Technology scouting of the industry
- Technology audit
- Technology transfer check-up
- Feasibility studies
- Dissemination
- 13 pilot projects involving 15 companies identified as a result of the scouting.

A systematic approach from the outset has meant that there was a higher chance that the companies approached were likely to be interested in the project as well as working in an area relevant to the project. In addition, the interaction and networking that took place between companies would normally never have taken place. There has been collaboration, sharing of ideas and networking between pilot projects.

## **COMPETENCE CENTRE OF WING SYSTEM SIMULATION AND WIND TUNNEL VERIFICATION (CCTS)**

<b>Region:</b>	Schleswig-Holstein, Germany
<b>Programme type:</b>	Operational Programme Objective 2 (2000-06)
<b>Duration of project:</b>	November 2003 – June 2007, extended until September 2008
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €2,016,000, including €983,000 from the ERDF

**The economic objective of the project was to establish a "Competence Centre of Wing System Simulation and Wind Tunnel Verification" (CCTS) that would serve as a contact point for industry in the event of technical or scientific problems in that field.**

The technical objective of the project was to develop aerodynamic research and optimise wind driven systems in natural wind currents. These systems use wind for energy production, for example wind turbines, which are of particular importance in view of rapidly increasing energy prices, and also for propulsion, as is the case for sailing yachts.

As a result of the characteristic boundary layer of the wind, the incident flow with respect to the wind speed and angle of incidence is dependent on the height. This phenomenon is termed "shear flow" or "twist flow".

Therefore, a main component of the project was the design and construction of a new twist flow wind tunnel for testing sailing yachts and other wind driven systems (in particular renewable energy techniques). The wind tunnel is built to specifically address the needs of small to medium sized sail lofts, but is also well equipped for use by large professional sailing sport campaigns. Apart from these elements, the optimal height, size and shape of wind turbines can be tested and defined. This experimental method is paired with a set of numerical verification methods which supplement experimental research by applying self developed highly sophisticated software and devices.

This project proved to be successful. A competence centre has been created offering services which are rarely available elsewhere. The twofold approach of the Yacht Research Unit Kiel<sup>3</sup>, an internal research and technology transfer unit with industrial clients, continued to develop further competence while keeping in tune with the needs of industry. Quite recently, a "Fluid Structure Interaction Method" for analysing sails was developed and made use of experimental as well as simulation techniques. This technological progress highlights the Yacht Research Unit's position at the top of science and engineering in this field. Apart from its position as a research partner for industrial clients from the maritime and sailing sport industry, this newly developed method will be used by industry in a very short period of time. This is again a strong indication that the competence centre can provide excellent opportunities for transferring results of academic research into industrial applications for the support of local industries.

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<sup>3</sup> YRU-Kiel, i.e. a competence centre for yachting technology at the University of Applied Sciences Kiel (Fachhochschule Kiel)



## ENVIROINNOVATE

<b>Region:</b>	West Midlands, United Kingdom
<b>Programme type:</b>	ERDF - Objective 2
<b>Duration of project:</b>	June 2003 to March 2007
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €1,044,866, including €202,372 from the ERDF

**The West Midlands region of the UK has made a positive link between innovation resources within universities and its 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 has assisted 116 companies and supported the economic regeneration of the region's industry.**

EnviroINNOVATE was conceived as a long-term venture aimed at contributing to supporting new product introductions into emerging environmentally linked markets by regional SMEs. This is a demanding task as these markets are new, can be highly technical and are difficult opportunities for SMEs to assess without access to expert resources. It also aimed to contribute to an enduring engagement between regional Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and the SME community in the Region. SMEs and universities are not traditional partners in projects, as their priorities, timescales and organisational culture differ markedly.

The specific objectives of the project were:

- to provide specific assistance in innovation to SMEs resulting in new environmental products and services
- to provide effective links between academic institutions and SMEs in support of the innovation projects
- to develop enduring links between universities and regional SMEs
- to create a network of common knowledge support

The key delivery partners were the seven universities that provided the core support to the project with end users being drawn from the region's SME population. Several regional companies also provided content. The project partnerships were all newly established and collaboration between partners was crucial to successful completion of the project.

A number of individual innovations which benefited the participating companies came out of the project. However, what was of more enduring value was that the project also developed innovative ways for regional SMEs and academic institutions to work together. Key to the successful collaboration was the creation of a team of dedicated advisers who, linked with SMEs, came to the programme and identified and arranged links to suitable resources. They

also managed the interaction between companies and academic institutions, and developed a project to suit a specific SME's requirement, which required a multi-institution delivery team.

The project achieved the following results:

- Businesses participating 121
- Investment raised €1,711,000
- New and protected employment 80
- New and protected sales €1,483,000

The key achievement of EnviroINNOVATE has been to deploy academic resources in support of SME development in the field of environmental technologies. It has also provided a solid interface that understands both business requirements and methods to engage and support academics to work with industry. To reach this level of success, the process benefited from a dedicated and competent management body committed to the project.

## CENTRE FOR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER (CTT), TORUN

<b>Region:</b>	<b>Kuyavia-Pomerania Voivodship, Poland</b>
<b>Programme type:</b>	Phare ESC 2001
<b>Duration of project:</b>	October 2002 – December 2004
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €1.8 million, including approx. €1.25 million from the EU pre-accession contribution

**From 2002 to 2004, the EU pre-accession funds were used to construct the Centre for Technology Transfer (CTT) which has subsequently become the heart of the recently established Torun Technology Park. The key objective of the project was to create an inviting environment for entrepreneurs working in the area of high technologies, as well as scientists interested in commercialising their ideas.**

This project offered entrepreneurs professional advisory services in a variety of domains, ranging from setting up businesses to financing technology transfer related ventures. In the national and regional context, the way in which the Centre for Technology Transfer approaches its clients is innovative. Staff at CTT systematically analyse market actors and on this basis offer tailor-made services, such as consultancy and training.

The Regional Development Agency has played a key role between the political level, (necessary for developing the project) and the business world which is the project's main beneficiary. The Regional Development Agency owns the Park and is responsible for distributing the EU grants for SME initiatives in the region. For more than two decades, the agency has had an intermediary and pilot role. Although the University has not been directly involved in planning or building the Centre, it has become a key actor in the later stages.

The concrete results of the project were:

- 6 buildings with facilities of 8,660 m<sup>2</sup>
- four technology halls with resource bases of 4,720 m<sup>2</sup>
- 86 offices from 12 to 50 m<sup>2</sup>, in total 2,630 m<sup>2</sup>
- a modern conference room, 2 training rooms and a computer laboratory
- two meeting rooms
- a lunch bar with catering facilities

These achievements should be considered in the wider context of the TTP where, at present, nearly all the space is rented by a total of 28 firms employing over 240 people.

In a less developed area with a recent history of technology and a large potential for cutting-edge academic know-how, this project has made the first crucial step in encouraging co-operation between industry and the scientific community. In time, this should lead to technology transfers between the key partners and concrete initiatives which will increase innovation in this region.



## INCUBATOR TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

<b>Region:</b>	Lower Silesia, Poland
<b>Programme type:</b>	Sectoral Operational Programme for the Improvement of the Competitiveness of Enterprises
<b>Duration of project:</b>	October 2004 – September 2007
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €5.6 million, including €4.2 million from the ERDF

**The Incubator Technology Centre was created in the Lower Silesia Region to bridge the gap between strong scientific potential and a low level of innovative enterprises in the region as well as a low level of saturation of advanced technologies in the economy.**

The project's main objective is to stimulate the development of advanced technologies, in particular:

- the transfer of new technologies to existing and newly incorporated business entities, and commercialisation of scientific research results
- the creation of an adequate infrastructure to ensure conditions for generating innovations
- assistance in the establishment, development and promotion of business entities using modern technologies, especially of small and medium-sized enterprises

The Incubator Technology Centre project is aimed at minimizing the gap between the strong scientific potential of the Lower Silesia region and a relatively low level of innovative enterprises (especially small and medium-sized enterprises) operating in the region. It also aims at establishing an entrepreneurial culture in the science sector and encouraging this sector to be more market oriented. The central aim is to create a network between innovative companies to allow them to exchange information and initiate common activities. Wrocław Technology Park (through close cooperation with universities and research institutions including “Big Science” institutions) enables companies to familiarize themselves with technologies discovered there as well as current research projects. The most important goal is to encourage scientists, PhD students and professors to establish new knowledge-based enterprises and spin-off companies.

WPT has grown to become a centrepiece of Wrocław innovation activities. This is why it now plays a pivotal role in implementing the EIT+ programme, a major initiative boosting education, research and innovation projects in Lower Silesia. The EIT+ programme is a knowledge portfolio linking the knowledge triangle partners. The largest project of the portfolio is worth €120m. The programme is linked to the Polish European Institute of Technology bid. As an established institution with market expertise as well as an innovation hub with multiple networking links, WPT is a key stakeholder in the EIT+ process.

Wrocław Technology Park is active within the scope of nationwide integration of the knowledge and technology transfer centre within the development of the Regional Innovation

System. In order to facilitate implementation processes, WTP employs a specialist whose task is to service companies within the scope of technology transfer.

Another important element of this project is the Lower Silesian Incubator for Entrepreneurship which supports academic circles in developing innovative attitudes. The Park also has its own laboratories which are available for the use of interested companies. These are new innovative activities in the region as well as in the country.

The project was managed by Wrocław Technology Park, which has formal and operational links with universities and research organisations. Wrocław Technology Park cooperates with its shareholders: the City of Wrocław, the University of Wrocław, Bank - BZ WBK S.A., the Wrocław University of Technology, the Industrial Development Agency, the Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences, the Foundation for Development of Wrocław University of Technology and the Lower Silesian Chamber of Commerce.

The Incubator Technology Centre has:

- facilitated the commercialisation of R&D works by several of the Park's companies
- improved the conditions for running innovative-oriented businesses
- created new technological companies and developed existing ones
- created new jobs in knowledge-based sectors
- encouraged the scientific research sector to act

The combination of national public and private investment together with EU support has made it possible to start an active Technology Park which is growing fast and has become a point of reference where regional small companies, spin-offs or international companies that want to settle in the region may find everything they need concerning traditional incubator services and highly innovative equipment.

## INNOVATION ASSISTANT

<b>Region:</b>	Niederösterreich, Austria
<b>Programme type:</b>	Innovative Actions, 2000-06
<b>Duration of project:</b>	July 2002 – January 2004
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €1,118,000, including €514,000 from the ERDF

**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. The first results are positive with new products developed in many of the SMEs supported.**

The support consists of 4 pillars:

- Grants for the labour costs of the Innovation Assistant
- Mandatory training of the Innovation Assistant through a specially designed post-graduate training programme
- Grant of a maximum 50% of the costs for further training linked to the project on which the Innovation Assistant is working
- Funding for expert consultancy for the Innovation Assistant project (100%)

The main innovation is to provide regional SMEs with skills that were missing in order to innovate and remain competitive. In addition, the Innovation Assistant follows an 18-day course which covers project management, communication skills, team building, conflict management and tools for innovation management. The project had a holistic approach in that it combined different elements to meet the objective of bringing innovation to SMEs: the financing of a new member of staff with a university background, assistance for the implementation of a defined innovative project (with the possibility of accessing the technical expertise of a consultant if required) and some training in management.

The project was managed by the Land Niederösterreich working in partnership with the organisations in the region responsible for promoting innovation.

### **New products developed - Assistants employed longer-term in the SMEs**

First results demonstrate positive feedback from the SMEs and the Assistants:

- In 50% of cases, 1-2 new products have been developed, and in 33% of cases, more than 2 products have been developed

- In 17% of SMEs, there has been a 'technological jump', and in 66% of SMEs there has been a 'big improvement'
- In 67% of cases, the project has generated significant and sustainable partnerships in the field of 'Research & Technological Development. In 50% of cases, the new partners are other SMEs; in 25% of cases they are Research Institutions; and in 25% they are universities
- In 83% of cases, the project brought organisational changes to the SME
- In 17% of cases, the Innovation Assistant became manager of the SME and in 33% of cases he/she became Director of a department in the SME

### **The project is "mainstreamed"**

The project was successful in piloting a new approach to supporting innovation in the region. It is continuing after the pilot with support from other regional and EU funds. In addition, a spin-off from the project is support being provided for "Export Assistants".

The following good practices were identified in the course of the project:

- The manager of the SME needs to be convinced of the usefulness of the Innovation Assistant and should be ready to help the Assistant integrate in the company
- The Innovation Assistant should have a genuine desire to make a career in an SME
- The fact that the Innovation Assistant works on a specific innovation project ensures that he or she can focus on strategic technological and innovation aspects
- The holistic approach of the project (including training at the University) is attractive for both the assistant and the manager of the SME
- The fact that the Land managed both the Innovative Actions programme and the Objective 2 mainstream ERDF eased the extension of the pilot project
- The fact that the project has been managed by the unit in charge of support for SMEs ensured that the Innovation Assistant scheme met the needs of SMEs

## EPICENTRE

<b>Region:</b>	<b>Northern Ireland and Border counties, UK and Republic of Ireland</b>
<b>Programme type:</b>	Interreg IIIa
<b>Duration of programme:</b>	November 2004 - December 2007
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €3.5 million, including €2.6 million from the EU

**EpiCentre is a cross-border project operating in the North West of Ireland. The centre focuses on developing a strong industrial research base by integrating existing capabilities in the three tertiary level education providers in the region. The support delivered by EpiCentre has helped more than sixty small companies to develop new products and services.**

The EpiCentre project serves a region which has suffered economically from the decline of traditional industries. The overall objective of the project is to promote the development of a knowledge based economy in the area. Universities and academic institutions in the region act as centres of R&D and therefore constitute a key element of the project. The three tertiary level education providers in the region are the University of Ulster at Magee (UUM), the North West Regional College (NWRC) and the Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT).

EpiCentre provides:

- Assistance with solving practical industrial problems
- Access to specialised expertise and equipment
- A networking and knowledge centre (training courses, evening events)
- "Signposting" – directing companies to the appropriate organisation that can help them

The centre is distributed across the three sites but has one Centre Manager to ensure cohesion and maintain consistent service across the region. The academic institutions involved have made an effort to adopt a customer focused approach which encourages businesses to collaborate with them.

This cooperation between academia and industry on a cross-border basis reflects the innovative character of the project in the regional context. The Centre is presented to the region as an integrated Centre, with one Manager, and any company (irrespective of location in the region) is directed towards the most appropriate resource to address their needs. The cross-disciplinary nature of the project is also innovative. EpiCentre coordinates cooperation between different disciplines such as creative arts, sciences, technology, multimedia and life sciences. EpiCentre establishes contacts within the institutions on behalf of the clients and also provides signposting services.

The project is in the middle of its third year. All the objectives of the project have been met and exceeded. EpiCentre has engaged with over 80 local companies (the target was between

35 and 40) and provided hands-on technology support to these companies. Some products are even in production and are being sold worldwide.

The ultimate goal of the EpiCentre project is job and wealth creation for the North West region. In this respect, the project has had a significant impact on the regional economy. To date, over 60 local companies have benefited from the expertise of EpiCentre. Many of these companies are small and have limited or no R&D budget. The support delivered by EpiCentre has permitted these companies to innovate with existing products/services and to develop new products/services. This has encouraged growth and job creation in these companies and has also ensured that companies which may otherwise have left the region have decided to stay in the North West and benefit from the continued support and expertise of EpiCentre.

New and existing entrepreneurs in the region now have access locally to state of the art support facilities - including specialised equipment and expertise. This means that the lead time to new product design and development has been massively decreased. This has led to an increase in innovation and new products and services being created by local entrepreneurs and inventors. The EpiCentre project has therefore fostered links between industry and academic institutions, which is beneficial for both parties.

## MATEO

<b>Region:</b>	Catalonia, Spain
<b>Programme type:</b>	Interreg IIC
<b>Duration of project:</b>	July 2004 – December 2007
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €7.8 million, including €4.4 million from the EU

**MATEO (Matching Technologies and Opportunities) was a Regional Framework Operation in Interreg IIC that addressed, on an interregional level, the problems related to stimulating technology-driven innovation through close cooperation between entities from four complementary European regions.**

The MATEO project did not limit itself to stimulating innovation at the policy level, but was actively involved in hands-on innovation work: research centres, innovative SMEs, technostarters and incubators. The aim was not only to exchange theoretical knowledge on best practices in the field of innovation, but also to carry out concrete technology and/or sector-oriented sub-projects that bring together actors from various regions, thus generating joint industrial activity out of RTD knowledge.

The core objectives of the project were the adoption of new technologies by established SMEs (Technology Transfer) and the creation of new technology base companies. These objectives have been achieved through 12 interregional sub-projects in eight important sectors: food, biotechnology, aerospace, advanced materials, pharmaceutical and medical technologies, mechatronics, renewable energies and process and production technology.

MATEO is a highly innovative project in itself. Whereas traditional technology transfer policy focuses solely on the regional context, MATEO expands this to benefit from the opportunities offered by interregional cooperation. The creation of sub-projects that have the specific aim of generating hands-on opportunities for interregional technology transfer is unique and a pilot for potentially more all-encompassing initiatives involving more regions and possibly the whole of Europe.

Regional partners were selected on the basis of their experience and know-how in the selected sectors. The partnerships had to function both between the regions and within the regions. At the intermediary level, a total of 53 different public bodies were involved from four Member States.

The most tangible result of this project is the concrete sub-projects which companies in the respective regions were involved with, developing new products and reaching new markets through new international partnerships. Another interesting result is the enhanced know-how of concrete innovative techniques for both the sectoral intermediaries and their improved access to more advanced sources of technical know-how. Finally, all partners have learnt a lot

about better techniques for transferring knowledge from resources to beneficiaries and how this can be stimulated and lead to innovative products.

Within MATEO, in both the international and regional context, genuine transfer of technology has taken place between research centres and SMEs. To a large extent, this relates to a system, rather than individual transfers. Furthermore, these projects have taken advantage of the international context in order to obtain better results than would have been possible within the regional or national context.

## CENTRES FOR INDUSTRIAL COLLABORATION

<b>Region:</b>	Yorkshire and Humber, United Kingdom
<b>Programme type:</b>	Objective 1 South Yorkshire and Objective 2 Yorkshire and the Humber
<b>Duration of the project:</b>	April 2003 – March 2008
<b>Funding:</b>	Total cost: €14.52 million, including €1.16 million from the ERDF

**This project aims to create a network of sustainable business-focused centres within the region's universities. The Centres of Industrial Collaboration (CICs) were set up to help businesses by transferring skills and technology from universities to small and large companies, encouraging greater levels of industrial innovation, research and development.**

The key objective is to exploit Yorkshire and Humber's well developed science base, leading to a dramatic improvement in regional competitiveness and productivity. CICs stimulate a greater understanding of technology commercialisation within the academic research community and within SMEs. To date, fourteen CICs have been accredited, with expertise from local universities covering the region's priority industrial sectors. The main criteria for the centres was scientific excellence, as evaluated by the Research Assessment Exercise (5 or 5\* RAE score) or potential (3a or 4 RAE), coupled with a good track record in knowledge transfer to, and engagement with, the region's industrial base. Host universities for each CIC received £600k (approximately €80k) over three years, in order to establish sufficient commercial income with a view to eventually being self-sustaining.

The main innovative feature of this project is the fact that no subsidies are provided to companies to enable them to work with research groups, and no funding is provided to the academic research groups to fund technical work. The funds cover the incremental costs of providing a professional business/university interface and promoting their services to business. By not granting funding to the research work, the CICs were able to generate a culture change within regional businesses to see that R&D has a value in itself, and is something worth spending their own money on.

The project was developed and implemented by the Innovation Team at Yorkshire Forward. Although the focus of the RDA is on improving the regional economy, CICs are encouraged to engage with companies, universities and other knowledge and technology based organisations nationally, Europe-wide and internationally, with a view to raising the profile of the region, universities and CIC programme. Central funds are used to encourage the CICs to work together as a network. This interdependence improves the chances of success of the individual CICs through cross referrals, joint working and a higher profile.

Three years on, the CIC initiative has paid off handsomely in terms of more sales, entrance to new markets, and business expansion for hundreds of firms. CICs have collaborated on more than 1,700 projects with businesses, work worth some £ 40 million and resulting in the creation or safeguarding of more than 1,300 jobs for the region.

Successes to come out of the programme have included the world's most tarnish resistant silver, the first needle-free injection system to be prescribed by the NHS, the most realistic flowing water ever seen in computer games and Marks & Spencer's new environmentally-friendly sandwich packaging.

Fourteen CICs, covering various areas such as biomaterials & tissue engineering, particles, polymer green chemistry, engineering design, environmental technologies, pharmaceutical innovation and wireless technologies, were developed in three phases with various research departments of the region's universities. Out of the 11 centres developed (phases 1 and 2), 9 are operating commercially post-funding. The three centres being developed in phase 3 are still in their funding period, but are on course to operate commercially in their post-funding period.

The culture change within the region's universities has meant that universities have used the CIC model internally to develop their own technology transfer programmes, resulting in faculty business development managers operating in a much more commercial manner.

A critical aspect of the CIC initiative is provoking culture change in regional universities. Marketing, market research, developing pricing policies and negotiating and competing for profitable contracts are not normal aspects of university life. Placing CICs within high profile departments makes a significant contribution to the development of a more commercial outlook.

The CIC initiative is increasingly being seen as a model of good practice in the UK and internationally, and was recently short-listed for the IRE European Innovation Scheme Award where it was praised for its impact on the region, its future prospects and the sustainability and adaptability for use in other regions across Europe. Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, has given credit to the CICs for "leading the way in transferring knowledge by promoting much more effective linkages between universities and business".



# RegioStars Awards 2008

RegioStars 2008 was launched by Commissioner Hübner in March 2007 during the Regions For Economic Change conference. At the time, Mrs Hübner explained that the main objective of RegioStars 2008 was to identify within the 268 regions of the EU good innovative practices in regional development. The aim has been to highlight original and innovative projects which could be attractive and inspiring to other regions. The themes 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 a case study which will be published on the Inforegio website.

The RegioStars 2009 Awards, will be launched on 26 February.

More information is available at <http://ec.europa.eu/inforegio/>,  
or contact: [regio-stars@ec.europa.eu](mailto:regio-stars@ec.europa.eu)