

## 1. PUBLISHABLE SUMMARY

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

The general purpose of AdPack2 is to foster cross-sectorial cooperation between the European clusters in the partnership and their SME members, as well as to support their SME members in going international and positioning them in the advanced smart packaging global value chain. This will be done through the establishment of a European Strategic Cluster Partnership (ESCP) formed by 6 European clusters from sectors linked to the smart packaging value chain, that aim to cooperate in order to implement their joint internationalisation strategy towards defined target third countries (Canada, China and United States).

This general purpose will be achieved through the following specific objectives:

- To prepare AdPack2 SMEs to go international through training and knowledge sharing actions
- To foster cooperation between partnership SME members; thus, contributing to decrease sectoral boundaries
- To establish cooperation agreements with international business and research intermediaries in each target country
- To establish an internationalisation ambassador in each target country
- To support the establishment of business partnership agreements to develop joint collaborative projects between the Partnership SME members and business and other relevant stakeholders from third countries
- To develop a long-term exit strategy that ensures the sustainability of the internationalisation support services after the end of AdPack2 project

### **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)**

Establishment of European legal structure – Ad-Pack EEIG

Three years ago, five European clusters started to jointly work within the AdPack project to boost the European sector of advanced and smart packaging by combining their different expertise. This two-year cluster internationalisation project was founded by BalticNet-PlasmaTec from Germany, Nanoprogress from Czech Republic, InovCluster from Portugal, Packbridge from Sweden and Plastiwin from Belgium. The starting signal was the building of AdPack's European Strategic Cluster Partnership (ESCP) at the beginning of the project.

Within the AdPack project a packaging-, food-, plastic, nano- and plasmatechnology clusters combined their competences in order to support the establishment of a sustainable partnership in the emerging industry of advanced packaging and beyond.

Now three years later, within the framework of AdPack<sup>2</sup> project a legal structure was established. Four founding clusters (BalticNet-PlasmaTec, Nanoprogress, InovCluster, Plastiwin) registered the Ad-Pack European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) in Prague, Czech Republic in December 2018. A European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) is a type of legal entity of the European corporate

law and it is designed to make it easier for companies in different countries to do business together or to form consortia to take part in EU programmes.

The vision of the Ad-Pack EEIG is to combine different experiences, know-how and value chains in order to boost business and innovation in the field of the advanced, smart packaging. The mission is to run a sustainable EEIG with high added value services for SMEs and innovation actors and engage them into long-term business and R&D cooperation with partners and consumers from Europe.

The aim of Ad-Pack's EEIG is also to strengthen cooperation between clusters and their cluster members across Europe. Furthermore, a joint internationalisation strategy will be developed to provide a global perspective and common goals and actions towards Europe. This strategy will include an implementation roadmap in order to intensify the internationalisation of cluster SME through the EEIG and to develop more competitive SMEs in Europe. Already three months after the registration of the EEIG, two new members, Packaging Cluster from Spain and Secured Communicating Solutions cluster from France joined this entity. Like so the newly born European ecosystem includes more than 1000 companies and innovation actors.

There were many challenges during the establishment, for ex. how to successfully overlap the interest of the founding organisations and create by-laws that will be accepted by all directors of all the clusters. Also, there was no such EEIG, so the legal steps were unknown. The process took more than 8 months and hundreds of hours and countless web meetings were organised and attended. As the executive director was elected Luboš Komárek, current chairman of Nanoprogress.

Providing added value for the European SMEs and soft-landing internationalisation to the target markets

An important step for preparation for SME support was the definition of the "AdPack<sup>2</sup>" value chain by exploring the linkages with current value chains of each cluster from the consortia. The value chain focuses itself both on process and material flow and incorporates the concept of circular economy, advanced manufacturing and materials, industry 4.0 and other. The value chain helps to define the potential opportunities for collaboration in the emerging industry of advanced packaging and serves as an important tool to position the SMEs in this emerging industry. The value chain is graphically represented in the text below.

Very important was also the establishment of the core-group, with companies, cluster organisations and other subjects directly related to the value chain of advanced packaging which will be highly involved in the ongoing project activities and will be the priority group for receiving the internationalisation support. Furthermore, the fact-finding missions were executed and local ambassadors that operate on the target markets of the project (Canada, China and USA) established. During the exploratory missions, in total 16 preparatory events (workshops, seminars, visits), 12 cluster to cluster meetings took place and 94 stakeholders from cluster organisation, SMEs and intermediaries participated. During the fact-finding missions each ambassador was personally visited by the members of the consortia and the offer of high added value services for European SMEs was discussed. The core-group includes currently more than 70 entities where 6 webinars with distinctive topics were held with the participation of the representatives of this group. We have provided SMEs trainings about the potential of specific KETs for the emerging industry of the advanced packaging and about the internationalisation towards target markets (Canada, USA, China). We have established ambassadors for each market, visited partners for facilitation and selected 8 – 18 companies that were involved in the each international mission and met their counterparts for developing business and innovation collaboration. During these missions MoUs among Ad-Pack EEIG and clusters, associations, facilitators and other companies were signed and countless B2B meetings organized.

**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)**

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

<https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/escp-profiles/adpack2>















