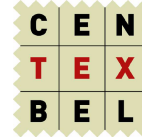




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DIMETEX

DISPOSITIFS MEDICAUX TEXTILES (Textile Medical Devices)

❖ DIMETEX

DIMETEX is part of an **Interreg IV** cross-border cooperation programme for the textile industry that began in November 2008 **and has been extended until 31 October 2012**. It regroups players from the Walloon Region of Belgium as well the Nord-Pas de Calais and Picardy Regions of France, with one-half of its funding from the European Regional Development Fund.

The medical segment is one of the main segments to demonstrate many assets and a strong power of attraction for producers of technical textiles. Three areas of study have been identified in an effort to represent the major opportunities for the development of SMEs within the region; these research themes are presented in more detail below. The aim of the DIMETEX project is to federate cross-border competence clusters and make use of these three high-potential areas.

The programme aims at building a **transversal biotextile cluster at the European level** by setting up a network of actors in the field of healthcare and textiles that have been identified within the area. The programme also endeavours to **increase the power of attraction** of the cross-border region. Its main **objective** is to set up a minimum of **seven research projects** focused on the issues to be considered.

❖ DIMETEX' Actions

- **To create a network of actors in the field of textiles and healthcare in the area**

Firstly, the actors on both sides of the border will be **identified**. This will consist in determining the technologies currently in use by these actors as well as their development strategy and markets they are targeting. In addition, a patent watch will be conducted.

These steps will help us to obtain a **vision that is as complete as possible** of all the forces present in the cross-border region. Mapping will be designed based on the data collected and its actual exploitation will be a key element for pursuit of the programme. It will enable us to put together an economic and scientific network comprised of companies, R&D laboratories and research facilities, particularly at CENTEXBEL and CETI.

- **To set up three work groups**

1. **Biological Culture and Filtration Products**

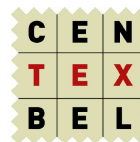
Benefiting from the **biotech boom**, particularly from the large-scale work conducted in the field of cell therapy, the sale of ultrafiltration membranes and growth media for the production of biological products or stemming from biotechnology has increased considerably. Although we are in the early stages, the R&D work conducted, at the peak of its development, has been creating in laboratories a high demand for innovative growth media and ultrafiltration membranes, products in which technical textiles can more broadly and successfully come into play.



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2. Implants and Orthoses

To strengthen, tighten, replace and prevent infection or adherence; implants can today be found in a large number of applications. This has been made possible by the use of supple materials that are able to contain and free active principles, demonstrate compatibility and degrade without leaving any residue inside the body; unlike metal implants. Many research opportunities and market niches have been opening up, all encouraging signs for future development.

3. Medical Textiles for Healthcare and Hygiene

Compression bandages include a wide spectrum of devices for different functions, such as the prevention of oedema, treatment of venous leg ulcers, improvement of scars, etc. Much innovation has been brought to compression bandages and, given the ageing population and significant increase in venous ulcers, great market growth is expected in this sector.

The **bandages** market today represents approximately 900 million dollars worldwide, with an average growth rate of 6% per year, all products included. Along with the increasing number of chronic wounds to be treated, the medical community is actively seeking innovative processes for the treatment of wounds, ever more “functional” in nature. At the crossroads of biotechnology and medical devices, this field presents an inexhaustible pool of scientific work with, in the end, excellent perspectives for the economic development of the most promising projects.

The **methodology** used is identical for the three identified work groups. Following an assessment of market needs as well as a technological and economic evaluation, the most pertinent research projects focused on the work theme will be identified. This will contribute to giving visibility to the renowned expertise on each side of the border as well as to considering new developments in companies based on these research projects.

▪ Communications

The DIMETEX project’s global communication will above all be conducted in the press such as in Textile Magazine and in specialised scientific journals. The directions taken by the projects will be conveyed in a newsletter, to appear every six months. Workshops centred on the theme of textile medical devices will also be organised.

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