

**FINAL FORMAT FOR PILOTS EXECUTED WITHIN VITAL RURAL AREA
(June 2012, Peter Laan)**

Work Package	: WP2 Regional branding
Theme	: Involvement of stakeholders
Key words	: promotion – profile – entrepreneurship – labelling – sounding board
Name Project / Pilot	: Ambassador Project West Flanders, ‘For Enterprise, it’s us’
Project partners	: Province West Flanders – Provincial Development Company (POM) – important entrepreneurs in the province
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Main problems to be solved (analysis): lack of participation in the regional branding process, only the provincial government was responsible for regional marketing. The brand stayed within the government (also the budget), there was no external support for the branding project.	
Policy frameworks to be dealt with/fitting in: -	
Aim of the project:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promotion of entrepreneurship (one of the 3 ‘spearheads’ of West Flanders; - dissemination of the brand of West Flanders; - multiplication of the initial regional marketing budget - creating awareness in the economic sector 	
(Expected) Results: the actual result is that we can rely upon a group of 50 companies which committed themselves to promote West Flanders as a region known for its entrepreneurship (‘For Enterprise, it’s us’). The overall expected result is that we get more free publicity by being mentioned in the communication tools of the 50 companies	
(Expected) outcome within the WP:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To bring the brand outside the government - Set up a cooperation/organisation with the Provincial Development Company (POM) - To make a selection of max. 50 companies who are representative for the region (starters, SME’s, international companies) - To maximise promotion on entrepreneurship by using the communication tools of these 50 companies - To stimulate more individual contacts between the provincial government and private companies - To start a sounding board group for economic policy - To organise PR-events with these companies (networking) 	
(Expected) outcome for the region as a whole (impact of the project; effects may be written in terms of the sustainability triangle = 3 P approach (people, planet, profit), i.e. benefits on the social, economical and physical part)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of West Flanders as a region for entrepreneurship - To establish a clear profile towards existing and potential entrepreneurs/investors 	

Planning: 2009-2012. Evaluation end of 2012 with the objective to make it sustainable.

Costs: estimated on 100.000 euro

Financing: Province West Flanders, with the support of Vital Rural Areas

**Implementation of the project (cf. CAA):
which stakeholders were involved?**

- The governor and deputation of the Province (political support)
- The board of the Provincial Development Co.
- The CEO's of some important companies in W-Flanders

**what process did you run through to fit the project into local conditions?
how did you sustainably implement the project (locally, regionally)?**

- Selection of a short list of representative companies
- Discussion on criteria for selection
- Presentation of West Flanders as a region for entrepreneurship
- Specify the return for the 'ambassador' companies
- Set up a steering group for the ambassador project

KEY QUESTIONS LIST:

1 Which successes were achieved so far in the pilot project?

We managed to establish a network of 50 ambassadors

- what is the background / main reason for these successes?

Strong belief in their region; some well-known CEO's gave the example, so other companies followed quickly; the role of the governor as a believer/stimulator; earlier positive contacts with provincial development co.; opportunities for networking, individual visits to convince companies, recognition by their own government.

- what set-backs or problems did you face and what were the reasons for this?
- are there any break-down patterns to be recognized in the project?
- are these set-backs, problems or break-down patterns easy to solve? How?

We plan a thorough evaluation by the end of 2012

At this moment we experience that the cooperation with the provincial development co. could be better; there is also a lack of time/staff to visit the 50 ambassadors regularly; some ambassadors are more enthusiastic than others.

- what are the DO's and the DON'Ts of the project?

Don't try to attract too much companies, the follow up takes a lot of time.

Define criteria and possible return

Make a clear procedure

As a government, give the example as investor in your brand

- what are critical success factors in this project?

Large support by the political level (governor + deputation)
Try to convince important companies to start the project

2 What are the expected *boundary conditions* for the project to be implemented?

- in terms of policy frameworks

Alignment with the economic strategy

- in terms of physical circumstances

- in terms of involvement of people / partnerships / entrepreneurs / public bodies

Culture of the company

Quick Wins for the company (promotion)

- in terms of budget and financial support

Long term support by the provincial government

3 Which *related projects* can be studied or consulted (other innovative best practice examples) before starting to think on implementation?

We found our inspiration in : 'Er gaat niets boven Groningen' – cooperation between University, Province , city and entrepreneurs in Groningen (NL):

<http://marketing.groningen.nl/over-marketing-groningen>

Within Vital Rural Areas other ambassador projects are developed in :

-NOFA (NL)

-Meetjesland (B)

4 What is the *applicability / transferability* of the project? See 5

a) as derived from the project results

- in terms of critical mass (physical, social, budget)

- in terms of the needs of the region or location

- in terms of the starting point for implementation

- in terms of participation and organization

- in terms of time needed for implementation

- in terms of expected outcome (spin off for other fields: physical, social, economical)

b) as derived from testing or implementation the project or the project results elsewhere.

What were the results there?

5 Which *tools* does the project bring in to alleviate / help starting up implementation elsewhere?

-selection criteria for ambassadors

-website

-guidelines for using the brand

-ambassador label (derived from the West Flanders log) – plexi

6 Sustainability

a) How is/can the project be sustainably implemented? What is needed to reach this?

- in terms of organization

- in terms of regional / local networks/partnerships / people

- in terms of budget

b) what are the benefits of the project seen from the Profit, Planet, and People side?