



Press release

The first projects of the European 2 Seas Cross-border Cooperation Programme have been approved

The first projects of the new European 2 Seas Cross-border Cooperation Programme involving the French Nord-Pas de Calais region, the south coast of England and the Dutch and Flemish coasts, were approved on 12 November 2008. Eleven cross-border cooperation projects received the go-ahead from the Programme Steering Committee and will receive funds totalling nearly 19 million euros from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The first call for project proposals for the INTERREG IVA 2 Seas programme, which closed on 25 July 2008, received 23 applications for European joint financing for cross-border projects developed by partners located in the eligible zone of the Programme. On 12 November, the Programme Steering Committee, chaired by Marie-Noëlle LIENEMANN, Vice-President for Europe on the Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Council and European M.P., approved 11 of them after careful consideration.

The approved projects deal with economic, environmental and social issues which have a particular relevance for the 2 Seas cooperation zone. Their activities will receive up to 50% funding from the European Union.

The 2 Seas programme is a new zone for cross-border cooperation created in 2008. It is located at the meeting point of the Channel and the North Sea and involves the coastal regions of the 4 Member states: France, England, Belgium (Flanders) and the Netherlands. The Nord-Pas de Calais Region is the Managing Authority and it is supported by a technical secretariat to drive forward and monitor the programme.

A new call for project proposals for the 2 Seas Programme is currently underway and will close on 10 December.

Further information

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ANNEXES:

The 11 approved projects

TIME: or “Transferring Innovation for Maritime Economy”, led by ADITEC in Pas de Calais. This project involves France, Belgium (Flanders) and the United Kingdom. It aims to promote economic and technological cross-border cooperation in maritime activities in Pas de Calais, Kent and the region of Antwerp. Links will be established among three Business and Innovation centres to work on innovation management techniques, to identify needs and opportunities, to assist client organisations to reach agreements and successfully implement innovative projects.

TEN: or “Transmanche Enterprise Network”, led by Medway Council (UK). This project involves the United Kingdom, France and Belgium. Its aim is to assist small businesses develop in Medway, Nord - Pas de Calais and West Flanders, by exploiting cross-border relationships in the 3 regions concerned.

ECO-MIND: or “Development of the environment and innovation market”. This project, led by Business Support Kent (UK), involves the United Kingdom, Nord-Pas de Calais and all the eligible and neighbouring zones of the Netherlands. The purpose of the project is to gain a better understanding and meet the specific needs of small and medium-sized businesses seeking to develop innovative products and services for the environment and to assist them in using, to their advantage, the growing market for environmental products.

BPPE: or “Developing Best Practice in Promoting Enterprise”, led by Business Support Kent. This project involves Medway and Kent in the United Kingdom and the regions of Ghent and Eecloo in Belgium (Flanders). The main goal of the project is to assist in the development of a corporate culture and to promote entrepreneurship in disadvantaged areas so that the local inhabitants can make their own living, develop self-respect and promote a work ethic within their communities. It aims at contributing to establish an environment and conditions which promote an increase in business creation.

C2C: , or “Connect to Compete”, led by the South East England Development Agency. This project involves the United Kingdom, France (Pas de Calais) and Belgium (Ostend and Bruges). It aims at improving the connectivity of cross-border ports and assisting in the development of intermodal freight transport in order to make it more efficient and “sustainable”. The project also seeks to strengthen regional competitiveness in terms of intra-European and international trade and transport chains.



C-SCOPE: or "Combining sea and coastal planning in Europe". This project led by the Province of West Flanders involves Belgium and the United Kingdom. It aims to use an integrated and uniform approach to the management of coastal and sea planning and establishes the basis for a strong, sustainable coastal economy appropriate to its environment in West Flanders and Dorset.

Urban Habitats: This project, run by the Schieland and Krimpenerwaard Water Authority (NL), involves the Netherlands (Groot Rijnmond), the United Kingdom (Essex, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock) and Belgium (Ostend and Ghent). The project aims at improving access to and the quality of urban green spaces and developing awareness of and commitment to urban green spaces by local communities.

SISCO: or "Solutions for Implementing Sustainable Construction: the Sustainable Purchasing and Planning Centre", led by the Environment Centre in the United Kingdom. This project involves the United Kingdom (Brighton and Hove, West Sussex, Portsmouth, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Southampton), Turnhout (Flanders) and West North-Brabant and Groot Rijnmond in the Netherlands. It aims to overturn obstacles to sustainable development policies by integrating sustainable development (social, economic and environmental) in local authorities' planning processes. It mainly concerns the building sector and the use of renewable energies and technologies.

ACCESS: or "Employing ambassadors in communities and promoting social capital in disadvantaged communities", led by Medway Council (UK). This project involves the United Kingdom and France. Its aim is to carry out a programme of cross-border activities with the purpose of improving the quality of life and the employability of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Medway and the Dunkirk urban area.

CBOOPSD: or "Cross-border observatory for the optimisation of public services". This project involves the United Kingdom and France. Led by Kent County Council (UK), its purpose is to understand users' needs in greater detail in Pas de Calais and Kent in order to adapt public services to the requirements and expectations of the various groups of users.

TSE: or "Tackling Social Exclusion – by examining, testing, and improving service quality". This project led by Southampton City Council (UK) involves the United Kingdom, Belgium (Flanders) and the Netherlands. It brings together the urban areas of Southampton, Ghent and Rotterdam and studies, tests and improves methods which encourage social inclusion.



The key-parts of the 2 Seas INTERREG IVA Programme

Since 1990, European territorial cooperation has enabled concrete projects to be implemented among the regions of the various countries of the European Union with the purpose of reducing differences and ensuring that national borders are no longer an obstacle to sustainable economic and social development for all of the EU's regions.

The 2 Seas programme is a new zone for cross-border cooperation created in 2008. It is located at the meeting point of the Channel and the North Sea and involves the coastal regions of the 4 Member states: France, England, Belgium (Flanders) and the Netherlands.

The programme benefits from 167 million euro community funding (ERDF) for the period 2007-2013.

The aim of the programme is to develop the competitiveness and the potential for sustainable growth of the maritime and non-maritime assets of the areas concerned in the programme by creating and developing cross-border cooperation partnerships. In order for the programme to meet this objective, priority is given to four key elements:

- the creation of an accessible, attractive and competitive area at an economic level,
- the promotion and development of a healthy and safe environment,
- an improvement to quality of life,
- Joint actions with the France (Channel) - England programme constitutes the programme's 4th priority. The focus is on capitalising on good practice.

The added value of cross-border cooperation to the development of the territories concerned, the quality of the approach, the aims pursued and the expected results, the relevance of the partnership and "good value for money" are all important criteria taken into account for the approval of the projects.

Project partners may be public authorities, public equivalent bodies, non-profit-making organisations or from the private sector. Each partnership must include at least one English member.