

## I<sup>2</sup>PCC - Interprovincial Internationalization Project China Cleantech - Synopsis -

I<sup>2</sup>PCC is a joint project of the provinces of Antwerp, Limburg, East Flanders and Flemish Brabant. It enables Flemish cleantech companies to become acquainted with the potential and importance of the Chinese market, in order to stimulate actual collaborations and Belgian-Chinese projects. To do so, the provinces work closely together with Cleantech Flanders, Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), and partners in the provinces' Chinese sister regions.

### *Context:*

For Flanders and Europe, the international clout of SMEs is an absolute priority. After all, the competitive position of Flemish companies is strongly determined by the international context and international trends. I<sup>2</sup>PCC is part of how the provinces have responded.

The cleantech sector in Flanders is characterized by many new, small companies and ranks very high in terms of innovation. By stimulating and supporting internationalization, these companies can expand the scope of their innovations and strengthen Flanders as an innovative region.

Cleantech Flanders represents the Flemish cleantech industry and brings together more than 200 companies developing and offering sustainable technologies to the world.

The goal is to increase exposure for its member companies and contribute to sustainable development worldwide.

Cleantech Flanders' companies are active in the following 6 domains:

- Blue Growth and Blue Energy
- Innovative Water Management Solutions
- Bio-Energy Economy
- Sustainable Chemistry
- Waste Management, Smart Materials Management and Circular Economy
- Energy Efficiency for Smart Cities, Smart Buildings, Smart Industries and Mobility

China is an interesting and important market for Flemish cleantech companies. In the last 30 years, China has seen a large increase in levels of urbanization. This means decisions have to be made quickly to create high quality living conditions for China's population. Heavy investments are being made, including in waste processing, drinkable water supply, water purification, energy and heat production. These are all areas where Flemish expertise can make a difference. The Chinese government's Made in China 2025 strategy also prioritises a transition to a greener and more energy-efficient economy. This creates a momentum for foreign companies to set up large projects in partnership with local Chinese companies.

China is still unknown to many SMEs, however, and is difficult to access.

All Flemish provinces have a partnership with a sister region in China - often spanning over multiple years - with an emphasis on economic cooperation. Because I<sup>2</sup>PCC specifically focuses on these existing cooperative relationships, an interesting network can be offered to Flemish cleantech companies. These regions (being Chengdu, Chongqing, Guangdong, Hebei and Shaanxi) are geographically dispersed in China, and are very diverse in terms of economic situation, climate, development, etc.

### *Aim and Activities:*

Through local Chinese partnerships, the four Flemish provinces involved have opened a network of government organizations, industry federations, knowledge institutions, companies, etc. to the Flemish cleantech industry. This offers Flemish companies unique access to targeted contacts and niche markets in China.

Specifically, the I<sup>2</sup>PCC project includes a process of information sessions, a business mission to the various Chinese regions and targeted incoming visits from Chinese delegations.

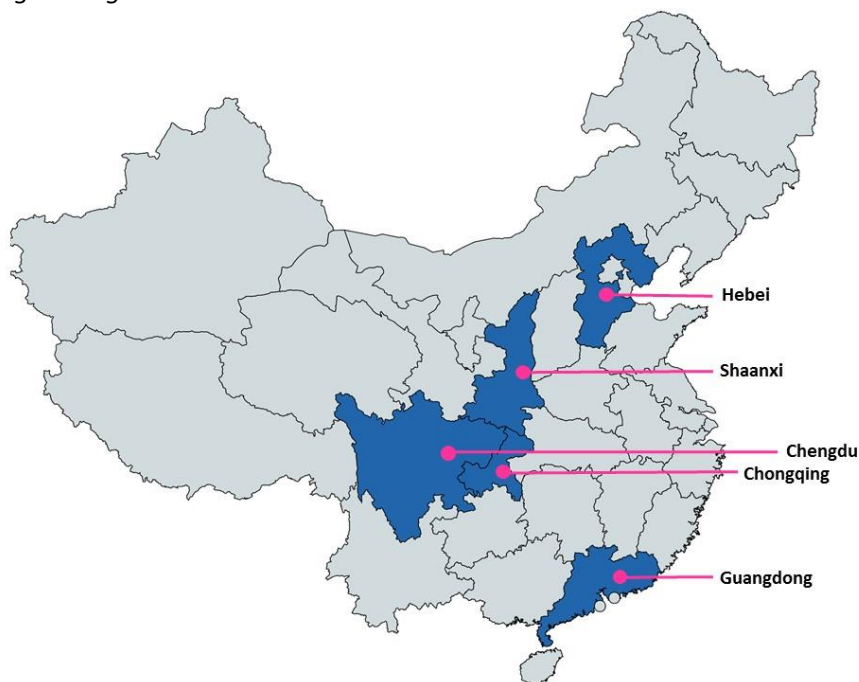
For each Chinese region, the most relevant subsectors or domains within the cleantech industry are identified including the main local players. In 2019, these companies will be invited to visit the cleantech industry in Flanders, where initial contacts with Flemish companies will be facilitated.

By the end of November 2019, companies will finally be able to participate in a corporate mission to the various partner regions in China, which will consist of, among other things, official meetings with government agencies, companies and knowledge institutes and local visits in the field. The mission is linked to the Princely Mission to China, under the chairmanship of HRH Princess Astrid.

After the mission, the main results are shared with the entire Flemish cleantech industry during a closing seminar including best practices.

To realise this interprovincial project, I<sup>2</sup>PCC receives financial support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

### *Introducing the regions:*



For over 25 years, the Province of East Flanders has been working with the Province of **Hebei**, which is strategically located in the North-East of China, surrounding the capital city of Beijing, the port city of Tianjin as well as the new Xiong'an urban region. Hebei's economy is characterized by a history of heavy industry and today it offers opportunities for international players offering innovative cleantech solutions.

In 1985, the Province of Antwerp concluded a partnership with **Shaanxi** Province, a first in Belgium. Over the past 33 years, projects on education, culture and the development of our key economic industries have supported knowledge exchange between the regions. Shaanxi lies at the entry point of the Silk Road and has the most versatile energy supply in China, with associated challenges in terms of environmental sustainability and pollution.

Since 2011, Flemish Brabant has been partnered with the innovative Chinese city of **Chengdu** (Sichuan province). This offers privileged access to China and leads to exchange and cooperation. The province collaborates with Chengdu smart city in five areas: foreign investments, the five clusters of Smart Hub Flemish Brabant (health, logistics, food, cleantech & creativity), people-to-people exchange, heritage and partnerships with local authorities.

With 32 million inhabitants, **Chongqing** is China's largest city province and is among the fastest growers, achieving an economic growth of 9.3% in 2017. The city is located on the Yangtze river, the longest river in Asia and one of the busiest rivers in the world. The downstream Three Gorges Dam forces Chongqing to focus on water treatment as waste streams from livestock farming, industry (heavy metals and chemicals) and households present a challenge in terms of soil pollution.

**Guangdong** province, which borders Hong Kong and Macau, is expected to rise to the equivalent of the sixth largest economy in the world by 2035. Guangdong has been committed to energy conservation, emission reduction and developing innovative technologies. It is mentioned in "Happy Guangdong" as one of its goals for the 12th Five-Year Plan period (2011-2015). It aims to achieve this target by boosting domestic demand, innovation, workforce development, regional coordination, green development and "harmonious sharing".