

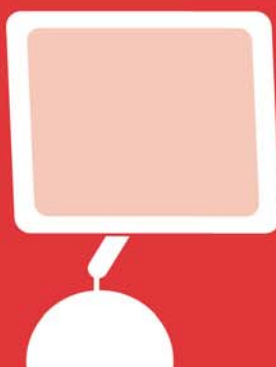


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MentorChem

*Mentoring European Knowledge
of the Chemical Regions*



REPORT



REGIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

REGIONS OF KNOWLEDGE PILOT ACTION

MentorChem

A SUCCESS STORY

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TABLE OF CONTENT

	<i>page</i>
1. The MentorChem PROJECT	1
2. RESULTS of the PROJECT	2
2.1. <i>Analysis and Benchmarking</i>	3
2.2. <i>Mentoring</i>	3
2.3. <i>Innovative Cooperation</i>	4
2.4. <i>Mainstreaming</i>	4
3. DISSEMINATION of the PROJECT RESULTS	5
4. CONCLUSION	6
5. AFTER the PROJECT	6
6. CONTACTS	9

1. The MentorChem PROJECT

The Project “**Mentoring European Knowledge of the Chemical Regions**” (MentorChem) is a cooperation between the regions **Saxony-Anhalt**, **Lombardia** and **Asturias** in the framework of the pilot action “**Regions of Knowledge**” supported by the European Commission DG Research from January 2004 to June 2005.

The main aim of the action is to **demonstrate the central role of knowledge in driving regional development** and how regional actors can effectively participate in formulating their regions future.

Furthermore, it is the objective to **increase collaboration on a interregional basis** to enable learning between European regions and the identification of models and activities that can be implemented in different regions.

The cooperation approach of the project emphasize an **innovative-pragmatic mentoring model**, which is based on a classic approach of identifying the weaknesses-needs of disadvantaged vs. developed regions and the exchange & modelling of best-practices.

As a result, **joint solutions for the transfer of innovative policy instruments** have been discussed and possible options for the future have been highlighted.

Finally, the results have been examined in view of **maximizing the opportunities for the mainstream policies**.

The project has implemented its activities and produced its results in according to the set work plan.

Intensive communication between the partners and the coordination of the project leader has ensured a smooth management.

The component Benchmarking and Analysis has resulted in the **publication of the SWOT Analysis and Benchmarking Study** to increase the knowledge about problems and challenges in the respective areas and to identify topics for the exchange of experience.

These priority topics have been further deepened in the Mentoring phase that has initiated a **mutual learning process between the partners**.

2. RESULTS of the PROJECT

The main results of the project are:

- ✿ the development of **regional strategies** towards REACH,
- ✿ the **description of regional research competences** in chemistry,
- ✿ the **initiation of cooperation** between the chemical sites initiatives CeChemNet (Saxony-Anhalt) and AIQPA (Asturias),
- ✿ the **improvement of cluster policies** and the exchange of experience based on best practice.

The project **“Mentoring European Knowledge of the Chemical Regions”** has been successful in bringing together the three regions Saxony-Anhalt, Asturias and Lombardia in order to start an intensive process of exchange of information and to build up a sustainable partnership.

The project work has benefited from the **constant involvement of regional stakeholders**. A broad range of **dissemination activities** has supported the mainstreaming of project results. Several other European regions have been informed about project progress and results.

In relation to the set objective the **project has achieved the following results:**

2.1. Analysis and Benchmarking

The **implementation of the SWOT Analysis / Benchmarking study** has sharpened the knowledge about the problems and challenges for the regional development in the three partner regions. Several best practice solutions have been identified for the exchange of experience.

2.2. Mentoring

Based on the identification of strength and weaknesses of the disadvantaged and better developed regions, the **partners have initiated a mutual learning process**. Several topics have been selected for an intensified exchange of experience.

2.3. Innovative Cooperation

Following the chosen priority topics, the partners have initiated innovative cooperation such as the forward looking regional strategies on REACH, the cooperation between chemical sites initiatives. These results are examples of **new schemes for cooperation between regions with different development stages.**

2.4. Mainstreaming

The mainstreaming of project results has been achieved by **linking the interregional exchange of experience with the debate at European level.** The results of the REACH impact assessment have been important for the debate at European level and will be further discussed in the European decision making process.

The **development of regional research competences** in chemistry has influenced the debate about the future focus of regional research policies on excellences and the connection to the discussion about the European Technology Platform “**Sustainable Chemistry**” creates a feedback to the European sphere.

The cooperation between the chemical sites initiatives CeChemNet and AIQPA has led to the **formulation of new activities** that can be jointly implemented in the future. The exchange of experience on cluster policies has produced **concrete proposals for the improvement of cluster policies** in Saxony-Anhalt.

The established partnership has been used to develop a joint application for the “RTD OMC NET” in order to further deepen the cooperation in the future.

Based on the **intensive communication with the European Chemical Regions Network**, the project

results have been disseminated to several other European regions also in the new Member States.

Taking into account the success of the cooperation approach the transfer to the regions in the new Member states makes sense. The application “**Mentoring European Research in Chemistry**” includes a Polish, English and Austrian partner for the **further strengthening the exchange of experience in an enlarged Europe.**

3. DISSEMINATION of the PROJECT RESULTS

The results of the project have been **disseminated in the partner regions and to other European regions** in order to maximise their effect.

With the publication of **brochures** and **newsletters**, the development of **project web page**, participation in other events, the involvement of regional stakeholders and the organisation of the **final conference** all relevant information about the project work has been broadly disseminated and is available for the use of other interested people.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the pilot action “**Regions of Knowledge**” gave the possibility **to develop innovative solutions and to initiate a mutual learning process between the regions** of different development stages that is to the benefit of all partners.

Especially the **mentoring approach has proved its success**, which should be further strengthened in future European Programmes.

Especially looking at the 7th Framework Programme for Research and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme the **strengthening of cooperation** between industrial clusters and the integration of relevant regional stakeholders (research, industry and politics) is important.

The **regional dimension** has a clear added value for these activities, which should be further supported in the future.

5. AFTER the PROJECT

Based on the **success of the cooperation**, the partners will follow up this mainstreaming process even after the end of the

project as interesting initiatives have been started that **create potentials for future activities.**

The debate about the shape of REACH is ongoing with the 2nd reading of the European Parliament in autumn 2006. The partners will actively promote the joint position and **further raise awareness of the challenges in the regions.**

The GO-REACH application has been further supported for the submission to the European Commission in order to open up new possibilities for future cooperation.

In the meantime the European Commission has developed a REACH helpdesk strategy that is using a similar approach, which has been developed in GO-REACH.

The brochure **“regional research competencies in chemistry”** is evaluated by the research stakeholders in the region in order **to identify cooperation areas for the future and to initiate joint research projects.**

The 3rd European Congress of Chemical Regions on 6th October in Milan has been used to present the project results to a broad public and to **disseminate the best-practice solutions to a big number of European regions.**

Based on the exchange of experience between AIQPA and CeChemNet both initiatives evaluate potentials for joint actions or the implementation of new activities in their networks.

The **cluster process in Saxony-Anhalt will be further strengthened** by the development of a **“cluster map chemistry”** that has been proposed as one of the results of the project.

This cluster map will be financed by the regional marketing association and chemical enterprises and is an added value for the chemical cluster.

Furthermore **a new cluster management for the chemical sector in Saxony-Anhalt is planned**, that benefits from the experience of the project and that relies on the **international partnership**.

6. CONTACTS

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REGIONS OF KNOWLEDGE PILOT ACTION

MentorChem – A SUCCESS STORY

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MentorChem recognises the *potential of chemical industries to stimulate regional development* in the 3 regions concerned:

- ✿ Saxony-Anhalt (DE)
- ✿ Lombardia (IT)
- ✿ Asturias (ES)

MentorChem addresses the *revamping of the chemical industry* as a key evolution of an innovative regional policy.

MentorChem helps to *set up the regional development capabilities* essential for sustaining competitiveness for building a knowledge-based economy in these regions.

