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Commission



RegioStars Awards 2012

Presentation
of the finalists

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European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy
Communication, Information and Relations with Third Countries
Raphaël Goulet
Avenue de Tervueren 41, B – 1040 Brussels
Email: regio-info@ec.europa.eu
Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index

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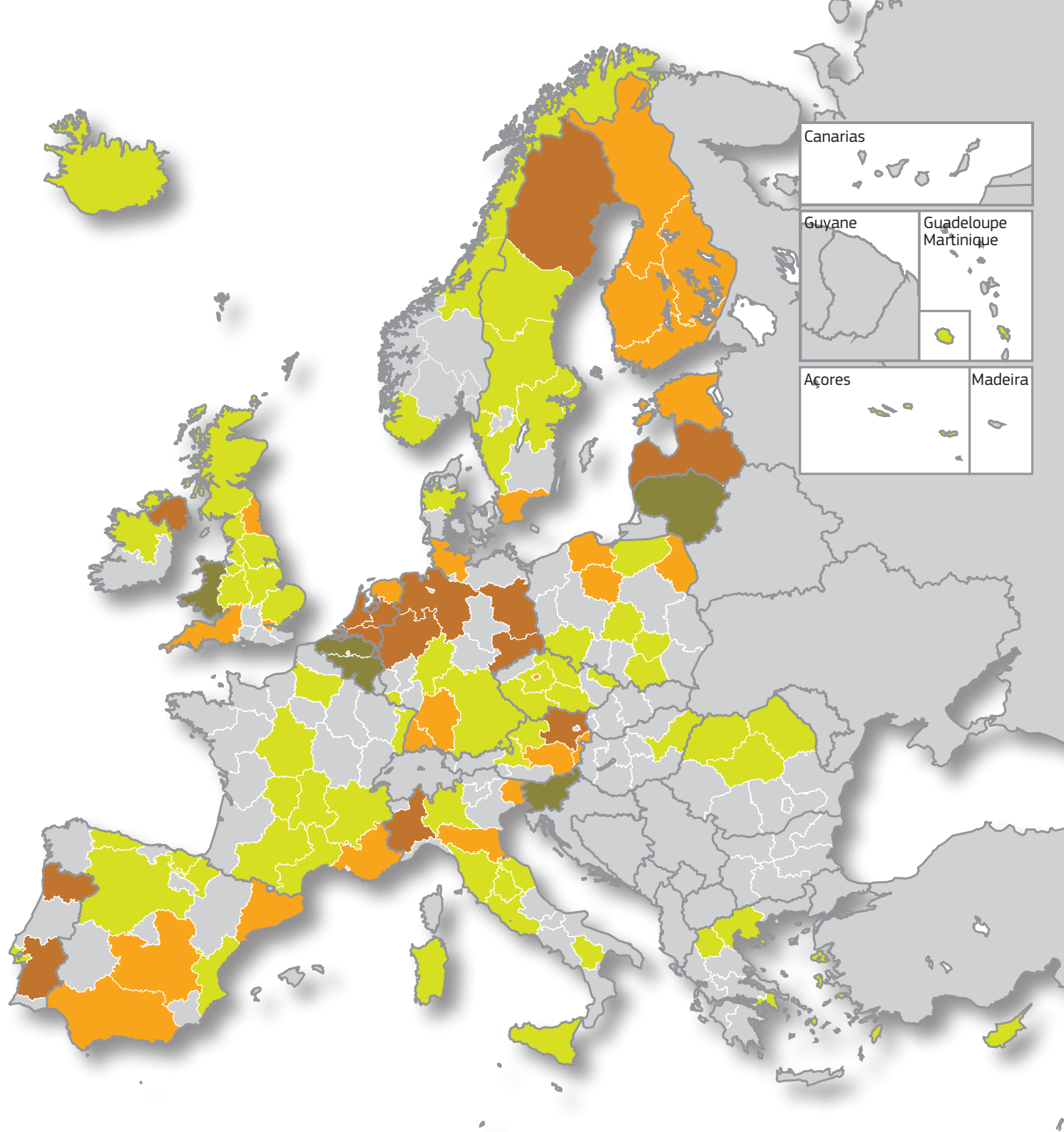
RegioStars Awards 2012

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RegioStars Applicants 2008-2012

Number of applicants

- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-8
- >9

Foreword



It is my great pleasure to introduce the 24 finalists of the five RegioStars awards on offer for 2012. The finalists provide an interesting mix of projects from across the European Union, addressing important themes for regional development. Equally important, they provide examples of how Europe's cities and regions are taking up the challenges that have also inspired the Europe 2020 strategy.

The 2012 edition marks the fifth year of the awards. In these five years over 350 projects have been nominated, 130 have been shortlisted and 21 have so far received the coveted trophy – and five more projects will join the list of winners on 14 June this year at the award ceremony.

We have benefitted in that time from the expertise of five distinguished jury Presidents and the expertise of the many jurors including representatives of the academic world and practitioners from the local, regional, national and international levels.

While the award ceremony is the annual centre piece of our RegioStars competition – especially for the winning regions – I recommend that you take time to look through this synthesis of the 24 finalists. Pay particular attention to the ingenious ways in which the effort to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is addressed by involving a wide range of actors in the different project and schemes.

In this year's awards we have five categories. The first is about service innovation which is an important route to smart growth. The projects in this category feature innovations in different service sectors, including strong examples of public service innovation.

Secondly, sustainable growth is featured this year in the category on ecosystem services, an area offering growth opportunities for the future while securing our environmental heritage. Cooperation projects are particularly well represented in this category given the cross border nature of environmental challenges.

Thirdly, in the domain of securing inclusive growth, the focus this year is on how we are responding to the challenge of active ageing, the importance of which is specifically marked by the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

Fourthly, the CityStar category shortlist includes outstanding projects tackling inclusion with a focus on the regeneration of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Last but not least, the information and communication category highlights the importance of communicating on the projects financed. It contains excellent examples of how to do this using well prepared websites.

I hope that you find inspiration in these pages and perhaps new partners to help you achieve your regional development aims.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Hahn'.

Johannes HAHN
Commissioner for Regional Policy



Once again five excellent and inspiring European projects will be crowned at this year's RegioStars awards 2012. To choose the winners from a field of so many outstanding entries required some serious probing and intense debates within the RegioStars jury over which I had the pleasure and honour to preside.

These discussions centred on each project's individual merit, added value and impact. In that sense I can say that all finalists presented in this brochure are winners. All of the finalists in their different categories demonstrate extraordinary quality and results on the ground.

All these projects are multidimensional and multi-level. They involved committed partnerships working in cooperation to propel their regions forward. And they are innovative, but not only and not necessarily in the sense of technology-led innovation, but investing in new ways of doing things and in enabling people.

Through these projects we could also see an approach taking shape that has been recently promoted by the European Commission under the term 'smart specialisation'. This is a focus on comparative advantages and differentiating one's region through building excellence, combining and aggregating capacities and skills in very specific areas, resulting in a sort of unique DNA for each region.

Put in simple terms, it is to look at what you have and what's really great, a unique speciality that cannot easily be reproduced somewhere else, and to grow it. This has as much to do with territory and identity and going back to one's roots than it has with innovation.

That's why I like the concept, because it is in a way organic and despite it having multiple dimensions and being, thus, difficult to explain in a nutshell, it is rather self-evident.

It helps to explain why similar projects work out in one environment and not necessarily in another, a question that has always intrigued me throughout my work with the regions.

It also supports the notion that regional development is an art, not a science, and that it is not just about getting the technicalities right but also having the governance and the political will lined up.

That is something that's been clearly evident in the 2012 RegioStars winners and finalists. These projects have impressed me and the jury. They have what I like to call 'heart and ratio' and they prove that Europe's got talent, that we are one single creative and innovative Europe and not just a single market.

I applaud and congratulate the winners of the 2012 RegioStars. And I want to extend a sincere thanks to the members of the jury. It was a pleasure and an honour to preside over such a knowledgeable, distinguished and committed group of individuals.

Luc VAN DEN BRANDE
President of the Jury

RegioStars Jury 2012



Luc VAN DEN BRANDE

Special adviser to Regional Policy Commissioner Johannes Hahn for multilevel governance issues in cohesion policy and the EU2020 Strategy, President of the Jury.



Mário ALCÂNTARA (PT)

Head of Office at Tribal DDB in Lisbon.



Pam BERRY (UK)

Senior Research Fellow at the Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford.



Agathe CAHIERRE (FR)

Deputy Mayor of Le Havre in charge of development of deprived areas.



Wojtek CHOJNACKI (PL)

Senior Project Manager at Symetria e-business agency.



Claus EPPE (DE)

Lead partner of the Silver Economy Network of European Regions (SEN@ER) and the project leader 'Active Ageing of Migrant elders' (AAMEE).



István FARKAS (HU)

President of National Society of Conservationists – Friends of the Earth Hungary.



Simon GÜNTNER (DE)
Professor for Social Sciences
and Social Policy at HAW
Hamburg.



Pertti HERMANNEK (DE)
CEO of EurActiv.de, the
German office of the
European online news
portal network EurActiv.



Elizabeth MESTHENEOS (UK)
Director of IFA (International
Federation of Ageing).



Claire MUNCK (BE)
Past Managing Director
of EBAN, the European
Business Angels Network.
Responsible for business
development projects
at Be Angels, Belgium.



Jette NOEHR (DK)
Senior Adviser in the
Confederation of Danish
Industries (DI).

Finalists and Jury members



Smart growth • Innovative projects or schemes supporting service innovation in its different forms

Bringing business and R&D together in Lower Austria

Technopol programme

The Technopol programme in the Lower Austria region was launched in 2004 with the aim of transforming public and semi-public research and development (R&D) facilities into centres of 'technology-oriented business', which will attract companies and link together R&D and enterprise. The programme's strategy has been to create a critical mass of innovative companies, higher education organisations and R&D facilities, all located in the same place and sharing a clear thematic focus. The programme's goal is not only to generate new technological knowledge, but also to help put this know-how to work for business and to strengthen the economy of Lower Austria.

Since 2004, the Lower Austria region has been engaged in a transformation of its regional economy from a rural area to a high-tech and innovation-friendly one. A key part of this strategy has been the establishment of technology concentrations or 'Technopols' to bring together business and the research community so as to drive the structural change of the Lower Austrian economy.

The Technopol programme is an integral part of the Lower Austria regional innovation strategy and is co-financed by the EU under the ERDF regional competitiveness and employment objective.

In addressing the innovation needs of companies in the region, a key strategic issue has been to create clusters in the areas where the region has a competitive advantage.

'This is a commercial programme which can serve as a good, inspirational example for other regions with clear and concrete tools and successes.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

Three locations targeting different technology sectors were selected:

- Technopol Krems for medical biotechnology;
- Technopol Tulln for agro-biotechnology and environmental biotechnology;
- Technopol Wiener Neustadt for modern industrial technologies.

A further location, Wieselburg, which specialises in bioenergy, agricultural and food technology is currently being evaluated for inclusion in the Technopol programme.



The overriding objective of the programme is to build bridges between the economy and universities. This is achieved by encouraging open innovation involving companies, researchers, students, and other relevant stakeholders

The programme gives support to the applied research carried out by R&D institutions and makes existing problem-solving expertise available to the commercial sector.

The services provided by the Technopols are carried out in close cooperation with other regional service providers for innovation and technology transfer, such as clusters, funding agencies, technology centres, and other regional and national agencies.

An impact study carried out in 2010 showed that the gross value added effect produced by companies located at the Lower Austrian Technopols can be valued at around EUR 191 million.

Of this, just over EUR 119 million, or 62%, has benefited Lower Austria directly, while around 30% has benefited foreign countries and 8% other Austrian provinces.

With the Technopols directly employing a total of 1 386 persons in 2009, this successful programme can certainly be seen as one of the cornerstones of the Lower Austria regional innovation strategy.



Project	Technopol programme
Region	Lower Austria
Programme or Body	ERDF / Regional Competitiveness and Employment
Duration of project	04/2004 – 12/2013
Funding	EUR 6 192 361 of which EUR 2 738 336 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	http://www.ecoplus.at/en/ecoplus/technology-research/technopol-program

Smart growth • Innovative projects or schemes supporting service innovation in its different forms

Health tourism initiative developed in the mountains of Austria

Hohe Tauern Health

The 'Hohe Tauern Health' (HTH) initiative was launched in the Oberpinzgau region of Austria in 2008 to develop the peripheral, mountainous area as an innovative tourist destination, exploiting the recognised health benefits of the local Krimml Waterfalls.

Tourism in this part of the Hohe Tauern National Park region near Salzburg has been stagnating in recent years. The regional authorities therefore set out to develop a new range of health-related tourism products exploiting the health benefits of a notable local feature, the Krimml Waterfalls. Scientific evidence had demonstrated that fine mist in the vicinity of the waterfalls is effective against asthmatic and allergic diseases. In addition, specific features of the National Park region are low pollution, low levels of fungal spores, and a short flowering season – therefore making it an ideal place for a bronchial asthma treatment or cure.

'This is a well-implemented project addressing an important health challenge, not only in Europe but across the world. The initiative can be replicated across borders, thereby also satisfying the requirements of future sustainable tourism.'

RegioStars Jury 2012

Indeed, the Paracelsus Medical University (AT) has been investigating the medicinal qualities of the Krimml Waterfalls since 2006 and has set up a scientific laboratory nearby.

Asthma and allergic rhinitis rank among the most frequent chronic diseases in western societies. The curative effect of the waterfalls means that a holiday with a daily stroll around the waterfalls can reduce the symptoms not only during the stay, but with positive effects lasting over a few months.

The project has been developed in close cooperation with the regional authorities, the regional tourism association and the National Park administration. An initial feasibility study looked at the allergologic conditions hotels had to fulfil, how these could be certified, which hotels would be eligible, and whether a sufficient number of hotels could be found. Out of this process a group of 11 three and four star hotels emerged, which have jointly carried on the development of the project.



The hotels have invested in the required renovation and adaptation measures to classify them as 'Certified Allergy' hotels. They are able to offer anti-allergic university-certified rooms that ensure a good night's sleep and provide access to medical services as part of their 'premium product'.

The link between the medical community and tourism ensures that services catering to tourists will develop based on certified scientific knowledge and evidence.

Such development can be seen through the number of tourist stays in the summer season in Krimml, which has increased enormously – from 60 000 in 2008 to 70 000 in 2009 and 78 000 in 2010, i.e. an increase of 30 % within two years.

The idea has also spread to the local wood and construction industry, where the idea to develop 'allergic-proof' wood products (from furniture to houses) has been taken up.

The project is already seen as a reference for similar activities in the Salzburg region and neighbouring countries.



Project	Hohe Tauern Health
Region	Salzburg (AT)
Programme or Body	Strengthening the Competitiveness of the Salzburg Region 2007-2013
Duration of project	10/2008 – 12/2011
Funding	EUR 500 000 of which EUR 125 000 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	www.hohe-tauern-health.at

Smart growth • Innovative projects or schemes supporting service innovation in its different forms

Creating a world class cluster of 'cleantech' businesses in Styria

ECO WORLD STYRIA

The mission of ECO WORLD STYRIA has been to increase the concentration of successful clean technology (cleantech) companies in the Austrian region of Styria and ensure that this cluster becomes a top location worldwide for cleantech innovators. It also seeks to increase the international competitiveness of the region through innovation in the area of green technologies and to generate economic growth.

The cleantech cluster ECO WORLD STYRIA was founded in 2005 to specialise in energy and environmental engineering and develop a world level Green Tech Valley in the Austrian province of Styria.

The province has a long tradition in the cleantech sector. ECO WORLD STYRIA plays an important role in the implementation of economic policy in Styria and is financially supported by the Regional Government. It is a key part of the new Styria 2020 economic strategy.

'An illustration of a collaborative, well-rounded approach to cluster development in a key sector for the future of Europe. It has managed to attract significant private sector support, new project participants, and has shown impressive results to date.'

RegioStars Jury 2012

The cluster was set up as a public-private partnership and is driven by a research-industry-government cooperation model designed to take eco-innovation to a higher level. Together with its strategic partners, ECO WORLD STYRIA provides a support structure that permits sustainable growth for its cluster clients in the areas of biomass, solar energy, waste as a resource, and water.

The region of Styria is now home to more than 170 cleantech companies, of which 15 are world technology leaders in their field. These companies have an average (real) growth rate of 19% per year – nearly double the worldwide cleantech market growth of 10% per year.

Cleantech revenues generated by these businesses have risen to EUR 3.1 billion in 2010, equivalent to 9% of the Gross Regional Product, compared to 5% in 2005, and Styria now has one of the highest concentrations worldwide of top class clean technology companies within an hour's drive.



As a result, this world-class cluster has also attracted several big companies to move their headquarters to Styria.

Since the beginning of the project, eco-innovative companies have generated 5 000 new jobs, increasing their staff on average by over 10% per year.

To stimulate service innovation ECO WORLD STYRIA has developed, together with 30 global experts and seven international specialised media, the 'ECO Future Radar' book, which focuses on trends and market developments in the cleantech sector. More than 500 companies use the Future Radar to check their business strategy and identify opportunities for service innovation.

Furthermore, the cluster has introduced so-called 'Technology Round Tables', bringing together customers, researchers and companies to assist the businesses in developing new technologies and services.

ECO WORLD STYRIA was one of 20 pilot clusters that were audited in the pilot phase of the upcoming European Cluster Management Excellence Certificate. It was honoured with the status 'World Class Cluster' by reaching 99% of the maximum score. ECO WORLD STYRIA was ranked 'N°1 Cleantech Cluster in the World' by the renowned US Investor's network Cleantech Group.

The success of the cluster has helped raise the level of self-financing from close to zero at the beginning of the project to well above 40% of the overall budget (annual fees for the companies, service charges) today.



Project	ECO WORLD STYRIA
Region	Styria (AT)
Programme or Body	Regional Competitiveness Styria 2007-2013
Duration of project	5/2007 – 3/2012
Funding	EUR 888 000 of which EUR 444 000 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	www.eco.at

Smart growth • Innovative projects or schemes supporting service innovation in its different forms

Advice and coaching for sustainable business start-ups in the Brandenburg region

Orientation and guidance services for start-ups in Brandenburg

A concerted programme has been developed in Germany's Brandenburg region to support job-creating start-up businesses through a comprehensive range of advisory and counselling services targeted at different types of potential entrepreneurs. It is based on successful experience of a 10-year pilot programme.

With the support of the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Federal State – or *Land* – of Brandenburg, a programme is being implemented to advise, train and coach potential entrepreneurs in launching and running a sustainable business. It also covers training for the succession of existing businesses.

Based on a successful pilot programme, the scheme being run by the Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Women and Family (MASF) is targeted at a range of

different groups. These include young people (under the age of 28), people from an academic background, immigrants, advanced coaching for innovation start-ups and training for the ownership succession of existing companies.

The business start-up programme brings together under one roof a comprehensive advisory service for new companies in the region. The programme is supported by the 'Founders Network Brandenburg', a local network which includes chambers of commerce, trade associations, federations of self-employed, employment agencies, job centres and promoters of economic development.

For individuals without a job, being self-employed is a viable alternative to regular employment. Under the programme, mentors and external advisers are available to support the founders, identifying and providing the required training at the start of self-employment. Once the business has been launched the advisory services continue to be available in support of those making the transition.

'The project has demonstrated impressive results at local level and should be an example for other regions, not least because of the importance of promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship to address the economic and societal challenges faced by Europe today.'
RegioStars Jury 2012



Special attention is given to high-tech start-ups with the slogan: 'Innovation needs courage'. Often these projects are complex and ambitious and demand an increased mentoring effort.

The ownership succession of existing businesses is also targeted for support. The main goal is the well-timed and successful business transfer, which ensures the training of the new managers and the protection of jobs.

Between 2001 and 2009, Brandenburg's support services counselled more than 11 000 potential founders. Of these, some 74% took the step to become self-employed. Between 2003 and 2009, the number of self-employed persons in Brandenburg increased from

104 000 to 129 640 (an increase of 10.5% to 12.3% of the total workforce). During this period some 9 700 business start-ups and business transfers were realised with the support of Brandenburg's start-up services.

An evaluation of the supported services undertaken in 2005 pointed to the long-term sustainability of the new companies created.

Individuals counselled by the services have demonstrated significantly better business performance than unsupported founders, creating businesses that remain longer in the market, create more jobs, and plan higher investments.



Project	Orientation and guidance services for start-ups in Brandenburg
Region	Brandenburg
Programme or Body	MASF Programme promotion qualification coaching measures
Duration of project	12/2009 – 12/2013
Funding	EUR 7 550 000 of which EUR 5 620 000 is European funding (ESF)
Websites	http://www.masf.brandenburg.de/cms/detail.php/bb1.c.151587.de http://www.lasa-brandenburg.de/Existenzgruendungsfoerderung.664.0.html

Smart growth • Innovative projects or schemes supporting service innovation in its different forms

Digital investment in the Greek tourism sector

Digi-lodge

Digi-lodge is a state-supported initiative in Greece designed to accelerate 'digital' investments in the country's tourism sector, especially at state-licensed lodging facilities (hotels, lodges, motels, rented rooms, etc.). The widespread introduction of modern ICT tools in hotels and other tourist facilities is attracting greater numbers of higher value-added visitors and is also improving hotel management efficiency.

The Greek tourism sector has been slow to embrace the advantages of modern Internet technologies and services to attract higher volumes and higher value-added tourism.

Small and medium-sized hotels are typically geared towards holidays for Greek families, while many larger hotels are strongly dependent on tour operators. As a result, hotels and boarding houses in Greece have been failing to directly access a broader clientele of tourists and visitors from abroad.

Indeed only 74 % of Greek hotels have access to the Internet and this number falls to 37 % for small guest houses. Additionally, only 63 % of hotels have a web page (30 % for smaller lodges); some 71 % of available hotel websites do not have online details of room availability; some 77 % lack data on prices; while more than 67 % of bookings are made through traditional channels.

One of the key objectives of the initiative is to spur technology-related investments even at the smaller lodges and family-run hotels across Greece. Digi-lodge offers to co-finance private investments in information and communication technologies to help them:

- enhance their Internet presence and international exposure;
- increase online bookings with fully automated online transactions;
- reduce seasonality effects and increase the flow of tourists throughout the year;
- increase the overall service quality by providing facilities such as WiFi, digital entertainment, etc; and
- considerably improve business efficiency by modernising back office operations.

'A project characterised as exceptional due to its objective to bring the tourism sector into the digital age, and its scale, covering more than 3 000 hotels and lodgings all over Greece.'
RegioStars Jury 2012



digi-lodge

Digi-lodge supports ICT investments that range between EUR 7 000 and EUR 40 000 in total, and co-finances them at a level of 60%. The total eligible investment budget is directly correlated to the type of state licence and the 'star rating' of the hotel. Each investment proposal has been submitted and screened through an automated electronic portal that has simplified the process.

Under the Digi-lodge scheme, digital investment agreements have been concluded so far with nearly 1 500 hotels and lodges, which are now able to offer online transactions and e-services.

Through the combination of advice and innovative co-financing, Digi-lodge is helping to dispel the fears and reservations of Greek hotel-owners about technology and launch them on the 'digital track' for the years ahead, when investment upgrades will typically be relatively minor expenditures.



Project	Digi-lodge
Region	Greece
Programme or Body	ERDF Operational Programme 'Digital Convergence'
Duration of project	08/2009 – 02/2011
Funding	EUR 75 000 000 of which EUR 36 000 000 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	www.digitalaid.gr

Smart growth • Innovative projects or schemes supporting service innovation in its different forms

Pan-European transfer of good practices in rural innovation

RUR@CT – European Regions for Rural Innovation

RUR@CT is a network of European regions which jointly aim to reinforce the effectiveness and efficiency of rural development through the transfer of good practices in the area of rural innovation. The network brings together 32 member regions and 30 partner regions with similar socio-economic characteristics. Experiences and good practices are shared and 'exported' to other regions where they are adapted to the local context and implemented.

Within the RUR@CT network, 'rural innovation' is understood in broad terms not only as technological, but also as economic, social and/or organisational innovation in rural areas.

The network's overall objective is to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of rural development policies at regional level through the successful transfer of good practices between European regions.

RUR@CT has developed a number of tools to achieve its objectives. It is underpinned by an online database, which currently makes available 155 good practices related to rural innovation. The content is segmented into seven main areas, namely 'accessibility and new infrastructures'; 'services to the population'; 'demographic challenges'; 'diversification and competitiveness'; 'employment and social cohesion'; 'environment and sustainable development'; and 'territorial governance and strategy'. Each good practice is described, analysed and classified according to its innovation level and transferability level.

RUR@CT has also developed an innovative methodology for the transfer of good practices, created for the purpose of facilitating transfers and guaranteeing their sustainability. This methodology details all the steps needed for the transfer as well as the role of the importing and exporting regions.

The results of RUR@CT's work and the achievement of its objectives can be seen in the development of some 40 Action Plans, which have been inspired by the good practices of the 'exporting regions'. These Action Plans have a catalytic role in the development of innovative regional policies since they define the conditions and the structure for the implementation of such policies.

'The ability to innovate at different levels within a traditional economic sector is a challenge in itself. Reconciling political with economic issues is something RUR@CT has managed to do with great skill, going further than the sharing of best practices and actually ensuring the implementation and transfer of expertise.'

RegioStars Jury 2012



The transfer of good practice enables the emergence of innovative and concrete rural development projects, led by a mix of stakeholders (small and medium-sized enterprises, local authorities, civil society, and research institutions).

In the area of 'environmental innovation', for example, good practice on awareness-raising initiatives for energy-saving in high schools is to be transferred from Baden-Württemberg (DE) to Limousin (FR).

In the area of 'organisational innovation', good practice developed in the wool sector can help others better organise and structure their wool industry at regional level, while reinforcing their marketing approach. Good practice from Jämtland (SE) is currently being implemented in Limousin.

In the area of 'social innovation', Andalusian good practice on gender equality is also being implemented in Limousin. Another example of good practice is being transferred from Wallonia (BE) on intergenerational housing, aimed at strengthening social inclusion and solidarity between the youth and the elderly.

The guarantee for sustainability is the existence of a complete database of good practices relating to all dimensions of 'rural innovation' that is regularly updated. The existence of this database and the detailed methodology facilitate future transfer opportunities and secure the implementation of transferred good practices.



Project	RUR@CT – European Regions for Rural Innovation (Régions Actrices de l'Innovation Rurale)
Region	Limousin, France
Programme or Body	ERDF Operational Programme for Limousin (Priority Axis 5, Measure 1 'Strengthening Territorial Cooperation')
Duration of project	01/2008 – 12/2013
Funding	EUR 2 000 000 of which EUR 1 000 000 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	http://www.ruract.eu

Smart growth • Innovative projects or schemes supporting service innovation in its different forms

Providing a 'smart' marketing platform for small design firms

Innovative Collaboration Networks for Smart Growth

Hidden Art is a not-for-profit organisation that sets out to assist disadvantaged design micro-enterprises in the London area gain access to the competitive, global marketplace. It provides a dedicated network and business-to-business (B2B) platform for the designers, and supports them with training, information, and business collaboration opportunities.

The Hidden Art project 'Innovative Collaboration Networks for Smart Growth' aims to stimulate smart growth for the local design community in London through service innovation, collaborative networks and training.

It provides the infrastructure and support to help designers, who are often sole traders, to market their products globally via the Hidden Art e-Shop, pop-up shops, international trade fairs, the company website, and press coverage.

The Hidden Art project offers an integrated support network and sets out to provide designer micro-enterprises with the resources and access normally only available to larger companies.

Alongside the dedicated B2B platform, designers are also supported with customised guidance provided through monthly networking events and one-to-one counselling sessions. The support model focuses on offering a menu of tailored progression routes, to raise their commercialisation of knowledge skills as well as offering platforms for collaboration, production and distribution of their work.

The Hidden Art system also generates opportunities for collaboration on joint procurement bids, particularly relating to the 2012 London Olympics.

Product development programmes are also organised to help participants develop their ideas into a product and get it into the marketplace.

A joint initiative between the Polymer Centre at London Metropolitan University and Hidden Art, for example, gives designers with limited knowledge about polymer-based materials the support they need to develop a concept into a design that can be manufactured and sold.

This virtual network builds on and expands the existing Hidden Art network which is open to all designer-makers and currently numbers around 2 000 members, of which 67 % are women.

'The project is well designed with many strong, innovative elements. It uses new social media tools to help designers and design-makers transfer their passion into products.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

Hidden Art

Around 100 designers have their products featured on the Hidden Art e-Shop (www.hiddenartshop.com) and around 300 have their directory page on the Hidden Art website (www.hiddenart.com).

Joint marketing collaborations, events and programmes are brokered or administered by Hidden Art to maximise commercialisation opportunities.

To date support has been provided to 450 businesses. Some 150 businesses have been involved in the collaboration networks.

The project has increased confidence in the London-based designer-maker community. Role models have been created for the industry, as the case studies show a number of individuals who have succeeded to create expanding businesses through project services.



Project	Innovative Collaboration Networks for Smart Growth
Region	London, UK
Programme or Body	London ERDF Operational Programme 2007-2013 (Priority 1 theme 1: Promoting Innovation)
Duration of project	10/2008 – 12/2011
Funding	EUR 1 490 000 of which EUR 750 000 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	www.hiddenart.com

Sustainable growth • Investments in ecosystem services and green infrastructure leading to sustainable regional development

Restoring green corridors to preserve biodiversity in the Rhône-Alpes region

Green Corridors Contracts

The Rhône-Alpes region in France is leading a strategy to preserve and restore a series of 'green corridors' on its territory to reduce the erosion of biodiversity. Five areas are receiving support under a system of innovative funding contracts concluded with local stakeholders.

The fragmentation of natural areas due to human activity is one of the primary causes of biodiversity loss in industrialised countries. In the Rhône-Alpes region, a series of 'green corridors' is being created in areas at risk, in order to facilitate the movement of wildlife and preserve the rich local biological network.

These green corridors are being created through a system of land contracts based on a detailed five-year action programme and upon which the region bases its financial contribution (average 50%). The total grant awarded by the region does not exceed EUR 1 million per contract.

Five corridor contracts are now in place and cover 5% of the Rhône-Alpes region (Grésivaudan, Bauges-Chartreuse, Chartreuse-Belledonne, Massif Central, Saint-Etienne).

The key objectives of the contracts are to restore corridors, ensure their sustainability, and to improve knowledge on species and their habitat. They also set out to foster 'green' agricultural practices to protect biodiversity and counter obstacles to biodiversity continuity.

Contracts play a key role in the sustainable development of the region by mainstreaming biodiversity issues into all policies (urban, agricultural, etc.), fostering awareness-raising on the long term objectives, and creating long-lasting infrastructure that preserves the ecological continuity of the region.

The starting point for the process is the mapping of the ecological networks in the region, which forms the working basis for all local players wishing to engage in ecological projects in their areas and ensures they are both participants and beneficiaries of the project.

'This is an important initiative to bring biodiversity issues into the mainstream of local and regional policies. The initiative contains a strong focus on raising public awareness of the value of ecosystem services.'
RegioStars Jury 2012



Today, five contracts have already been agreed and four others are in preparation, of which one is a cross-border contract with Switzerland. They will form the basis of the 'Regional Scheme of Ecological Coherence' (SRCE), an environmental strategy that each French region will have to jointly elaborate with the State by 2012. A key success factor in the project was the development of strong partnerships: the actions are jointly led by local associations, road infrastructure organisations, infrastructure users, land owners, farmers, and local authorities. A total of 71 public partners, 19 associations, and 8 private companies are involved in this elaborate, multi-disciplinary approach.

The contracts have, for example, initiated the construction of crossing points for wildlife, the planting of hedgerows, the implementation of agro-environmental measures, the restoration of riverbanks, awareness-raising actions, the management of wetlands, and the acquisition of land by the regional authorities.

Moreover, the contracts create jobs, with the region financing 50% of the salary of the engineers responsible for their coordination.

Once the contract/funding phase is completed, the cost of the daily functioning of the infrastructures will be almost neutral. Management costs are relatively low and can be assured by local and regional authorities alone.



Project	Green Corridors Contracts
Region	Rhône-Alpes region
Programme or Body	Identifying, protecting and restoring the ecological network of the region
Duration of project	01/2007 – 12/2013
Funding	EUR 18 785 173 of which EUR 7 119 349 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	http://biodiversite.rhonealpes.fr

Sustainable growth • Investments in ecosystem services and green infrastructure leading to sustainable regional development

Innovative Alps-Carpathians Corridor re-establishes a major migration route for wild animals

Alps-Carpathians Corridor

The high-level roads and settlements between the Alps and the Carpathian mountains interrupt a traditional route for wildlife. Green landscape bridges and other measures are now maintaining and restoring the Alps-Carpathian Corridor and allowing wildlife to flourish.

The mountain ranges of the Alps and the Carpathians, which straddle the border of Austria and Slovakia are the largest sources of biodiversity in Central Europe. The Alps-Carpathians Corridor between these mountains has historically been a major migration route for wildlife crossing the Danube and has been disrupted by economic development.

Pressure on land use in the region located between Vienna and Bratislava is considerable and a solution has been needed to combine ecological requirements with economic activity. As a part of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) the Corridor is being

restored to re-connect the eastern reaches of the Alps to the Western Carpathians and to support ecological connectivity and the sustainable development of the whole region. The project has brought together various institutions, NGOs, universities, as well as highway companies, and regional and federal authorities from Austria and Slovakia, to create a common trans-border platform facilitating the migration and genetic exchange of wild animal populations.

The project is also expected to increase the recreational attractiveness of the region and improve the environmental awareness of the population.

This project is among the first projects to be implemented as a part of the EUSDR.

The outcome is a joint Austrian-Slovakian Action Plan for the Corridor, covering land use, communication, scientific fundamentals, protection and spatial planning. Upon completion of the project, an Implementation Handbook will be included as reference material for similar future projects.

'This is a large-scale green infrastructure project that promises to strengthen the existing ecological network, and that works effectively with local stakeholders.'
RegioStars Jury 2012



creating the future

Programm zur grenzüberschreitenden Zusammenarbeit SLOWAKEI - ÖSTERREICH 2007-2013
Program cezhraničnej spolupráce SLOVENSKÁ REPUBLIKA - RAKÚSKO 2007-2013

A comprehensive Handbook on spatial planning will also be drawn up, which will translate the spatial planning objectives into planning tools for all regional administrations.

A system of 'Green Bridges' is under construction to allow easy passage for wildlife and the first will be constructed in Austria across the A4 Vienna-Budapest motorway. A similar wildlife overpass is being introduced in Slovakia to improve ecological connectivity across the highway from Bratislava to Brno.

The Corridor's structure has created a forum for the managers of these regions to share ideas and develop solutions that can be applied within the entire region, instead of only per protected area.

To ensure long-term continuity, key stakeholders are party to a Memorandum of Understanding that can contribute to sustainability in their area of responsibility. In addition, the relevant spatial development plans at regional and federal level will factor in the results and recommendations from this project.



Project	Alps-Carpathians Corridor
Region	Trnava, Bratislava, Wien, Burgenland, Niederösterreich
Programme or Body	ETC Slovakia – Austria 2007-2013
Duration of project	12/2008 – 06/2012
Funding	EUR 1 852 450 of which EUR 1 427 519 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	http://www.alpenkarpatenkorridor.at

Sustainable growth • Investments in ecosystem services and green infrastructure leading to sustainable regional development

Improving urban planning to adapt to climate change

GRaBS: Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco-towns

The GRaBS project – Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco-towns – sets out to provide the tools and knowledge to ensure that urban development across Europe, both existing and new, is suitably adapted to the impacts of climate change. Its key objective is to improve capacity and skills in the use of ‘green’ and ‘blue’ infrastructure. GRaBS is enabling urban designers, architects and planners to create or remodel outdoor spaces and buildings in order to ensure that they are resilient to climate change and extreme weather.

With today’s very high levels of greenhouse gases, urban areas are particularly vulnerable to the effects of rising temperatures and increased flooding. Appropriate strategic spatial planning and urban design are able to provide solutions which can reduce vulnerability to the anticipated impact of climate change.

GRaBS is an INTERREG IVC project which brings together 14 partners from eight EU Member States representing authorities facing a wide range of climate change challenges.

Over the past three years, policies and tools to promote the role of green and blue infrastructure in adapting towns and cities across Europe to climate change have been developed within the framework of the project.

The term, ‘green infrastructure’ refers to gardens, parks, landscapes, green roofs, etc., while ‘blue infrastructure’ covers water bodies such as rivers, streams, floodplains and sustainable drainage systems. Both can play a vital role in creating climate-resilient development.

Through interregional cooperation, the GRaBS project has facilitated the transfer good practice, knowledge, and experience on climate change adaptation strategies to local and regional authorities across Europe. Some 27 regional events on climate change have been organised, bringing together nearly 800 people, and raising the skill levels of some 130 staff members in regional/local authorities.

A key product of the GRaBS project is the Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Tool, created by the University of Manchester as a GRaBS partner. This innovative tool allows planners to input climate and socio-economic data into a GIS mapping system and measure the vulnerability of specific areas to climate change patterns.

‘While there are many projects working on the environmental aspects of green and blue infrastructure, this project goes further in assessing the social and economic benefits as well.’
RegioStars July 2012



This is complemented by the launch of a web-based International Case Study Database which compiles information on effective climate change adaptation planning in urban areas.

Through the stimulus of the GRaBS project, climate change adaptation has been integrated into policy at various strategic levels with partners producing Adaptation Action Plans (AAPs) and High Level Policy Statements. a particular concern is to ensure that green infrastructure interventions are designed and managed to ensure that they do not cause negative outcomes such as increased energy consumption. a concrete example of good practice is the integration of solar PV panels with green roofs. To date, 11 AAPs have been produced by 11 partners in seven different Member States.

To support the development of AAPs, an additional outcome of the GRaBS project is the Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Tool, created by the University of Manchester with input of local data from all GRaBS partners. This innovative tool allows planners to input socio-economic data into a GIS mapping system and measure the vulnerability of specific areas to climate change patterns. It is used as a decision making tool not only for planners but also to raise awareness of the challenges of extreme weather on urban neighbourhoods with politicians, stakeholders and local community groups.

This is complemented by the development of an online International Case Study Database which compiles information on effective climate change adaptation planning in urban areas.

The GRaBS consortium is working on the development of a successor project to take the outcomes of the project forward, and focusing on the implementation of the Adaptation Action Plans.



Project	GRaBS: Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco-towns
Region	England (leader)
Programme or Body	INTERREG IVC – European Territorial Cooperation Programme
Duration of project	09/2008 – 08/2011
Funding	EUR 3 183 000 of which EUR 2 430 000 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	http://www.grabs-eu.org/

Sustainable growth • Investments in ecosystem services and green infrastructure leading to sustainable regional development

Promoting measures to help North-West Europe adapt to the impacts of climate change

Strategic Initiative Cluster – Adaptation to the Impacts of Climate Change (*SIC adapt!*)

A major challenge for territorial development in North-West Europe (NWE) is improving its capacity to cope with the impacts of climate change. Some 100 project partners from seven EU Member States are combining their efforts to promote climate change adaptation through a strategic cluster of eight transnational projects.

The projects form part of the Strategic Initiative Cluster (SIC) entitled 'Adaptation to the spatial impacts of climate change' (*SIC adapt!*) and focus on appropriate adaptation measures for sensitive environments such as urban areas, floodplains and coastal zones across North-West Europe.

SIC adapt! is a grouping of networks or clusters that brings together eight projects funded by the INTERREG IV B North-West Europe Programme, to jointly tackle adaptation to the impacts of climate change in different spatial settings.

The cluster, which is led by the German Water Board, Lippeverband, was launched in October 2010 with the aim of:

- increasing the resilience of built, water, natural and social environments towards climate change;
- building a stronger knowledge base;
- inputting climate change impacts into key EU policies; and
- supporting wider international efforts at adaptation.

The funding of this strategic cluster allows 100 project organisations to work together and refine their strategic approaches at the local and regional levels. The cluster will provide a significant contribution to the review of key EU policies as proposed by the European Commission under the EU climate-change adaptation strategy after 2013.

Supporting the project is a 'Cluster Expert Board', which brings together representatives from all levels and types of organisations beyond the existing project networks to provide effective knowledge transfer from the local/regional level to the national/EU level and vice versa for aligning the approaches.

'This project exemplifies effective cooperation and information sharing in the area of climate change adaptation.'

There are many examples of best practices, tools, and measures employed in order to achieve efficient adaptation in different locations and sectors.'

RegioStars Jury 2012



A web-based cluster knowledge platform provides a comprehensive knowledge base of experts and will serve as a long-lasting information basis within these organisations. Moreover, the knowledge platform will be integrated into a web portal that will sustain the professional network.

The initial conclusions from the project indicate that climate change adaptation will only be successful and effective if the development of technical adaptation tools and measures include stakeholders as part of the process. It is evident from the early work that the main challenges in this process lie in improving communication, facilitating organisational change, and increasing institutional capacity.

Special attention needs to be paid to the local and neighbourhood dimension of climate change and to the target groups such as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The concerted actions of the cluster will result in extensively tested assessment tools and good-practice adaptation measures that can be easily transferred throughout NWE and other European regions.

Given the benefits of having access to the knowledge of around 100 clustered organisations it is anticipated that this transnational exchange will last beyond the formal establishment of the cluster.



Project	Strategic Initiative Cluster – Adaptation to the Impacts of Climate Change (<i>SIC adapt!</i>)
Region	North-West Europe (BE, DE, FR, IE, LU, NL, UK)
Programme or Body	INTERREG IV B North-West Europe (NWE) Programme
Duration of project	10/2010 – 06/2013
Funding	EUR 879 525, European funding only (ERDF)
Websites	http://www.sic-adapt.eu • http://www.eglv.de

Sustainable growth • Investments in ecosystem services and green infrastructure leading to sustainable regional development

Joint management and ecological development of cross-frontier nature areas

Hainaut Cross-Border Nature Park

The Hainaut Cross-Border Nature Park (PNTH) straddles the border between Wallonie (BE) and the Nord-Pas de Calais region of France. a cross-border management system has been set up to protect the area and promote its socio-economic development.

The PNTH is located in between a number of major urban hubs such as Lille, Tournai, Mons and Valenciennes/Douai. It encompasses two nature parks either side of an international border and major waterway. On the French side is the Regional Nature Park 'Scarpe-Escaut' (PNRSE) and on the Belgian side the the Nature Park of the Escaut Plains (PNPE). The zone covers some 70 000 hectares and encompasses one hundred or so towns and villages with a population of some 250 000.

'This cross-border project mobilises local citizens to conserve ecosystem services and also includes cross-sectoral working. This should mean that more sustainable, integrated solutions are found to environmental issues.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

This zone, rich in the natural, landscape, built and cultural heritage on either side of the Escaut valley, faces a number of environmental challenges and the PNTH project has set out to bring together all stakeholders in the region to better understand, protect, develop and manage the region.

Over the period 2007-2011 a joint management programme has been implemented in this cross-border area which has sought to manage issues ranging from land planning, institutional organisation and the mobilisation of technical teams, to relations with elected politicians and local stakeholders.

The principal challenges facing the PNTH revolve around the preservation of the water resources, the conservation of a functional ecological network and the development of environmentally-friendly farming practices. They also have to take into account the maintenance of a rural socio-economic fabric, preserve and improve the living environment and landscape, as well as maintain the rural nature of the region.

Through the 2007-2011 Action Plan a framework has been put in place to manage knowledge about the natural heritage, compile inventories of species at risk and develop information databases. An inventory of the wetlands has been undertaken and an integrated management plan has been developed for the cross-border waterway, the Elnon.



To gain a better understanding of the way these landscapes are changing a Cross-border Landscape Observatory has been created whose website (www.observatoire-paysages.pnth.eu) enables local residents to become involved by 'sponsoring' a landscape.

The 2007-2011 action programme focused on five fields of action:

- Defining the primary areas of concern and their long-term objectives;
- Structuring the governance and management of the PNTH nature park;
- Assembling a cross-border technical team;
- Enhancing ecological awareness in the region;
- Jointly implementing and managing a series of themed projects.

Some 85 % of the project's attainment indicators were accomplished one year before the project's end including 700 actions in the area of the joint management of natural resources.

The two nature parks, PNPE and PNRSE, have signed a formal partnership agreement. The 'Cross-border Charter of the PNR Scarpe-Escaut' will run for 12 years and is also an important element in ensuring the continuity of the partnership.

Certification as part of the 'Transboundary Parks' network of the European Federation of Parks (EUROPARC) will enable in the building of a network of sustainable cross-border parks across Europe.



Project	Parc naturel transfrontalier du Hainaut (PNTH) (Hainaut Cross-Border Nature Park)
Region	Région wallonne – Région Nord - Pas de Calais
Programme or Body	Interreg IV A France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen
Duration of project	01/07/2007 – 31/12/2011
Funding	EUR 4 599 300 of which EUR 2 229 650 is European funding (ERDF)
Websites	www.plainesdelescaut.be • www.pnr-scarpe-escaut.fr

Inclusive growth • Strategies, initiatives or projects addressing the challenge of demographic change and supporting active ageing (2012 is the 'European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations')

Change in management skills provides early support for elderly people

Project for Early Support of Elderly People in their Daily Lives (VAMU)

Improved collaboration between staff carrying out primary care and other support bodies helps bringing early support to elderly people in Kuopio, Finland. This allows the elderly stay at home longer.

Finland has one of the fastest ageing populations in Europe. It is increasingly important to develop social and health practices to help elderly people live at home for as long as possible.

The key objectives of 'VAMU', the project for the 'Early Support of Elderly People in their Daily Lives', are to provide individual support for elderly people living at home, and to develop collaboration and partnerships among health and social services, as well as among clients, staff, experts, and other actors (NGOs and private-sector service providers).

The 'early support' approach provides tools for the early identification of risks, assessment of the client's service needs, and the planning and implementation of further action in the best interests of the client.

When adopting this new approach among primary care providers, questionnaires served as a key tool in the implementation, monitoring, assessment, and follow-up of VAMU. Staff were involved in developing and monitoring their own working methods, and electronic questionnaires were used to elicit opinions and develop ideas. This approach was strongly supported by managers.

'This project is a worthy finalist because of its systematic approach to administrative reform and its approach to preventive health measures, enabling older people to maintain independent living.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

Cross-administrative and multidisciplinary collaboration can promote elderly people's health, welfare, and their ability to live independently. But this requires their active involvement in this process.

During the project, responsibility for the promotion and maintenance of early support passed entirely to the managers and staff. This transfer was supported by systematic training sessions with better information on processes and agreed practices.



Statistics from Elderly and Disabled Services in the city of Kuopio show that the number of elderly living at home increased from 91.5 % to 94.9 % from January 2008 to March 2011. The number of elderly in sheltered accommodation increased from 2.9 % to 4.1 % (the national recommendation is 5-6 %).

The number of elderly people in long-term care decreased from 5.6 % to 4.6 % (the national recommendation is 3 %).

The 'early support' approach is being included in the strategy of the City of Kuopio Centre for Social and Health Care Services, and in the centre's annual scheme.

VAMU training will be a standard part of staff training. VAMU lectures are being prepared and will also be offered to the public in collaboration with adult education centres.

The good practices of the VAMU project were disseminated at several national events and at the VII European International Congress, 'Healthy and Active Ageing for all Europeans', in Bologna, Italy. Participating in the successful concluding seminar of the VAMU Project, on 12 May 2011, were 115 partners from eastern Finland.

The model developed during the VAMU project can also be applied to other client groups.



Project	Project for Early Support of Elderly People in their Daily Lives (VAMU)
Region	Northern Savo (Finland)
Programme or Body	Operational Programme for Eastern Finland, Priority axis 3: Improvement of the accessibility of areas and the operating environment
Duration of project	9/2008 – 6/2011
Funding	EUR 600 000 of which EUR 420 000 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	http://www.kuopio.fi/web/kaupunkitietoa/varhainen-mukaantulo-vamuikaihminen-arjessa-projekti

Inclusive growth • Strategies, initiatives or projects addressing the challenge of demographic change and supporting active ageing (2012 is the 'European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations')

I-Cane – an innovative mobility system to help the blind and visually impaired achieve self support

I-Cane

Innovative technology in the form of an intelligent walking system or I-Cane could help the growing population of predominantly elderly people suffering from visual impairment remain socially and economically active.

In Europe there are 900 000 blind people and approximately 12 million people with significant visual limitations. Worldwide there are approximately 160 million blind and visually impaired people. Many will be able to benefit from highly advanced assistive technology being developed by I-Cane Social Technology in the form of a unique pedestrian guidance device.

The I-Cane combines cutting-edge technology for satellite navigation (integrating data from GPS, Egnos, Glonass and, in future, Galileo) with inertia sensors, algorithms and complementary guidance technology. Built into the cane are various patented system mobility functions. The handle incorporates a tactile arrow which offers an efficient non-verbal and intuitive interface.

'I-Cane is a very innovative combination of new and old technologies, leading to greater social integration. The fact that it is a social enterprise involving a regional group (SMEs, large enterprises, local groups, and NGOs) is also exemplary.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

The I-Cane helps the pedestrian find a 'free path' based on an innovative method of combining sensors, mechatronics and algorithms. The system is able to detect obstacles along the route and provide the user with the information he/she needs to proceed safely. Most of the communication takes place by means of a tactile interface built into the grip of the cane.

The system is seen as a breakthrough in navigation for the blind and visually impaired. Initial tests have been very positive. The use of this intelligent cane can significantly increase the self support, mobility and social participation of people with visual limitations.



The I-Cane initiative started as a foundation founded by the social entrepreneur Huub Grooten, funded by non-profit organisations. The company 'I-Cane Social Technology BV' was set up in 2008 to further develop the early research activities of the I-Cane Foundation (co-funded by the province of Limburg, NL).

Based around state-of-the-art, yet proven, technology the aim of the development is to keep the cost of the I-Cane systems low and affordable for a global audience. The launch of the I-Cane system on the market will be in 2012.

The initiative is supported by a consortium of other small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and cooperative relationships have been established with leading organisations in European countries for the blind and visually impaired. These partnerships are embedded in the project by means of seats in the I-Cane Advisory Council.

The current market response confirms the interest in the I-Cane. Even conservative revenue projections indicate that income in 2013 will be sufficient for the initiative to grow into a sustainable service and product range with several patented spin-offs aimed not just at those with visual limitations. In particular the unique Tactile Arrow (man-machine-interface) offers many opportunities regarding independence and mobility of Alzheimer and Dementia patients, and wheelchair- and walking frame-users.

Market and sector acceptance is in progress in the Netherlands and Belgium, and first user tests have been conducted in other countries. I-Cane will set up national initiatives to tailor the system to the unique requirements of each region. a limited amount of public money may be required to launch each of these initiatives.



Project	I-Cane
Region	South Netherlands, Province of Limburg (the Netherlands)
Programme or Body	Operational Programme South Netherlands 2007-2013 (OP-South)
Duration of project	12/2008 – 11/2011
Public funding	EUR 692 800 of which EUR 346 400 is European funding (ERDF) • Total project costs: EUR 1 385 600
Website	www.i-cane.nl

Inclusive growth • Strategies, initiatives or projects addressing the challenge of demographic change and supporting active ageing (2012 is the 'European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations')

Supporting the ageing population by keeping them physically and socially active

Seniors in Motion – URBAN 2 Porto – Gondomar

In the socially deprived parts of the Portuguese cities of Porto and Gondomar the 'Seniors in Motion' programme has implemented a range of integrated activities to promote the social inclusion, health, and wellbeing of the ageing population.

The main goal of the 'Seniors in Motion' programme was to give senior citizens living in deprived parts of the cities of Porto and Gondomar new opportunities for public participation through a series of integrated actions to encourage social integration and wellbeing.

The project's target area included two neighbouring parishes, Campanhã (city of Porto) and Rio Tinto (city of Gondomar). Located in the Porto Metropolitan Area, they are a perfect example of urban growth spreading outwards from the city core of Porto with a high concentration of social housing and a poor urban environment.

A high proportion of the population in these deprived areas is over 60 years old while the area also has a high level of unemployment (27%).

A large number of the elderly people, particularly those living in the area's social housing, were isolated and segregated from the general population, restricted to their residential area whether at home or in a care institution for the elderly.

In collaboration with the seven local elderly care centres, the project developed a new approach involving a proactive programme of dynamic activities to care for the psychological and physical state of the ageing population by keeping them physically and socially active as long as possible.

The programme supported a number of sport activities such as t'ai chi ch'uan, hydrogymnastics and boccia, adapted to the age of the beneficiaries and aimed at preserving their mobility and creating a strong sense of community.

'Seniors in motion went beyond traditional approaches to the idea of enriching older people's lives through cultural activities and expression. The project is also attractive as it involved municipal/regional cooperation alongside NGOs and local associations.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

urban 2 [PORTO]

It also introduced a recreational programme based on the performing arts (theatre and poetry) creating some 15 art workshops which resulted in public exhibitions.

A series of workshops on information and communications technology (ICT) were set also up for the senior population offering a basic skills programme on ICT through which 128 participants were certified.

A further educational programme for senior citizens resulted in 15 unemployed people obtaining certification and subsequently employment with social institutions in the deprived area.

An 'inclusive neighbourhoods' action involved the organisation of cultural festivities in each deprived neighbourhood to promote inter-generational dialogue.

The 'Seniors in Motion' project directly involved some 1 300 senior citizens in its various actions and has led to long term structural change in the target area. These integrated activities have also achieved positive social impacts such as strengthening local communities and enhancing self esteem.

The success of the strategy was based on a strong partnership between the managing authority, municipalities, local associations and NGO's. It integrated closely with other financial instruments to maximise the impact. Each partner was involved in different ways, but most of them maintained their support even after the end of the project.

Financed entirely by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the URBAN 2 Porto-Gondomar action was the most significant urban programme in Portugal.



Project	Seniors in Motion – URBAN 2 Porto – Gondomar
Region	North Region (Portugal)
Programme or Body	URBAN 2 Porto – Gondomar 2000-2006
Duration of project	11/2003 – 11/2006
Funding	EUR 294 899 of which EUR 206 429 is European funding (ERDF)
Websites	http://www.bonjoia.org/

Inclusive growth • Strategies, initiatives or projects addressing the challenge of demographic change and supporting active ageing (2012 is the 'European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations')

Mobilising older people to help older people

O4O: Older people for Older people

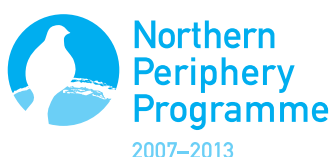
The proportion of older people in the European population continues to increase and the O4O project has been examining ways of helping communities provide the required services by mobilising older people to help other elderly people.

While the longevity of the general population is increasing, the percentage of older people (over 55 years) in Europe's northern periphery is higher compared to central and urban regions. Providing services for the elderly in rural areas is more challenging and a lack of healthcare and social support can lead to exclusion and hardship.

'The novelty of this project is its management approach to community development for older people in rural areas. It deals with the challenge of providing support services to older people in rural communities while seeing older people as part of the long-term solution in providing support in their own communities.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

In the O4O project, (Older people for Older people) which was concluded in 2010, staff from partner regions across the Northern Periphery – Finland, Greenland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Sweden – have worked closely with rural communities to research and develop alternative ways of providing support and services for their older citizens. In particular, they have sought to fill the gaps in service provision that would help statutory providers to keep older people living in their homes and communities with the many benefits it offers.

A major challenge of rural service provision is the high cost of travel in remote areas and finding and keeping the skilled staff required such as nurses and social carers. O4O has been a response to the emerging policy idea that people in communities should become increasingly involved in providing their own basic services, which could supplement or replace the services that statutory providers do not or cannot provide to improve quality of life for older people.



Working with groups of older people in rural communities, O4O has employed their skills, experience and knowledge to identify priorities for support services and activities. O4O set out to involve older people as they better know their own needs and are a huge source of energy, skills and knowledge.

Over the three years of the project, the potential benefits of involving older people in setting up and running an O4O initiative have been demonstrated. Measures have included a community transport scheme, community-managed centres for older people, help and friendship schemes, a luncheon club for older people using local produce from older people's gardens, volunteering to support older people, and history and culture projects.

O4O has worked to ensure the sustainability of the services created to give them every chance of continuing. Handbooks and guidance documents have been produced, and capacity built to support repeat services in the future and to enable other communities to undertake similar services.

The knowledge gained has been used to produce a Toolkit to help other communities develop O4O initiatives.

A series of policy briefings have been produced as part of the O4O project. These cover the practicalities of social enterprise creation within communities; the influence of culture and policy context on social enterprise creation; the future for older people's service delivery; and specific policy objectives for each of the O4O partner countries' national and regional governments. These policy briefings are available on the O4O website (www.O4Os.eu).



Project	O4O: Older People for Older People
Region	Highland and Islands, Scotland (Finland, Greenland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Sweden)
Programme or Body	Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013
Duration of project	01/2008 – 12/2010
Funding	EUR 2 125 530 of which EUR 1 183 997 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	www.O4Os.eu

Turning urban wasteland into a creative 'micro city'

Open LAB Ebbinge (OLE)

Open Lab is a unique international example of innovative, temporary city building where an area of wasteland in the city of Groningen (NL) is being transformed into a centre for business creativity.

Through a public-private partnership, a one hectare area of wasteland in the Ebbinge Quarter of Groningen, is being developed into a 'micro city' inside Groningen. The ERDF-funded project Open Lab Ebbinge (OLE) brings together a broad range of public and private partners in a long-term experiment in using demountable, nomadic and sustainable buildings. It is an innovative approach to regenerating unused sites in inner cities is also a proving ground for innovative and creative entrepreneurs.

This land in Groningen which has been abandoned since the late 1980's is being transformed into a temporary micro-city (2010-2015) for the creative economy, for cultural events and entertainment. It is a cultural and creative hotspot; an area for innovative entrepreneurs and educational institutes to develop new products and services.

It is also a practical laboratory for testing out sustainable approaches to temporary architectural solutions and urban development. As part of the project energy-efficient and cradle-to-cradle building methods, materials and approaches are being tested and showcased.

'The project 'Open LAB Ebbinge' brings life to an abandoned and derelict wasteland by using temporary architecture and innovative planning instruments. It aims at attracting cultural and creative industries and can play an important part in revitalizing the wider area.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

The Municipality of Groningen is responsible for providing the necessary public facilities, while private companies and knowledge institutes invest and erect the so-called 'pavilions', a non-profit development company and service provider is responsible for the temporary real estate and the use of public space for events and other activities.

The main objective of the project is to develop a deprived urban area into a dynamic creative zone, where knowledge, innovation, culture and creativity meet and mutually reinforce. Other objectives include further developing the profile of Groningen as creative city, tackling the problem of unoccupied commercial buildings in the Ebbinge Quarter and stimulating the local business climate.



The temporary micro-city project will pave the way for the permanent use of the area in the future. By testing and implementing temporary solutions in practice, the public and private partners can find out what is needed to create the desired working and living environment for knowledge workers, creative entrepreneurs, innovative companies and the public.

The project has already given a boost to the creative industry of the region. Events, public facilities, theatre and congress centre are estimated to have over 250 000 visitors each year.

The project can be dismantled and used again in other parts of the City of Groningen and other places where investment is needed to regenerate abandoned urban sites and wasteland.

Due to changes in the Common Agricultural Policy, one of the Groningen's sugar beet factories has been dismantled. The experience of Open Lab will be applied to this derelict industrial site. A lot of interest in the project has already been shown by other cities.

The public aspect of the partnership is mainly to create the basic conditions to attract businesses and enable creativity to flourish. As the involvement of private partners has been high from the beginning, the long-term sustainability is high.



Project	Open LAB Ebbinge (OLE)
Region	Northern Netherlands (Noord-Nederland), City of Groningen
Programme or Body	Operational programme ERDF 2007-2013 objective 2, Northern Netherlands
Duration of project	20/09/2009 – 31/12/2011
Funding	EUR 4 892 640 of which EUR 192 640 is European funding (ERDF)
Websites	www.groningen.nl • www.ebbingekwartier.nl

Rediscovering Vila do Conde: Integrated Programme for Urban Regeneration

Rediscovering Vila do Conde: Integrated Programme for Urban Regeneration

The architectural, cultural and social decline in the Portuguese city of Vila do Conde has been reversed through an innovative and integrated urban regeneration programme.

The old centre of Vila do Conde in northern Portugal features a wide range of remarkable historical monuments which along with its cultural environment, has always attracted a vast range of artists and men of letters.

Located 30 km north of Oporto city, Vila do Conde is an important industrial centre, fishing port, and tourist area. In the 1980s, however, due to the decline in major industries that for years ensured its prosperity, Vila do Conde was faced with a cycle of decline and deprivation, combined with a dwindling population and serious deterioration of its ancient heritage.

'The Rediscovering Vila do Conde project clearly shows the benefit of long-term commitment, major strategic investments, integrated planning, and the inclusion of various social groups in order to revitalise an area in decline.'

RegioStars Jury 2012



To counteract this deterioration of the socio-economic and urban infrastructure, the Municipal Council of Vila do Conde, in partnership with the European, national, regional and local authorities, developed an integrated programme of urban regeneration, with a view to, mobilising and combining all agencies and support tools available.

This resulted in the implementation of the 'Rediscovering Vila do Conde' programme between 2000 and 2010.

A core aspect of this programme centred on enhancing cultural heritage through the integration and recovery of important buildings in the historic centre of Vila do Conde – the 'Identity Anchor Poles' – and their use in activities primarily related to culture and creativity. Major improvements were made to the historical centre, the waterfront, and the sea-front of the city.

New ways of promoting creative and cultural activities to strengthen the identity of Vila do Conde were also introduced, working in close partnership with key regional and local actors.

The regeneration process has been innovative with the adoption of many new techniques in the construction and development of public spaces and facilities.

Regional and local agencies as well as the general public have been involved in the various phases of this urban regeneration initiative.

The success of the integrated urban regeneration programme and its various actions have been recognised regionally, nationally, and internationally through multiple awards and, in particular, winning the prestigious 'Novo Norte' prize in 2011.

The achievements of the integrated program are also evidenced by the broad national and international recognition of the city's brand of culture and creativity, in particular hosting the prestigious 'International Short Film Festival' during the first weeks of July when Vila do Conde becomes the epicentre of the film market, attended by developers, industry and public. Activities undertaken under the project increased social cohesion, as the differences became an element of individual valuation, reinforcing the integration of the population – including the ethnic minorities – in the regenerated urban context.

Crucially, the demographic decline of Vila do Conde since the 1980s has been reversed.

The experience gained in developing the project, as well as lessons learned through contacts with other European cities, have built up a 'knowhow' which has been applied to other cities through the Urbact I municipal action programme, in which Vila do Conde has been an active participant.

The close involvement of all the partnerships that provides much of the programming and animation is key to the future sustainability of the integrated action in Vila do Conde.



Project	Rediscovering Vila do Conde: Integrated Programme for Urban Regeneration
Region	Portugal Norte Region
Programme or Body	North Region Operational Programme
Duration of project	01/2000 – 12/2010
Funding	EUR 18 289 329 of which EUR 8 874 716 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	http://www.cm-viladoconde.pt/

Integrated strategy to generate social, economic and environmental sustainability and growth in south-east Malmö, Sweden

SÖM 'South East Malmö'

The SÖM 'South East Malmö' project set out to create a socially, environmentally and financially sustainable environment in a number of depressed city districts of Malmö.

The 80 000 people living in the south-east area of Malmö, Sweden, suffer a very high level of unemployment and many are highly dependent on social benefits. The SÖM 'South East Malmö' project undertaken in 2008 set out to bring together public, private and non-profit actors to work towards a sustainable growth in the area.

The needs in the SÖM area were clearly identified, as well as the opportunity to fund some of this work with the help of the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Public consultation and sustained dialogue ensured a strategic focus on the needs in the SÖM area and synergy in implementing projects, even if the two funds had different aims and objectives.

'The South East Mamö project was shortlisted because it facilitated close and well-targeted coordination between various structural funds (ESF and ERDF) that supported a long-term vision. The intercultural dimension of the project is also clearly a positive element.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

Over a period of one year the partners successfully created a platform to concentrate available resources, both human and financial, and help create a socially, environmentally and financially sustainable environment in these city districts while promoting creative, sustainable growth.

As part of the SÖM coordination process, all local actors jointly identified the common interests, problems and opportunities in four districts of the city as a first step towards a structured and integrated regeneration plan for south-east Malmö. This analysis generated 10 projects focusing on issues such as social integration, growth of the local economy and job creation which were launched with ESF and ERDF funding.

Working alongside the city administration in these projects, has been Malmö University, the National Employment Agency, National Insurance Office, the private sector in Malmö and neighbouring areas, and the City administration in Gothenburg, amongst others.

A particular success has been the SÖM Fosie action to increase jobs and access to jobs through horizontal actions of integration, training and matchmaking and a new phase has been launched with EU funding.



Other actions include a pre-study of an innovation and education centre; one to combat social exclusion and unemployment for young people through innovative partnerships with NGOs and the public; an experimental project to break trends of long-term unemployment; a coaching project for unemployed and socially excluded persons; and a scheme for training people to gain access to the labour market.

The projects have improved equal opportunities and integration for minority groups and young people and reduced unemployment and social exclusion.

Furthermore, the initiative has generated a new area-based strategic regeneration programme with social innovation as a main tool.

It has created an environment that allows local initiatives based on needs and demands to flourish, one that is well integrated and accepted by the local population and local private, NGO and public actors.

The project platform has become a public tool for city sustainable regeneration and continues to function actively within the city's general budget.

The long-term effect of the project has been to create a strategic partnership for the SÖM area and to develop an action plan for the area and the city as a whole.

It has increased the participation of citizens, private actors, property owners and the commercial and industrial world in efforts for future city development.

The success of the approach is proven through the fact that other new projects have been started after the projects end, including self-funded continuation of the process work through a city administration help desk.

The experience from SÖM has continued through a new programme in Malmö called "Områdesprogrammet" area based programme, which has been formally approved by the city council executive board. It now has a holistic integrated approach to five areas facing particular challenges, and builds on the coordinated use of ESF and ERDF funds.



Project	SÖM 'South East Malmö'
Region	SKÅNE-Blekinge (Sweden)
Programme or Body	Operational programme Skåne-Blekinge
Duration of project	01/2008 – 12/2008
Funding	EUR 190 000 of which EUR 81 105 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	www.malmo.se

Introducing harmonized development in the cross-border region between Austria and Slovakia

Baum – Bratislava Umland management/ Bratislava Urban Regional Cooperation

Through a series of projects and joint initiatives, the Slovak capital Bratislava and the neighboring Austrian regions are engaged in cross-border co-operation to harmonize the development of the region.

BAUM (Bratislava Urban Regional Cooperation) is a joint initiative between the provinces of Lower Austria and the Burgenland, the Slovak capital City of Bratislava and the Bratislava Self-Governing Region. The aim is to establish a platform for all stakeholders in the BAUM region to direct its spatial development.

Since the accession of Slovakia to the EU there is greater cross-border movement in the region, with people living on the Austrian side and working on the Slovak side, and vice versa. Schools and kindergartens are full again and many children in the region are educated bilingually.

'The BAUM project is outstanding in its aim to foster transnational cooperation and planning. It tackles recent developments, and challenges issues such as 'urban sprawl' which don't stop at borders, and which can only be solved by a range of stakeholders working together at regional level.'
RegioStars Jury 2012



The strong growth dynamics of Bratislava are affecting the rural Austrian villages through increased demand for new settlements, leisure and recreational areas. The formerly rural villages are becoming sub-urban towns.

There is a need for a well-balanced strategy for the future development of Bratislava and the towns in the surrounding area to limit unwelcome activities in the border region such as uncontrolled expansion etc.

In the course of the BAUM project, the first cross-border urban regional cooperation management structure shall be established. Creating the common platform will define the conditions for further regional development and the consensus of all stakeholders will establish clear foundations for systematic development.

Through the combination of regulations and investment activities on both sides of the border, the management structure for the city and surroundings will significantly mitigate the emergence of negative effects due to the expansion of the City of Bratislava.

The project involves information, cooperation, and coordination meetings for the Slovak and Austrian villages and the city of Bratislava. By formulating common perceptions about the image of the region, the project ensures sustainable conditions for the future development of the region such as mobility, settlement development, social affairs etc.

A new phase of cooperation is being initiated with even more specific goals such as the establishment of a multilateral expert platform (MEP) as a basis for implementing a urban and regional planning concept (URPC) – a collective vision for the region's development that unifies the interests of all affected stakeholders.

After the project is completed the expert platform will be retained for coordinating the future development of the border region. It will act as a continuous source of information for all decisions affecting daily life in the border region.

The cross-border urban-regional-cooperation management structure will also be retained to help in day to day communication between the Austrian and Slovak municipalities and regions.



Project	Baum – Bratislava Umland management/Bratislava Urban Regional Cooperation
Region	Nordburgenland, Wiener Umland-Nord, Wiener Umland-Süd, VUC Bratislava (Austria and Slovakia)
Programme or Body	European Territorial Cooperation Slovakia – Austria 2007-2013
Duration of project	04/2002 – 12/2013
Funding	EUR 690 959 of which EUR 587 315 is European funding (ERDF)
Websites	http://www.ba-um.eu

Information and communication • Informing the public
on the internet about projects benefiting from EU Regional policy

An interactive project database permits the visualisation of projects

e-Tools on National Development Agency website

*'Here, the effective use of digital tools
and well-selected information, ensure
easy access to comprehensive
information on EU-funded projects.
A vast set of digital tools provide access
to an impressive amount of data
about the projects.'*
RegioStars Jury 2012

The website of the National Development Agency (NDA) of Hungary is a public portal presenting the most important data relating to EU-funded programmes. Designed as a one-stop shop, it provides information about EU funds, operational programmes, and projects that have benefited from EU funding, and serves as primary platform for communication with beneficiaries. Among other useful applications, the website incorporates an interactive project database (EUMAP) which permits the visualisation of implemented projects co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, and the Cohesion Fund in Hungary.

National Development Agency
www.ujszechenyiterv.gov.hu
06 40 638 638



HUNGARY'S RENEWAL

Project	e-Tools on National Development Agency website
Region	Hungary
Programme or Body	e-Tools on National Development Agency website
Date of launch	2007
Funding	EUR 185 000/year of which EUR 157 250/year is European funding (ERDF)
Website	www.nfu.gov.hu

Information and communication • Informing the public
on the internet about projects benefiting from EU Regional policy

The 'one-stop-shop' for the public on EU spending

Europa om de hoek

'A simple, user-friendly interface with a hint of fun, enables stimulating and complete access to the projects. The website flawlessly leads the user from the home page to descriptions of EU-funded projects. The map is highly interactive, providing an optimal user flow.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

Europaomdehoek.nl is the 'one-stop-shop' for members of the public – particularly schoolchildren and students – that want to learn how European money is spent in the Netherlands. The website focuses on the immediate results of the projects. Background information on the different funds is also available. The website is especially easy to navigate thanks to the use of Google Maps. The language is easy to understand and the use of photographs and videos make the site attractive. The website is a highly important communication tool for the European funds, Dutch ministries, and the EU Representation in the Netherlands. It will, again, be the backbone of the annual event in 2012: the 'Europa Kijkdagen'.



Project	Europa om de hoek
Region	The Netherlands
Programme or Body	Managing Authority Kansen voor West, on behalf of the Managing Authorities of the four Operational Programmes in the Netherlands, and supported by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture & Innovation (EL&I), ESF, INTERREG, and the EU Representation in the Netherlands.
Date of launch	November 2009
Funding	EUR 95 000 of which EUR 20 000 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	www.europaomdehoek.nl

Information and communication • Informing the public
on the internet about projects benefiting from EU Regional policy

Quick and efficient search for the information you require

Regional operational programme for Podlaskie Voivodeship 2007-2013

'The programme makes effective use of tools combining video, images, animation, and GIS maps in a natural way that complements the user interface. These qualities, combined with detailed descriptions of the projects, result in a very positive user experience.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

The website is one of the most important tools in the communication strategy adopted by Poland's Podlaskie Voivodeship province. It presents comprehensive, detailed information on co-financed investments (including presentations, photos, and maps showing the investment location) and programme beneficiaries. It enables the user to quickly and efficiently search for the required information, and helps to promote the programme and investments to various audience groups. The website provides user friendly tools with which to examine the effects and see the implementation status of projects. Moreover it presents initiatives and examples of best practice that have significantly contributed to the growth of Podlaskie province.

Project	Regional operational programme for Podlaskie Voivodeship 2007-2013
Region	Poland
Programme or Body	Regional operational programme for Podlaskie Voivodeship 2007-2013
Date of launch	May 2009
Funding	EUR 14 924 of which EUR 13 432 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	www.efrr.wrotapodlasia.pl

Information and communication • Informing the public on the internet about projects benefiting from EU Regional policy

Estonia–Latvia Programme showcases activities online

Estonia – Latvia Cross-border Cooperation Programme

'A streamlined, easy to use, information-powered website that provides a clear understanding of the EU contribution to the projects. The design opts for simplicity over flashiness, providing an easy-to-use informational tool on the projects in question. Descriptions contain both photos and videos.'
RegioStars Jury 2012

The website of the Estonia – Latvia Programme provides information on its 57 cross-border cooperation projects, specifically Southern Estonia and Northern Latvia, which are supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The website has separate Estonian and Latvian sections including an area with the main Programme information, as well as a section on supported projects which provides details of beneficiaries, short project descriptions, and project photos. There are also videos and electronic materials (where available), showing the geographic location of projects and providing links to the project implementers. A key effort is made to focus the website's content on the activities taking place and the end-results achieved. The website also offers an electronic newsletter, distributed to some 1 750 municipalities, NGOs, beneficiaries, and intermediaries.



Project	Estonia – Latvia Cross-border Cooperation Programme
Region	Estonia-Latvia
Programme or Body	Estonia – Latvia Cross-border Cooperation Programme
Date of launch	February 2008
Funding	EUR 11 143 of which EUR 3 984 is European funding (ERDF)
Website	http://www.estlat.eu

European Commission

RegioStars Awards 2012 – Presentation of the finalists

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RegioStars Awards 2012

RegioStars – the awards for innovative projects – is an annual event to recognise and reward innovative projects supported by EU cohesion policy.

The Awards have been organised by the European Commission since 2008. The 2012 awards are therefore the fifth RegioStars Awards.

This year three categories are linked to important themes for the Europe 2020 strategy: Smart growth, Sustainable growth, Inclusive growth. In addition there is a 'CityStar' award and an Information and Communication award.

RegioStars 2012 has seen 107 applications from project promoters and regions.

The 24 projects selected by the RegioStars Jury highlight the excellent and innovative work being done on the ground in relation to the specific themes and present a geographical spread of projects from across the Union.

More details on the Award scheme can be found on the Inforegio website:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.cfm

RegioStars Awards 2013

The application process for 2013 RegioStars Awards was launched in October 2011:

- **SMART GROWTH:** Connecting universities to regional growth
- **SUSTAINABLE GROWTH:** Supporting resource efficiency in SMEs
- **INCLUSIVE GROWTH:** Social innovation: creative responses to societal challenges
- **CITYSTAR:** Integrated approaches to sustainable urban development
- **INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION:** Promoting EU Regional policy with short videos

The deadline for application is 20 April. The selected finalists will have the opportunity to showcase their projects before an independent jury during the tenth annual European Week of Regions and Cities – OPEN DAYS 2012. The Award ceremony itself will take place in Brussels in early 2013.

More details on these projects can be found on the Inforegio website:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm

Further information:

REGIO-STAR@ec.europa.eu



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