

Innovative Collaboration Networks for Smart Growth

Region: London

Start/End date: Oct 2008 – Dec 2011

ERDF: €744,781

Beneficiary: Mazorca Projects Ltd trading as Hidden Art

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Project Rationale and Key Objective

Why was ERDF needed? Where was the market failure?

To address key barriers of isolation and access to information that design micro-enterprises face. These barriers prevent them from moving from idea and product development to successfully commercialised work in an increasingly competitive global market place.

Key issues addressed: access to markets and access to latest technology.

What we aimed to achieve

To assist disadvantaged design micro-enterprises to access the competitive, global market-place by encouraging innovation and collaborative networks.

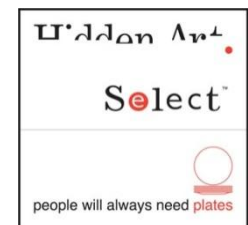


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How we delivered

- 1. Facilitated networking** through an online B2B platform
 - Exchange of information (through eg e-newsletters, www.hiddenart.com). Integrated support network (self-assessment form, tailored progression route)
 - Use of networks for peer to peer learning and joint selling
- 2. Developed a tailored innovation guidance/support programme.** Customised guidance (Modules, incl. 1-2-1 sessions, monthly networking events, self assessment forms) to establish a progression route and business journey.
- 3. Ran a Product Development Programme,** integrating selling (Hidden Art Select) to produce new interesting products.
- 4. Enabled collaborations for mutual business learning and joint commercial projects** to market their products globally via: *e-shop www.hiddenartshop.com, pop-up shops, international design fairs, website www.hiddenart.com, press coverage*
- 5. Promoted the idea of combining growth with reduced environmental footprint**



Project Achievements and Impact

- Initial findings: created 91 jobs (target 81)
- Helped 195 business to collaborate (target 100)
- Assisted 518 designers (target 500). Includes 312 women (69.4% - target 302)
- 77% beneficiaries increased sales through collaborative marketing and joint events
- Environmental outputs: exceeded. We achieved measurable materials savings, resulting in cash savings from environmental good practice

Impact – encouraged a vibrant community of design SMEs and created a culture of innovation, better surviving in a competitive market



Wooden Art

Innovative Character of the Project (Service Innovation)

- Exploited new media and online tools in order to support collaborations, joint ventures, bids and other **brokerage services**
- Created **smarter business models** for designers by covering the full supply and development chain. We facilitated innovation by linking designers to suppliers, bringing a great idea to the market place, including product development
- Drew on **collaborations with specialists** to maximise effect and minimise costs
- **Facilitated learning** by providing a practical customer journey in our business support modules focussing on selling opportunities



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Enhancing Partnerships

Some of the partners that added value to the project include:

- **UBS Investment Bank** (mentoring, hosting fora)
- **London Metropolitan University Metropolitan Works** (prototypes, CAD)
- **London Metropolitan University Polymer Centre** (production with polymers, plastics)
- **Craft Central and Cockpit Arts** (both supporting designer-makers)
- **100% Design** (international Design Fair, Sep, Earl's Court)

This cross-sector collaboration between partners boosted the profile of the project and contributed directly to its success.



Expected Sustainability/Exit Strategy

- collaborate with locally-based 'Culturelabel' www.culturelabel.com to run 'Hidden Art E-Shop'
- access facilities of local manufacturer/retailer to showcase and sell design SMEs products
- continue close links with cluster digital companies (Silicon Roundabout). Shortlisted by TechCity July 2011.
- continue close collaboration with key partners: Craft Central and Cockpit Arts and others



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