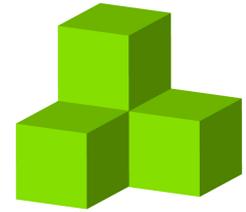


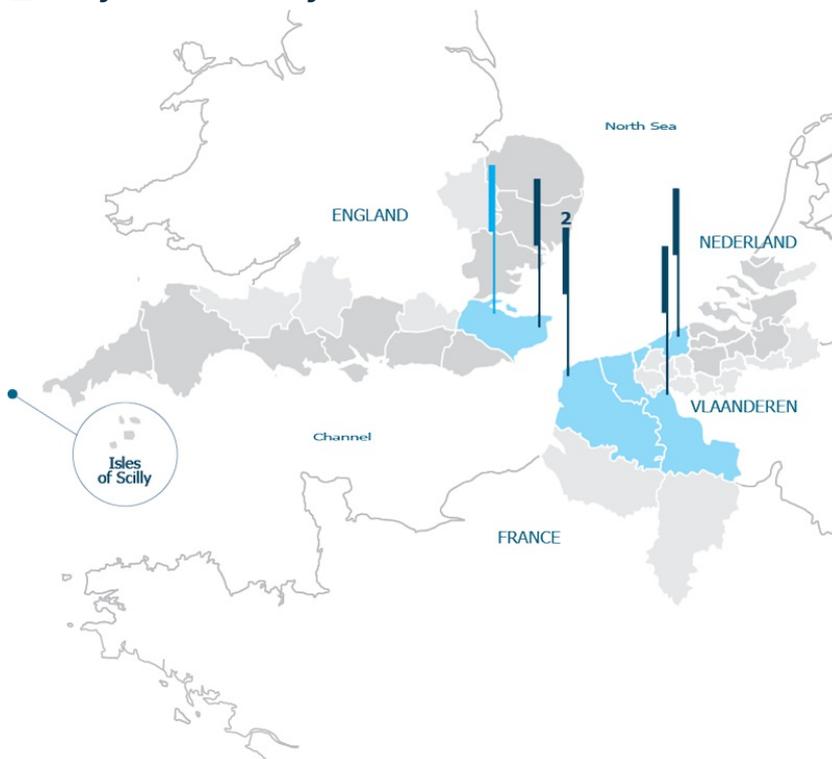
TEN

Transmanche Enterprise Network



tenproject.eu
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■ Project summary



TEN's objective is to develop crossborder trade between micro businesses, and also to address their needs by developing the business support infrastructure of the three partner areas and increasing the collaboration between them and universities. The partners from regional and city councils, a chamber of commerce and regional development agencies have already established good working relations and wish to ensure the continued existence of this network of tailored business support on cross-border trade, which gives micro businesses previously untapped opportunities to expand their access to border regions. The project will utilise the

skills of the SMEs it supports in the UK, France and Flanders to deliver the project activities, which include business support workshops, intensive assistance and translation services.

■ Activities

What was the project trying to achieve?

The aim of the project was to offer micro businesses in the 3 partner areas the tools to enable them to explore cross-border trade opportunities, to develop these businesses and to increase their survival rate through the tailored and focused support that the project could offer. The project also gives the partners the opportunity to share best practice and to learn about the different approaches to business support and business centre management. Objectives: - Development of cross border trade between micro businesses. - Development of a network of business centre managers and business support professionals - Development of workspace to

meet the changing needs of the businesses. - Development of the relationship between micro businesses, business support organisations and Universities.

What were the activities implemented?

400 audit questionnaires were carried out to establish the barriers to cross-border trade and to establish the needs of businesses wanting to explore a new European market. Based on the information received, the partners devised a business support programme, which included workshops, language training courses, 121s with business advisors and with business experts. For W Flanders start up businesses moving into their business centres, a package was offered including subsidised rent periods and free business support. There were a number of cross-border events held in each of the partner areas, which encouraged networking amongst TEN participants. There were also visits to the Lille Art Fair and to Terroirs et Saveurs in Arras. Businesses in Kent were offered a grant towards website development and translation. They were also able to use this grant for translation of marketing material when attending overseas events. One of the most popular workshops that we ran was on social media and we offered this as a 121 to Kent businesses, which proved to be very popular. TEN participants were also taken to visit business centres on study trips and were offered presentations from businesses based in centres across the partner areas. This gave them an insight into the kind of facilities offered across the Channel and on occasion they were given a presentation on the region. It was also an occasion to get to know the project partners, who are valuable contacts for businesses wishing to explore overseas opportunities. Business centre improvements were carried out in business centres across Medway and the Canterbury district and in Western Flanders. The project partners have worked closely with the Universities to develop links between small businesses and students. In Kent, partners have held consultancy weeks with the MBA students from Kent Business School at the University of Kent. Businesses have received tailored advice from students on issues specific to their business. It was a good opportunity for the students to put their learning and skills to practice in real business scenarios. It was interesting to see the close link between the Universities and business incubation. Towards the end of the project, we made a short film to evaluate the outputs and to capture the view of the TEN participants. We also produced an On Line Trading Guide.

■ Results

What were the key results of the project?

- 400 businesses across the 3 partner areas have been questioned on the barriers to cross-border trade - Business support programme developed in Kent and W Flanders offering over 120 events - Creation of project website: www.tenproject.eu - Launch of brand new microsite: www.crosschanneltrade.net - An Incubator map also completed - to show the network of business centres across the partnership. - There have been a number of trading projects between businesses in each of the partner areas, some of which are cross-border, others are local. - 14 cross border study trips across the partner areas - 60 businesses have benefitted from website development and/or translation and translation of marketing material. - In West Flanders, 7 of the business centres now have tri-lingual websites - Delivery in excess of 20 business centre improvements, including a TEN office in Canterbury and a small office area for 2 businesses at the Innovation Centre Medway.

Did all partners and territories benefit from the results?

The target groups are micro businesses in the partner areas. They have benefitted directly from the project services. Beneficiaries: These include Rough Old Wife Cider, Triangle Factory and Kersh Media, Canterbury Curry Club, Kent Crisps, Fudge Kitchen and Cheesemakers of Canterbury all sold their products in Arras at Terroirs et Savoirs, making contacts with distributors and stockists and receiving advice on European markets from CCI International. Business support organisations in the partner areas have become aware of the project and its success and they have been prepared to offer support and training for local businesses. Kent and Medway and West Flanders has benefited from the programme of business support available to small businesses. Other support organisations have been able to signpost businesses to the project and have been keen to promote TEN across the areas. In Kent, a peer group of TEN members has emerged and the relationships between businesses is sustainable. In Northern France, businesses have come to Kent to exhibit at business exhibitions and the Netday was partly funded by TEN. In West Flanders, businesses have had easier access to the incubators with the voucher system for business support and the subsidised rent for start-ups. Tenants and start ups in Kent and W Flanders will continue to benefit from the business centre improvements delivered through TEN, which have improved the facilities available at the centres.

What were the effects / outcomes for the territories involved?

In Kent, Medway and West Flanders, the project partners have been able to see the benefits of an EU project like TEN. It is clear that the funding and the contact with business support organisations across the Channel gives access to wider opportunities and that businesses are keen to pursue these opportunities with the support of the partners. In the Nord-Pas de Calais region, the benefits have not been considered so great. The time taken to compile reports and claims does not seem to be worth the funding that is drawn down from the EU. There seems to be a lack of support from Senior Management to provide a resource to manage the projects and for this reason, the staff members do not have the time to be as proactive as in other areas of the partnership. However, the relationship between the TEN project partners has been excellent and now that the contacts have been made, the network between us will always exist.

■ Distinctiveness

What was the real added-value of doing this cross-border project?

The partner areas are very accessible and a number of study visits have been possible due to the close geographical location of the partners. The partner contact has been valuable and will help us to support local businesses in the future. We have added value to the business support through European funding and through the networks that have been developed through the partnership, like the experience at exhibitions and research trips to business centres across the channel. Businesses have been given the confidence to explore new markets through the support we have given them for their first visits overseas and through the language learning that they have done with the project. Businesses know how to access support and also know who to contact if they want to explore overseas markets in the future.

Have any synergies been developed with other projects or networks?

At the Duurzaam exhibition in Kortrijk, there was a joint project stand with Centre Transfrontalier, a project with Lille, which enabled them to have a very large space as they could share the cost. Canterbury City Council has linked up with the Ecomind project in previous events and TEN has shared stand space with 2SeasTrade at Kent 2020 in 2012 and also shared transport with them on a day trip to TAVOLA.

What are the key messages , key lessons learned you would like to share?

Never underestimate the volume of work required to run a successful cross-border project or the amount of time it takes for the ERDF to be paid back to your organisation. Be prepared for the project to be delayed at the outset due to the time it takes for the partnership to build and for the project profile to be determined and set up. Budget for as many staff members as possible to support the Project Officer and also include time and budget for an administrative team. Allow more time for project delivery than you think you will need. Ensure there are plenty of cross-border activities in your project and that all of the partners are dedicated to delivering the project at cross-border level.

■ Project Information

Title	Transmanche Enterprise Network
Total project budget	€ 1 466 482
ERDF	€ 733 241
Priority & objective	Priority 1 b. Promote and encourage entrepreneurship and the development of new cross-border commercial initiatives
Timeframe	2008-11-01 - 2012-04-30
Lead partner	Medway Council
Project Coordinator	Wayne Saunders(wayne.saunders@medway.gov.uk)

