

## FLANDERS DISTRICT OF CREATIVITY - Leuven, Belgium

<b>Background</b>	Flanders DC was the initiative of the former Flemish Minister of the Economy, Foreign Affairs and E-Government, together with the entire Flemish government, to put the creative economy on the map and to increase the competitiveness of Flanders through creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and international business. Within this network the Flemish government, knowledge institutions and companies work closely together.
<b>Purpose of the project</b>	Reinforce the regional competitiveness through stimulation of creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship. The stated objective was also to put the creative economy on the economic development map.
<b>Geographical focus</b>	Flanders with a supra regional dimension.
<b>Partnership arrangement</b>	<p>Flanders DC was the initiative of the former Flemish Minister of the Economy, Foreign Affairs and E-government under the sponsorship of the entire Flemish government. Locally conceptualised, Flanders DC represents a component within the regional Flemish programme.</p> <p>Co-operation with Flemish partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers organizations VEV and UNIZO</li> <li>• Business School: VLERICK-Leuven-Gent management school</li> </ul> <p>International partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catalonia: COPCA and CIDEM</li> <li>• Scotland: Scottish Enterprise</li> <li>• Baden-Württemberg: Steinbeis Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>Have you involved other tiers of government in the project?</b>	<p>3 Flemish government agencies are founding partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency for export promotion</li> <li>• Agency for innovation</li> <li>• Flemish entrepreneurship agency</li> </ul> <p>As the cluster situates itself on the crossroads of different policy domains (education, economy and employment, culture), accordingly, the project partners thought it therefore important to reflect this and the ministries of education, economy and employment, and culture are all involved in the strategic boards and act as “sounding boards”.</p>
<b>Target groups</b>	The project targets to the whole population to the extent that it wants to stimulate a more proactive and creative mindset.
<b>Particular successes</b>	<p>The project is still very new but the first tendencies are starting to emerge. The negative net growth in businesses has been stopped.</p> <p>The international collaboration with other regions has become much closer in materialising a number of proposals for participation.</p>

<b>Lessons learnt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consistency in policy is a pre-requisite for success.</li><li>• It is a long journey to success; it takes time and close co-operation to make a cluster economically viable.</li><li>• Making governments and organizations work together successfully is a project of many years.</li><li>• Flanders DC is a direct product of regional government action, though it is captured spatially in the idea of a “creativity district” – no doubt to associate the concept with the industrial districts in the successful Italian model for local development.</li></ul>
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