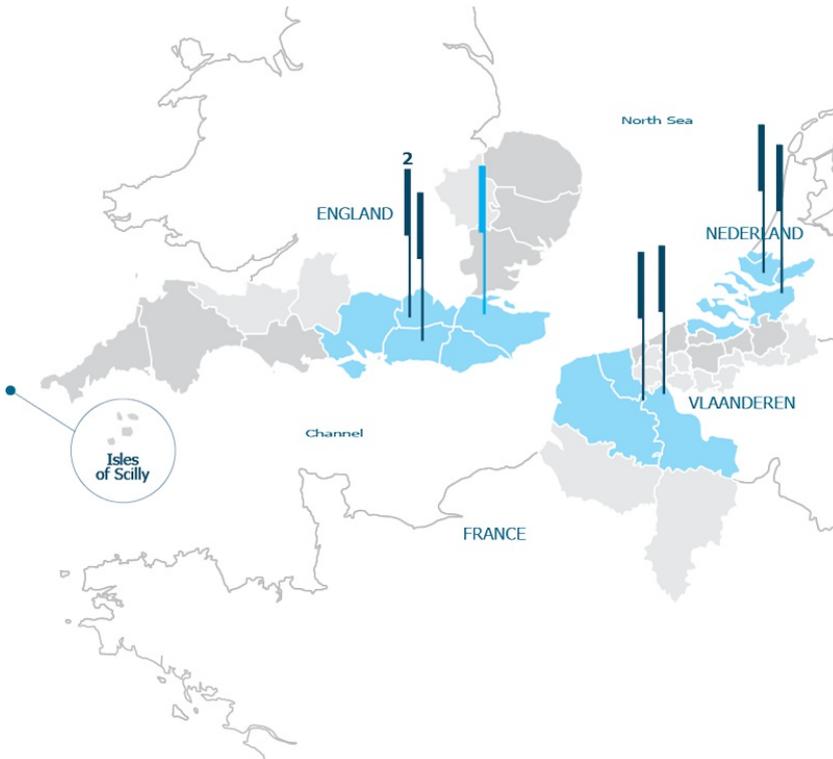


ECO-MIND

Environmental Market and Innovation Development



■ Project summary



The overall aim of Eco-Mind is to support SMEs seeking to develop innovative products and services in taking full advantage of the growing market for more environmentally acceptable products. To achieve this, Eco-mind partners will address the specific support needs of over 270 SMEs within the crossborder area covered by the project partners, and extend their reach to a further 600 through workshops, clinics, exhibitions and other crossborder activities. By linking up their expertise across the 2 Seas area, SMEs benefit from more development opportunities. Encouraging the public and in particular these SMEs to make full use of renewable energies is an

important aspect of the project. The project will therefore profile the companies with most environmental and economic impact, analyse the needs of eco-entreprises, define market opportunities, constitute a team of eco-innovation support specialists from across the 2 Seas area, deliver a customer support programme, and last but not least, make policy recommendations to regional and national authorities concerning future eco-innovation support priorities, the suitability of existing support provision, and how “gaps” in provision might be addressed.

■ Activities

What was the project trying to achieve?

The overall aim of EcoMind was to better understand and address the specific support needs of SMEs who are seeking to develop innovative products and services and then support them to take full advantage of the growing market for less environmentally impactful products.

Objectives: 1. Define the potential of the environmental market and priority needs for SMEs. 2. Identify and pre-select SMEs where the opportunities for eco innovation would have the

greatest environmental and economic impacts. 3. Design an innovative approach of support to SMEs 4. SMEs to receive customised and intensive guidance on a range of topics 5. Develop cross-border networks, events and workshops for project partners and project beneficiaries 6. Provide tailored intensive support to encourage competitiveness amongst SMEs on environmental solutions.

What were the activities implemented?

Cross border activities were managed at 2 levels: at partnership level and at the project beneficiary level. At partnership level: - Regular meetings between partners were held - These included quarterly steering and project management groups. During the meetings, the group discussed project update, issues, and actions but also worked on designing common material such as the profiling form. - Facilitating the sharing of knowledge & access to knowledge; this was done via meetings, teleconferences and emails. For example a Dutch student helped with a cross border cultural research. - Collaboration between partners took place to create cross border events. For example the Dutch event organised in November 2010 - Group discussions were held to review the project legacy and how the team wanted to proceed with the next steps. This action resulted in the FUSION project. At project beneficiary level: Cross-border events were delivered taking into consideration the requirements from businesses from other countries (structure, translation, promotion ...) For example, in France, CD2E ran "le Congrès des Eco-Technologies", in Lille in June 2010, an event that showcased many different new Eco-innovation technologies that SMEs in the region could benefit from. 2 EcoMind companies were presented with an eco-innovation award at this event. In the Netherlands, Delft TU and Enviu set up a Business Design Forum in November 2010. BSK-CIC organised Kent2020 in Kent on 7 April 2011 - 11 French businesses were invited and had the opportunity to test how small UK companies would react to their products/services. Connections were made between companies located in different countries on technology, commercial and knowledge links. This action was generally done as part of the Intensive assists offered to the beneficiaries. When completing an action plan the EcoMind partner would ascertain the needs & offers of an enterprise. Based on this information the partner would decide if there was the potential to establish contact with some other companies and would contact offer partners to coordinate business- to -business meetings and emails introduction.

■ Results

What were the key results of the project?

- 1,087 individuals profiled - 798 diagnostics carried out - 234 questionnaires carried out - 295 companies received customised intensive support from the partnership. - 2 partners (CD2E & BSK-cic) generated 4 reports on eco-innovation, cluster & IP - Enviu and Delft TU assisted 21 entrepreneurs - CD2E and CCIIGL guided 103 SMEs - BSK-CIC, CfSD, EnviroBusiness and WSX offered tailored services to 171 enterprises. - 6 case studies, 1 virtual map, 3 studies and 6 SME videos created. - 122 events with 3,716 participants and sponsorship of 124 individuals to attend events outside their country - 10 videos (viewed 11,450 times), 6 case studies, website information (32,730 online references), events promotion flyers distributed, presentations delivered, 1 virtual eco-innovation map & reference guides created. - 1 online tool to qualify eco-enterprises was created by CD2E - Winners of eco-innovation award: VFA (NL) in 2010,

Kypple (FR) & Envisan in 2009 - Best Start-Up KIEBA award: Aquaread (UK) - 1 company saved an estimated total of 2T of waste. 5 companies saved an estimated 306T of CO₂ and 28,000m² of water.

Did all partners and territories benefit from the results?

Target groups: The main impact of EcoMind in the local region has been on the partners, through increased practical knowledge on supporting SMEs and better understanding of the local support network. Beneficiaries: In the Netherlands, 62 young entrepreneurs, 285 participants via 11 events and 18 individuals were supported to participate in events outside the Netherlands. For the local SMEs the impact has been strengthened through business collaboration and access to specialist knowledge. In France, 453 local businesses were profiled to understand their requirements and 103 local entrepreneurs received intensive assistance. In addition, businesses and 3000 visitors benefitted from 73 events organised by local partners. 26 individuals were supported at events outside France. In the South of England, 572 companies were contacted to ascertain needs, 100 companies potential buyers of eco-innovative products were surveyed, 171 enterprises received intensive assistance. Small companies benefitted from 38 specialist events, attracting 530 visitors. Moreover, 80 individuals were sponsored to attend event outside England.

What were the effects / outcomes for the territories involved?

The regions have benefitted from increased skills on eco-innovation, increase internationalisation, improved carbon footprint and the emergence of local innovative leaders. Clusters in France have provided long-term benefit for SMEs and for the region by supporting innovative SMEs, access to funds, new jobs, and solutions to reduce environmental impacts and increased competitiveness and skills. In the UK, the main outcomes have been an increase in green knowledge; carbon reductions and ongoing networks - for example the design network. In the Netherlands, there is a strengthened support network for new sustainable innovators. Finally, most of the partners are still working together either directly via the FUSION project. This project contributes to establishing a complete network around eco-innovation in the region, increasing its attractiveness for green investors and support its economy via green skilled job creation, local carbon reduction, new technologies and greening of supply chain.

■ Distinctiveness

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

By working with contacts in different countries we were able to gain information on markets for our beneficiaries, helping them with their internationalisation. An example would be UK companies interested in trading on the continent were able to meet and discuss eco-innovation market with peers. We discussed and got new ideas on several project outputs; the EcoMind videos resulted from the lead partner using the innovative approach existing in the Netherlands. We were able to share some actions, compare results and discuss between partners on differences for eco-innovation in the region. EcoMind looked at the support models in the different countries and exchanged on approach and length of support.

Have any synergies been developed with other projects or networks?



The partners collaborated with other projects on events: with EEN (European programme) for match making. For example EEN was working closely with the EcoMind team to organised good events on eco-innovation but also facilitate business-to-business meetings during those events. We shared good practices (eg: sharing management tools), an example is with the Fish & Chips project (Interreg 2 Seas), the team was seeking to access our project templates. We set up referrals between projects, helping beneficiaries to network, creating added value between projects We provided our research to other projects as material to disseminate. Examples would be within the support network in France (local initiatives) We use opportunities to access other partners from external projects to gain expertise; this was particularly relevant for the work done on cluster and IP (European and local)

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

Working with the other partners can be motivating, fun but also sometimes challenging. Quality time is required at the beginning of the project to secure good understanding of the project and the different partners to maximise the cross border. It would be useful to have a more effective financial and management process for the project, having spent the time on EcoMind getting to know the partners; this will speed up the management and increase the management efficiency for future projects. Ecomind's advice: - Spend quality time getting to know the partners - Payment cycle (and impact on cash flow) must be integrated into the plan early especially for small /not for profit organisations - Learn about the cultural differences and how they impact/enhance meetings, events...etc - Do not under-estimate the time & resources necessary to administer the project - EU projects require give & take... the more you engage with a partner, the more you will gain.

■ Project Information

Title	Environmental Market and Innovation Development
Total project budget	€ 7 057 117
ERDF	€ 3 528 558
Priority & objective	Priority 1 c. Support innovation, research and cooperation between universities, knowledge institutes and businesses
Timeframe	2008-01-02 - 2011-10-31
Lead partner	Business Support Kent (CIC)
Project Coordinator	Adrian CHAMPNEY(adrian.champney@bsk-cic.co.uk)

