

## FRANCE

# Local development

**Location**  
Florac

**Programming period**  
2014 – 2020

**Priority**  
P6 – Social inclusion & local  
development

**Measure**  
M19 – LEADER/CLLD

**Funding (EUR)**  
Total budget 68 094  
EAFRD 43 580  
National/Regional 10 895  
Private 13 619

**Project duration**  
2016 – 2018

**Project promoter**  
Atelier Tuffery

**Contact**  
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**Website**  
[www.ateliertuffery.com/en/](http://www.ateliertuffery.com/en/)

A family business, with a long-standing tradition of producing denim clothing, used support from the LEADER measure to establish a modern workshop and increase its share in domestic and international markets.

## Summary

The Atelier Tuffery is located in the small town centre of Florac in the Cevennes mountains. It was established in 1892 and for four generations it has been producing jeans, clothing and accessories. In 2014, the next generation took over management and decided to make the family business a dominant player in a highly competitive market.



Support from the LEADER measure enabled the creation of a new workshop, located in the Florac business park. Funding was used to buy new equipment including new sewing machines, computers, interior design and an innovative automated and ergonomic cutting table, which is unique in France. The funding also covered part of the construction costs.

## Results

The workshop creates about 6,000 pairs of jeans a year, plus other fashion articles such as shirts, skirts and shoes.

Part of the production is exported via the website to 26 countries. The rest is sold to national and regional customers.

Tuff's Jeans enterprise saw their business grow by 600% in 3 years.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- ☐ The genuine feature of this project was that it went beyond the conventional economic support for an investment. It responded to the entrepreneurs' willingness to value local resources (i.e. hemp production) and to diversify their activity by including rural tourism in their plan by having their workshop open to visitors.



*"We are in the process of getting the national label 'Living Heritage Company' (in French: Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant). It is this combination of authenticity and modernity that comes to reward this prize!"*

Julien TUFFERY

## Context

The development strategy of the Local Action Group (LAG) 'Causses Cévennes' is encapsulated into one message: 'roots for tomorrow' and is based upon three main strands: local economic resources, sustainable tourism and amenities. Under the *economic* strand, the LAG provided support to the Tuffery workshop, the oldest French brand of jeans.

The enterprise is located in the small town centre of Florac in the Cevennes mountains. It was established in 1892 and for four generations, it has been making jeans according to their own know-how. In the 1950s, the jeans were mainly work wear but since then became a fashion item. The workshop employed up to 60 people to produce more than 500 jeans a day. The workshop created its own registered trademark: TUFF'S jeans. For several decades, the Tuffery workshop was the last French factory of jeans. In the 1970s, the workshop experienced difficulties. Consumption patterns changed and major distribution chains emerged. Alongside growing globalisation, production of goods was relocating and competition from foreign countries became immense. However, the family, with its strong tradition, continued to produce its jeans labelled 'Made in Lozère', which were the last jeans entirely produced in France. It was also important for the family not to relocate and to keep close to its collaborators.

In 2014, Julien Tuffery and his wife Myriam decided to take over the family business and bring back this treasure of French industry and know-how. They re-established Tuff's historic name - Atelier Tuffery - and returned to the source of the brand's artisan origins. They also redesigned the brand's web presence and communications.

## Objectives

The aim of this project was to support the modernisation of the Tuffs Jeans manufacturing company, with a more modern workshop located in the Florac business park, and the design of a new economic model based on direct online sales.

## Activities

In 2017, on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the family business, the Atelier Tuffery inaugurated a new workshop: a modern setting located in the Florac business park.

LEADER funding was used to buy new equipment including new sewing machines, computers and interior design services for the new workshop. The new workshop includes an innovative automated and ergonomic cutting table, which is unique in France. This was possible thanks to a partnership with the 3D Innov technological platform and the Jean-Baptiste Dumas high school in the city of Alès. The funding contributed to the construction of the new building located in the business park as it covered part of the construction costs.

The support also helped the company to incorporate new production methods, make a digital shift in marketing so as to become a key-player in e-commerce and develop a quality distribution network in France and abroad.

## Main results

At present (2018), the workshop creates about 6,000 pairs of jeans a year, plus other fashion articles such as shirts, skirts or shoes. In artisan production, it is the same person who makes sure that all of the operations of the manufacturing process are followed to the letter. The making of tailored jeans is a genuine know-how, and the workshop carries out all stages of the process: taking measurements, custom size template, hand-made pattern, drawing on raw canvas (manual cutting), assembling the 18 parts that compose the jeans trousers, laying metal accessories, finishing and quality control.

The majority of sales are made to individuals. Part of the production is exported via the website to 26 countries. The rest is sold to national and regional customers.

This in-depth transformation was quick to produce results as Tuff's Jeans saw their business grow by 600% in 3 years. This renaissance also has a strong local impact as it secured jobs, increased the shop visits and tourism in the area, and ensured greater economic sustainability.

In 2017, the company received the 'Living Heritage Company' (in French: *Entreprise du patrimoine vivant*) label, a mark of state recognition that values companies with outstanding craftsmanship and industrial know-how.

## Main results

The genuine feature of this project was that it went beyond the conventional economic support for an investment. It responded to the entrepreneurs' willingness to value local resources (i.e. hemp production) and to diversify their activity by including rural tourism in their plan by having their workshop open to visitors.

## Additional sources of information

[www.at-causses-cevennes.fr/project/achat-de-materiel-et-dequipements-pour-atelier-tuffery/](http://www.at-causses-cevennes.fr/project/achat-de-materiel-et-dequipements-pour-atelier-tuffery/)

[www.laregion.fr/L-atelier-Tuffery-120-ans-et-toujours-innovant](http://www.laregion.fr/L-atelier-Tuffery-120-ans-et-toujours-innovant)

<http://www.midinnov.fr/fr/le-concours-des-innovations/les-laureats2017/2017-1892-atelier-tuffery/>

