



## **Fish and Chips: the story**

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## FISH AND CHIPS

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Food is a constant in everyone's life. The food- and allied sectors constitute a significant part of the economic base and are, at the same time, a region-specific banner of that region's identity. The purpose of the 'Fish and Chips' project is to foster the joint development of new concepts and products or product-market-combinations (PMCs) and, through that cooperation, help boost the regional identity of each of the participating regions, and establish a common identity as clustered and neighbouring food regions.

Economic development through 'regional branding' also implies investments to boost the cultural and brand identity of a specific region. By cooperating, it will be strategically easier to open up new markets to trade, both collectively and for each individual partner, e.g. to nearby European capitals.

### CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The participating regions save considerably on development costs by cooperating on projects. It also allows them to launch initiatives together, as they find strength through numbers and economies of scale.

In addition to this, the cooperation significantly increases their knowledge, throwing up new ideas. By developing joint strategies, regional entrepreneurship (and especially the activities of SMEs) are strengthened and made sustainable, on a truly pan-European basis.



# FISH AND CHIPS

## WHO ARE WE?

'Fish and Chips' is a sustainable network of six food regions bordering the North Sea and the English Channel.

Mid-West Flanders, the Antwerp Campine region, Meetjesland (an area in the north of East-Flanders), Boulogne-sur-Mer, South-east England and Somerset cooperate on economic development, beefing up their competitiveness and raising the degree of innovation of agri-food companies in the project regions.



## WHO DO WE WANT TO REACH?

- The entrepreneurs of the agri-food sector
- The local and regional authorities
- The consumers and inhabitants of the project regions
- The border regions and their inhabitants
- The schools
- ...

## WHAT DO WE DO?

### Activity 1: Foster innovation in products and product-market-combinations (PMCs)

In the food- and food-related sectors, there are many opportunities to develop innovative products or services and, from those, to develop new product-market-combinations (known as PMCs). PMCs are, in other words, innovative combinations of products or services and market segments. By thinking out of the box and, sometimes, by making only limited modifications to food products or food services, products can often take on whole new functions and, in doing so, appeal to new market segments. In that case, we speak of a 'successful' PMC. This creative use of food products or food services can also afford solutions to future challenges, such as waste management, food shortages, demographic changes, etc.



The 'Fish and Chips' partners will, among other things, pool and analyze existing good case studies in the participating regions. On the basis of this exercise, a brand new concept will be devised for successful PMCs (with DOs and DON'Ts). In addition, a new PMC will be developed in every partner region. By way of inspiration, some field trips will be organized to Piemonte (to the Salone del Gusto (a taste show - food exhibition), among other things), Reims and London (food fair). Rounding off this sub-project are a series of reciprocal, promotional region visits, organized for travel agents and trade journalists, as part of the further development of a regional branding strategy centred around food in the participating regions.



## Activity 2: Strengthening of entrepreneurs and networks

Networking and getting to know one another's best practices is good for innovation in the regions and strengthens each region's economic fabric. The aim of 'Fish and Chips' is to realize many cross-border initiatives, as result of which several networks come into being, with one or more partners (multiplier effect).

'Fish and Chips' has identified four specific initiatives to strengthen regional entrepreneurship:

- Support and expand the concept of regional partnerships and networks of food companies and food-related sectors.
- Organize a series of cross-border, B2B events for networks and entrepreneurs of food- and food-related sectors.
- Create a time bank, to which each region supplies 10 'expert days' (e.g. in the spheres of product innovation, marketing, educational packages, knowledge networks, product development, culinary design...). Entrepreneurs and organizations from all other partner regions can 'draw and use' expertise from this time bank. In this way, the partner expertise is spread widely and shared.
- Develop a structural alliance between the regional networks of participating entrepreneurs and consultative platforms from the food- and food-related sectors within the 'Fish and Chips' territory.

### Activity 3: Open up the markets

A crucial phase for new products and PMCs is breaking into a market. Several factors affect the chances of these new products or services succeeding. 'Fish and Chips' focuses on a few tools which - for food products especially - can offer the key to a bigger success.

Efficient **distribution**: 'Fish and Chips' develops a few (single-day) pilot events in several regions for different kinds of suppliers and manufacturers. The project partners cooperate closely on this and strive, above all, to learn from one another: best practices, increase market share, optimize their distribution and cut costs.





Within 'Fish and Chips', we also examine what role the **social media** can play. Establishing virtual networks can, for one thing, provide solid support to existing or proposed real-world networks.

Development of a new concept (called '**Smaakacademie**' = 'Taste Academy') should raise awareness and improve the information on food in the partner regions. This 'Taste Academy' will be physically concretized in three regions: innovative and multipurpose, culinary teaching studios and/or taste labs are being set up in Mid-West Flanders, Meetjesland and Nord-Pas de Calais. In Mid-West Flanders, there are plans for an interactive, do- and experience centre for children (= the mini-Miummm).

A last focus are the regional **food and taste fairs**. The project partners will examine how these trade fairs can be restyled into innovative and professionally-run B2B events.



## RESOC Mid-West-Flanders



### PRESENTATION:

RESOC & SERR Mid-West-Flanders (The Regional Economic and Social Concertation Committee & the Social Economic Council for the Region) are the regional platforms for the development and the improvement of cross-sectoral, socio-economic collaboration, for the Flemish Counties of Roeselare and Tielt. RESOC is composed of representatives of public authorities (Province and local authorities) and the social partners (employers and employees-associations). Its mission is to develop and implement a socio-economic policy for the region. SERR is composed of representatives of the social partners. Its mission is to assure an integrated regional approach towards labour market issues, within the global socio-economic policy of the region.

**QUOTE:** *"Fish and Chips represents an excellent opportunity for Mid-West-Flanders to establish and strengthen its position as Europe's Vegetable Garden. As lead partner, our region will develop and promote a wide range of collaboration opportunities."* Brigitte Smessaert



### REGION:

The subregion Mid-West-Flanders covers 17 municipalities with approximately 250.000 inhabitants, and is situated in the Province of West-Flanders. It is a region that is characterized as a high-performing, industrialized area: Mid-West-Flanders has the highest employment activity rate (77,6%) in Flanders, combined with the lowest unemployment rate (3,5 %) in the country. In particular the

sectors of the food processing industry, textiles, metal and wood industries are flourishing.

### ACTIVITIES:

Developing a product market combination concept and creating a common concept for taste academies are two important activities within the project. In Roeselare there will be a new and multifunctional culinary atelier. Furthermore a food related activity and experience center is being developed for young children: the mini-Miummm. This is an extension of the Flanders House of Food (Miummm) where food and exercise take a central place.





## BOERENBOND PROJECTEN



**BOERENBOND**  
trouw aan land- en tuinbouw

### PRESENTATION:

BB Projecten vzw is the organisation through which Boerenbond & Landelijke Gilden make their joint competences and networks available for delivering projects. Boerenbond is the largest farmers organisation in Flanders, who's aim is defending the interests of Flemish farmers, as well as providing consultancy and vocational training for them. Throughout its 150 years history, Boerenbond has developed a broad experience in assisting rural entrepreneurs with developing their business, networks and technological skills, not only in the 'traditional' agricultural sectors, but also in more innovative directions such as Experience Economy activities, green care, landscape management, biobased and C2C production, etc.

**QUOTE:** *"Regional food initiatives make people appreciate the authenticity of the food that was produced by the farmer close by. It really helps to close the gap between consumer and producer in these times of ongoing globalisation."* Wim Ceulemans



### REGION:

In the Fish and Chips project, we largely support Flemish partners, but other partners as well in developing innovative distribution systems for regional food products. So our region of activity encompasses the whole of Flanders, including the 3 specific Flemish Regions involved in the provinces of West Flanders, East Flanders as well as Antwerp.

## ACTIVITIES:

To this end, we organize workshops and transnational study visits for entrepreneurs, we develop and support entrepreneurial networks, and we develop systems for distribution of regional food products, starting with performing feasibility studies up to delivering and testing innovative pilot projects in the 3 Flemish Regions. Furthermore, we provide expertise to other partners through the time bank of experts and we support the lead partner in his project communications activities.





## PRESENTATION:

RURANT - a unique Public/Private Partnership (PPP) of 11 project partners - is engaged in developing rural areas in the Belgian province of Antwerp. The main

objective is to conserve and regenerate rural areas in Antwerp province, and help them to remain tax-attractive and dynamic regions, mainly by fostering rural entrepreneurship (by assisting and advising rural entrepreneurs in new networks and methodologies) and by promoting neighbourhood networks, using RURANT methodology (achieve a common objective by getting various stakeholders involved).

**QUOTE:** *"Farm produce and regional products are key drivers of regional development... and Antwerp province is no exception. Our beers, vegetables and dairy products are strong ambassadors for our region, and what most people associate with it."* Peter Bellens



## REGION:

Antwerp province is made up of 70 towns and villages (1,716,000 inhabitants). Besides the port of Antwerp, it contains a large rural area with a leafy green landscape: fields, pastureland, a sandy soil and historic heathlands. Arable farming and horticulture are two of the economic flag-bearers, with dairy produce and meat products most prominent. Antwerp has a lot of famous beers too. Tourists love the region on account of its water sports and cycle routes.

## ACTIVITIES:

In this project, RURANT focuses on building networks of - and for - producers of farm produce and regional products. This serves to improve the professionalism and expertise of the entrepreneurs. In addition, RURANT aims to develop a touristic Product-Market combination (PMC) on Antwerp's beers, make a feasibility study on the distribution of farm produce and regional products and bolster an annual public event for producers of farm produce and regional products.





## PLC MEETJESLAND



### PRESENTATION:

Plattelandscentrum Meetjesland aims to inform the public on issues relating to agriculture and horticulture in relation to the countryside.

It does this in a creative way, for example by organizing activities that will give the Meetjesland extra value. Its activities are cultural, recreational and educational. They are accessible to both the inhabitants of the Meetjesland and to external visitors. Plattelandscentrum Meetjesland consists of 2 visitors centres: one on agriculture and one on regional heritage and tourism .

**QUOTE:** *"The durable existence of a strong agro-food region, thrives on the ensurance of a major social supporting system. To this effect, the implementation of an effective regional branding strategy is of the greatest importance."*

Luc Feusels



### REGION:

The Meetjesland is a Belgian rural region situated between the cities of Ghent and Bruges, and bordering the Netherlands in the north. It covers 1/5 of the province of East Flanders and consists of 13 municipalities with 175.000 inhabitants. The region has a variety of landscapes: the north has typical creeks, recovered from the sea, while the south is more sandy and wooded. 80% of the area is cultivated by farmers. The Meetjesland is a pronounced agro-food region.



## ACTIVITIES:

Plattelandscentrum (PLC) will develop a series of new product-market-combinations (PMC's), focussing on regional products. In addition, it wants to develop and implement a concept called the "Regional Taste Academy". To this effect, PLC will develop an innovative kitchen unit, where cooking lessons on food related issues will be developed. Finally, PLC wants to improve the accessibility of the regional market by creating a pilot distribution system for regional foodproducts.





## TASTE SOUTH EAST



**Food & Drink**  
from the South East

### PRESENTATION:

Welcome to the South East of England. Taste South East represents producers, farmers, fishermen in the 'Garden of England' and assists them to develop their business. We organise Meet the Buyer activities, networking meetings, training and best practice visits encouraging the sector

to enter new markets and opportunities. A one-stop-shop with expert advice is very important for the confidence of small food businesses. Access to new markets is key and in particular entering the London Market is high on our agenda.

Our work in the fisheries sector focuses on adding provenance to the high quality catch, raising its profile and developing more diverse supply chains.

**QUOTE:** "MD Henriette Reinders says: "In the current economic climate it is essential that businesses don't put all their eggs in one basket. Accessing new markets, looking at new opportunities is essential to keep your business healthy." Henriette Reinders



### REGION:

The South East of England boasts a wealth of local and regional produce due to its variety in soils and landscapes. Areas such as the South Downs offer grazing for the beef and sheep industries, and provide the ideal climate for the wine sector. The fertile soils in the many valleys offer opportunities for fruit and vegetables. Along the coast the many little harbours offer fresh seafood caught by day boats including crab, lobster and Dover sole.

## ACTIVITIES:

The Fish and Chips project dove tails well with our activities in the sector and will assist us further build on our added value work in the fisheries sector to promote the catch and places rich in fisheries heritage. The project will also help us to build better targeted networks in the food industry and exchange best practice as well as look at ways to improve supply chains in the region as well as run a pilot to develop supply chains into the capital.





## À TABLE!

*: à table!*

### PRESENTATION:

The cultural association 'à table!', based in Boulogne-Sur-Mer, organizes activities in which a dialogue between art, good food and industrial heritage comes first. à table! injects new life into 'la saurisserie' (= the smoking of herring) and is the pre-eminent location for discovering and experiencing the relationship between modern art and cultural heritage.

**QUOTE:** *"Boulogne appreciates the importance of having economic partners in Flanders and England because we, ourselves, are the main fishing port in France. We are an international hub and platform for fish processing, noted for its quality and diversity."* Frédéric Cuvillier



### REGION:

The much-visited region is situated at the confluence of two seas which are full of fish. The 'Boulonnais' are very proud of their roots. Boulogne-Sur-Mer is France's leading fishing port, noted for the diversity and quality of its international fish processing platform.

Boulogne-Sur-Mer sees its future as an open city in Europe, e.g. as a trading partner with the Flemish and British project partners.

## ACTIVITIES:

Boulogne-Sur-Mer participates in several activities within the project. For example, the region will focus its efforts on establishing a new product-market-combination (PMC), based on a single shared concept. After that, 'à table!' will roll out a brand-new concept, namely 'the taste academy'. These are, for instance, food education workshops, specially for children, on the mechanics of fish processing.





## SOMERSET



### PRESENTATION:

Somerset County Council is the principal tier of local government serving a population of half a million people. The Council works as an enabling body in relation to the local economy, and sees food and drink as one of the key sectors for economic growth. It is working with a range of local food & drink producers within the County to maximise the development of the sector and has set up a small steering group of producers to determine the detail of the Fish & Chips project. The Council has the support of the South West Food & Drink agency and I.B.M. to help deliver the various project components.

**QUOTE:** *"Somerset is very pleased to be a partner in this cross-border 'Fish & Chips' initiative. We will contribute our own expertise and experience to the Programme, and expect to learn from elsewhere whilst developing a number of new projects."* Emma Macdonald



### REGION:

Locally produced Food & drink is important to the Somerset economy and also contributes greatly to the landscape of the County. Cheese and cider are amongst the principal products and the landscape of meadows and orchards gives the County its familiar characteristics.

## ACTIVITIES:

We will be developing a new marketing hub for local food and drink, utilising the technical expertise of our private sector I.T. experts, IBM, In addition we envisage new tourism-related products that will see an increase in the distribution of local food & drink products.



