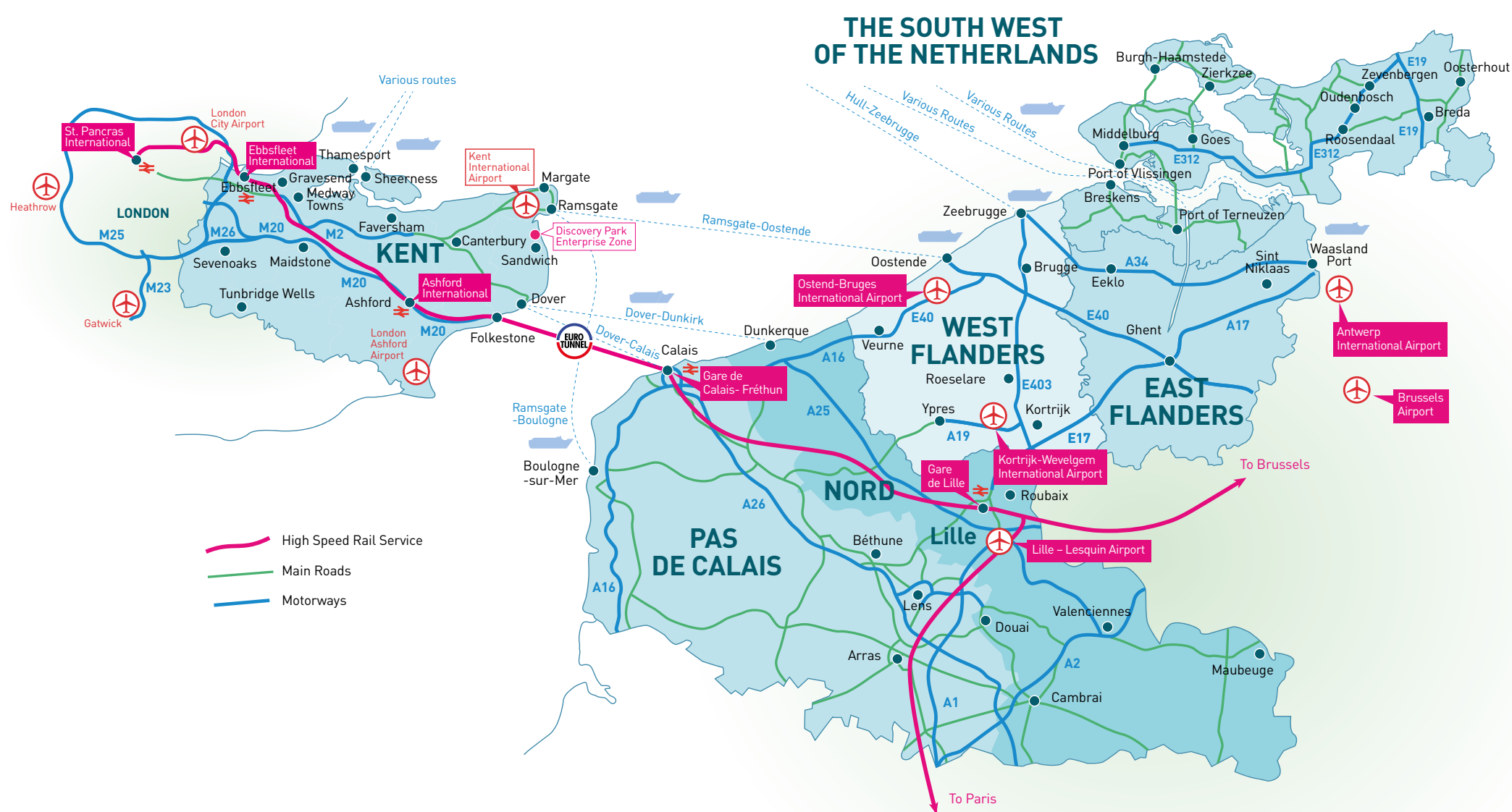


# 2 Seas Trade Region – A Great Place to do Business

The 2 Seas Trade region includes the County of Kent (England), the Provinces of East and West Flanders (Belgium) and the South West of the Netherlands. The region also has close links with Nord-Pas de Calais (France).



## The 2 Seas Trade region:

- Is at the heart of Western Europe
- Has access to a potential consumer base of 500 million people within a 300km radius
- Is within easy reach of several major cities including London, Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam
- Is home to over 414,000 businesses
- Is home to a significant number of large international companies including:
  - Saga, Kimberly-Clark & BAE Systems
  - Dow, Total, Eastman, Lamb Weston & McCain,
  - Neckermann, Thermphos & Elo Pak
  - CRC Industries Europe, Ranbaxy, NYK, WWL & Bayer CropScience

## A Connected Region:

- High Speed rails links connect the different parts of the 2 Seas region as well as neighbouring capital cities
- The region is home to 13 ports including Zeebrugge, Ostend, Ghent, Zeeland Seaports, Dover and Calais
- The Channel Tunnel situated within the region provides a physical link between the UK and mainland Europe
- A efficient motorway network also ensures rapid journey times between areas of the 2 Seas Trade region
- Several provincial or local airports connect the region with the rest of the world
- The region is therefore a major international logistics and distribution hub for the rest of Europe and beyond

## A Dynamic Region:

- The region is home to more than 15 research and higher education institutes
- There are a large number of research & innovation clusters on a range of themes including horticulture, logistics, life sciences & biotechnology
- A skilled, multilingual workforce

## A Diverse Business Region:

- New developments in bio and environmental technologies are providing many new opportunities and areas of growth for the region
- Whilst most industrial sectors are represented within the region the following are specialist areas where there are significant trade and business opportunities:
  - Life Sciences
  - Environment Technologies
  - Logistics and Distribution
  - Agri-Food
  - Renewable Energy
  - Tourism

## A Favourable Business Environment:

- The region can offer a range of good value, high quality commercial properties ranging from incubation units for start-ups to much larger properties for large firms.
- The 2 Seas Trade region is home to various enterprise zones and business clusters
- The region offers a favourable tax environment and a range of business support services and 'soft landings' support





# About the Region



## Kent

Positioned between the markets of London and Europe, Kent is the closest UK location to continental Europe, offering access to over 530 million consumers within a 24 hour drive. The region offers great value housing, good schools, four universities, a wealth of culture and history and thriving communities with parks and open spaces.

Kent is a commercial business hub with high-speed rail links to the UK capital and the continent. Rail links enable easy travel to London St. Pancras in 17 minutes from Ebbsfleet International and 37 minutes from Ashford International, or to Brussels, Lille or Paris in less than two hours. Office costs are up to 60% lower and operational costs around 35-65% less than London.

## The South West of the Netherlands

The South West of the Netherlands (Western Brabant and Zeeland) is a region of great potential. Over 100,000 companies are situated in this region, thanks partly to its strategic location. The large ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp are only 40 minutes away while Amsterdam and Brussels airports can be reached within an hour.

Furthermore, the South West of the Netherlands is easily accessible from the major economic areas of Antwerp and Zeebrugge in Belgium and the German Ruhr area.

Some 300 million consumers live within a range of 500 km. The South West of the Netherlands is home to over a million inhabitants. Important cities within the region are Breda, Roosendaal, Bergen op Zoom, Middelburg, Vlissingen and Terneuzen.



## East Flanders

Flanders is the northern part of Belgium. Institutionally it is the federal state of Belgium that contains the Dutch-speaking population. Flanders has over 6 million inhabitants, who make up around 58% of the Belgian population. They live in an area covering 40% of the Belgian national territory.

East Flanders is one of the five provinces of Flanders, one of the three regions of Belgium. It has an area of 2.982 km², and is home to 1.4 million people. The capital, Ghent, is the largest city in the province and has over 237,000 inhabitants.

East Flanders has two sea ports: the port of Ghent and the Waaslandhaven, which is the growth zone of the port of Antwerp. The Ghent-Terneuzen canal connects the port of Ghent with the Westerschelde and the North Sea. Various domestic and international inland waterway connections are accessible via the River Schelde, the River Leie and the Ringvaart.

## West Flanders

The Province of West-Flanders is Belgium's most western province and is a very enterprising region. Bordering the North Sea coast, West Flanders offers a prime location with plenty of business opportunities and excellent supporting infrastructure. It has an area of 3 144 km² and is home to 1.2 million people. Bruges is the capital of the Province and its city center is recognised as a world heritage site by Unesco.

In the north of the province, most industry is concentrated in and around the cities of Bruges and Ostend. Both cities also have important seaports: the port of Bruges-Zeebrugge and the port of Ostend. The logistics, metallurgy & energy sectors are dominant within the region and the middle of the province is home to an internationally competitive agro-food industry. The south is well known for its textile and design industry which is renowned for its focus on innovation.



Tourism is also an important industry in West Flanders, attractions include the Belgian coast, the historic centre of Bruges, 'Flanders Fields' and the World War I battlefields around Ypres.

## Nord-Pas de Calais

Nord-Pas de Calais shares a maritime border with Kent in the UK and a land border with Flanders, Belgium. The region has a range of excellent transport links and is home to a population of approximately 4 million. The region combines the "Départements" of Nord and Pas de Calais and is ideally situated in the 'heart of Europe' between London, Paris and Brussels.

The region is host to three significant seaports; Dunkerque, Calais and Boulogne-sur-Mer. Dunkerque and Calais are some of France's major freight ports. Boulogne-sur-Mer acts as a hub for fisheries and is a centre for seafood and distribution.

Nord-Pas de Calais has built on its rich industrial and mining heritage to become a dynamic region for modern business with key strengths in automotive manufacturing and high tech industries.

## The 2 Seas Trade Project

The 2 Seas Trade (2ST) project is part financed by the EU funded Interreg IVA 2 Seas Programme. 2ST aims to encourage and support SMEs in Kent (England), East and West Flanders (Belgium), The South West of the Netherlands and Nord-Pas de Calais (France) to trade within these partner regions. It also aims to attract business to the wider region as a whole.

For more information about the region and project visit:

**www.2seastrade.eu**



## Key contacts, links and support services

- Locate in Kent**  
Kent's investment promotion agency can provide free advice to overseas companies on business relocations, commercial property, supply chains and doing business in Kent.  
**Email:** [enquiries@locateinkent.com](mailto:enquiries@locateinkent.com)  
**Telephone:** +44 (0)1732 520700  
**Web:** [www.locateinkent.com](http://www.locateinkent.com)
- High Growth Kent**  
High Growth Kent offers guidance, coaching and mentoring to help ensure that growth potential is realised within a company.  
**Email:** [info@enterpriseeurope-se.eu](mailto:info@enterpriseeurope-se.eu)  
**Telephone:** +44 (0)844 725 2244  
**Web:** [www.highgrowthkent.co.uk](http://www.highgrowthkent.co.uk)



- Chamber of Commerce for the SW of the Netherlands**  
The Chamber of Commerce provides a range of support services to businesses including start-ups.  
**Email:** [zuidwest@kvk.nl](mailto:zuidwest@kvk.nl)  
**Telephone:** + 31 (0)76 564 68 00  
**Web:** [www.kvk.nl](http://www.kvk.nl)
- VOKA-Chamber of Commerce West Flanders** a networking organisation with more than 3,600 business members. Its focus is lobbying, networking, consulting and providing advice and information. The international department encourages international trade among members through seminars, events, business clubs, 'lunch and learn' events and business missions etc.  
**Email:** [info.wvl@voka.be](mailto:info.wvl@voka.be)  
**Telephone:** +32 (0)56 23 50 51  
**Website:** [www.voka.be/west-vlaanderen](http://www.voka.be/west-vlaanderen)



- VOKA-Chamber of Commerce East Flanders** facilitates economic activity and aims to create an optimal framework for successful business. This is underpinned by supporting the economic development of the region through lobbying, networking and offering specific services to businesses. VOKA East Flanders has 3,000 members including Volvo, Honda and Arcelor Mittal.  
**Email:** [info.ovl@voka.be](mailto:info.ovl@voka.be)  
**Telephone:** +32 (0)9 266 14 40  
**Website:** [www.voka.be/oost-vlaanderen](http://www.voka.be/oost-vlaanderen)

