

Tandem

BORDER	France-Belgium
TERRITORY	Nord-Pas de Calais; West Flanders
EUROPEAN PROGRAMME	INTERREG IV A France-Wallonia-Flanders
DATE	2011 – 2014
MAIN PARTNERS	Lead partner: POM West-Vlaanderen (the economic development agency for the Province of West Flanders); operational coordinators: Nord France Innovation Développement (NFID), OCWest – Ondernemerscentra West-Vlaanderen (West Flanders entrepreneurs' centre)
OBJECTIVE	Development of a cross-border knowledge strategy by strengthening the centres of expertise in their role as interfaces between academic institutions and businesses with the potential to innovate
MAIN ACTIVITY	Creation of cross-border "tandems" between centres of expertise and academic institutions in order to support innovative businesses

WHAT DOES THE TANDEM PROJECT CONSIST OF?

The Province of West Flanders and the Nord-Pas de Calais Region boast a dense population of innovative SMEs and an extensive network of higher education institutions and centres of expertise. The latter, whether public or public-private entities, serve as interfaces between SMEs and academia and consequently constitute a crucial link in the chain of development, application and dissemination of knowledge within the regional economy, specifically in the area of supporting businesses in their innovation projects. **Increasing the access of centres of expertise to all of the academic and higher education institutions in the cross-border region seems necessary in order to maximise SMEs' potential for innovation and, more generally, to improve the processes of technology transfer in the cross-border region's economy.**

The Tandem project is led by POM West-Vlaanderen, the economic development agency of West Flanders Province, in partnership with the NFID (Nord France Innovation Développement), a resource centre which supports the implementation of economic development policies (entrepreneurship, innovation and research) in the Nord-Pas de Calais Region.

The project aims at supporting the development of a cross-border knowledge strategy. It does this by fostering exchanges between French and Flemish hubs of competitiveness and excellence, clusters and centres of expertise in important and cutting-edge sectors identified for the two regional economies: ICT and imaging, food and health, textiles and new materials, transport and logistics, and clean technologies.

As a result, the Tandem project has become **the first operational cross-border collaboration between the two regions' knowledge strategies**: the Provincial Economic Impetus Plan in West Flanders and the Research-Innovation Strategy for Intelligent Specialisation (SRI-SI) in Nord-Pas de Calais, which also has a cross-cutting component called "Strengthening Partnerships with Resources of Excellence in Other European Regions".

"2013 strategic projects" award for the Tandem project by Wallonia and the INTERREG IVA France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen Programme