

## 1. PUBLISHABLE SUMMARY

### **Summary of the context and overall objectives of the project (For the final period, include the conclusions of the action)**

Medical technology (medtech) is technology used to ensure health in individuals suffering from a wide range of conditions and is involved in an entire pathway from diagnosis to cure. It extends life and brings healthy life years, reduces symptoms and prevents disease progression, thus playing an essential role in healthcare. Medical technology industry includes, among others: medical devices, in vitro diagnostics (IVD), medical imaging equipment. The European Cluster Observatory included in its European Cluster Panorama 2016 document the medical devices sector as one of the top European emerging industries.

The global medtech sector can be a tough environment for European small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups. In Europe, this industry is mainly composed of SMEs, representing 95% of the sector, which face numerous obstacles. Among the main obstacles we can mention: competition with large groups while searching for collaboration with them, stronger regulatory environments, the need of integrating diverse technologies in their products, etc. For several years now, the medtech sector has rapidly evolved with the emergence of new enabling technologies that can be integrated to medical devices, such as nanotechnologies, smart microsystems, IT solutions and connected devices, smart plastics. All these parameters represent new collaboration opportunities for SMEs and other players such as large groups and technological platforms. However, this also tends to increase the complexity of the value chain and requires stronger efforts to integrate players and in particular SMEs along the cross-sector value chain.

Besides these industrial and technological opportunities, the sector is evolving in an increasingly globalized and multi-technological environment and it is crucial for EU SMEs to access international markets to foster their competitiveness and to identify growth paths. Internationalization in the medtech sector, comparing to biotech or pharma industries, covers different types of activities such as search for technological partners, export of products, search for distributors... In addition of these multiple parameters, SMEs have often to face other difficulties such as lack of financial and adapted human resources, lack of time that are necessary to develop a structured international strategy and deploy and efficient expansion, to increase their competitiveness.

In this multifaceted context, clusters have a crucial role to play in supporting companies in their internationalization process and providing them with the proper specialized support tools. It has been demonstrated over the years, through the different European initiatives such as the ESCPs, the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP), the Cluster Excellence programs, that cluster organizations are the right component to foster sector and cross-sector growth and to support SMEs. Indeed, clusters have the capabilities to mobilize different players along the value chain, on specific markets or industry sectors, which is a strong added value for SMEs. In clustering together, SMEs have access to key networks of players to develop innovation and local collaborations; they can get key competences and benefit from key tools for the growth such as acceleration programs and internationalization. Getting access to a structured environment in the geographical concentration of the cluster creates the favorable conditions for SMEs' growth, which is even more crucial in complex emerging industry such as the medical devices sectors.

The 4 clusters partners of the MAGIA project, meaning BIPCA/bioPmed (Piemonte), BioWin (Wallonie), Life Sciences Nord (Northern Germany) and Lyonbiopole (Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes)

formed a European Cluster Strategic Partnership dedicated to Medtech sector, with the ambition to accelerate SMEs competitiveness.

The overall goal of the project has been to strengthen, through cooperation and sharing resources, the competitiveness on the global market of clusters' SMEs operating in the field of medical devices and to make the innovative European medtech SME industry more visible. Uniting forces and acting as a meta-cluster, meaning as a strong multifaceted and single partner, towards global markets creates a spill over effect on cluster's individual actions. As it has been demonstrated through the bioXclusters Plus alliance, where BioPmed and Lyonbiopole were involved, being united under a unique European umbrella, strongly foster visibility and strongly multiply the collaboration opportunities for SMEs particularly out of EU conceived as "local market".

In this state of mind, the 4 clusters' partners joined their local assets, knowledge, experiences, skills and best practices related to internationalization of clusters and companies in order to set up the basis of a competitive and ambition European Cluster Partnership in the field of medical technologies, requiring specific internationalization approaches. The partners had thus the ambition to develop a common joint internationalization strategy around a common vision and a common brand that could be the starting point to scale up the approach at European level.

By sharing their respective knowledge and experiences, such as the approach developed through the bioXclusters Plus alliance, the consortium deployed activities with the objectives of forming a European Strategic Cluster Partnership on Medtech based on a common vision for a long term relation. Their main objectives were:

- Set up the basis of the Strategic partnership by analyzing in depth each partner organization; identifying opportunities through the identification and sharing of cluster's skills and competences, as well as strengths and needs (in particular regarding internationalization) from respective ecosystem in medtech; from these needs the partners would identify precisely the markets to target from a shortlist of countries that the consortium had already identified as relevant for the medtech sector.
- Generate opportunities for the cluster partners and their SMEs to gain knowledge about the target markets, thanks to dedicated training sessions, the presence of experts and fact-finding missions focused on medtech company international development.
- Developing a common marketing and branding approach, in order to build up the visual and marketing identity of the ESCP as metacluster that could represent the strategic "core" of future pan-European initiatives.
- Defining a joint internationalization strategy for the ESCP including the Partnership Agreement (PA), expressing the willingness of the partners to engage in a long-term cooperation effort and the ESCP's strategy implementation roadmap.

### **Work performed from the beginning of the project to the end of the period covered by the report and main results achieved so far (For the final period please include an overview of the results and their exploitation and dissemination)**

The initial part of the MAGIA project has been focused on laying the foundations of the alliance, on acquiring mutual knowledge in terms of assets and international operations carried out by the four clusters and on the identification of the needs and demands of the MedTech SMEs in the field of internationalization. As a result of the data and information collected through four working groups organized with SMEs and through the electronic survey disseminated among MedTech companies in the four regions, it was possible to identify the two non-European countries that became the target of the project's actions: China and the United States of America. In addition, thanks to the study visits carried out in the four partner regions and thanks to the mapping of the MedTech companies of the

meta-cluster, the MAGIA partners benefited from a fruitful sharing of best practices in the field of cluster services for internationalization and from a better understanding of the internationalization needs of the consortium's SMEs.

Subsequently, building on the results of these preparatory activities, the MAGIA project has been focused on the production of a series of tools to support the internationalization of SMEs, such as market intelligence resources to keep up to the speed with current market trends, and insights from trusted market experts in form of video materials and interactive webinars to get a first orientation in the new and complex market environments in USA and China. The MAGIA consortium then carried out two fact-finding missions to the United States and China, which have been strategic for the identification of potential partners to support SMEs in their internationalization activities and to promote the MAGIA alliance outside of Europe. The missions also led to the successful signing of 8 collaboration agreements.

During the latter part of the project, to strengthen their position outside Europe and better support their SMEs, the four clusters have jointly developed a common internationalization strategy (Joint Internationalization Strategy – JIS). This is based on the results of a deep analysis of each partner's resources and assets, two MedTech market researches in the USA and China and two MAGIA fact-finding missions in these countries. The MAGIA JIS defines the joint European strategic vision of MAGIA, with the main objectives of defining a common internationalization strategy based on complementary expertise, skills, and networks to support the international development and competitiveness of the European MedTech sector; creating a European platform to foster cooperation between cross-sectorial clusters in Europe; representing and promoting the European MedTech industry in the world; establishing a common implementation roadmap, sharing resources and assets in the field of internationalization.

The strategy has been followed by a partnership agreement which has formalized the commitment of the partners in working together with a long-term perspective, beyond the duration of the project and which was supported by letters of intent signed by 57 European Medtech SMEs.

In parallel to these activities, the MAGIA partners have continued the promotion and dissemination of the output of the project, which included, among other things the participation to the annual conference of the Council of European Bioregions (CEBR) held in Munich in March 2018 and in Athens in April 2019, to an inter-consortium meeting with the Laser Go-Global ESCP-4i initiative, to the European Cluster Conference held in Bucharest in May 2019, to the 2019 CMEF Medical Equipment trade show in Shanghai and to the Intelligent Health Industry International Forum in Zhengzhou in October 2019.

Over 500 European SMEs have benefited from the actions of the project, while over 110 European cluster participated in dissemination events where the outputs of the project have been presented.

**Progress beyond the state of the art, expected results until the end of the project and potential impacts (including the socio-economic impact and the wider societal implications of the project so far)**

Thanks to its marketing strategy, MAGIA has been visible inside and beyond its ecosystem. The strong relations between the cluster partners were an asset for the motivation and it allows efficient deployment of activities. Therefore, the alliance has rapidly been perceived as a trustful interlocutor to access European ecosystems. The partners are willing to work on a long-term approach amongst the alliance and also with their international counterparts. The MAGIA ECCP profile and Twitter account will remain active after the end of the project. The alliance will keep promoting their international agreements to the benefit of SMEs, as well as maintaining the access to information materials.

**Address (URL) of the project's public website**

[www.clustercollaboration.eu/escp-profiles/magia](http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/escp-profiles/magia)

Logo of project Magia

