

1. PUBLISHABLE SUMMARY

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

The aim of the LASER-GO partnership is to develop the European cluster partnership in the field of cross-sectoral health-photonics technology. The consortium was founded by three clusters (LITEK, OpticsValley, and HTS) during Strand 1 of the COSME-supported Clusters Go International project. During the implementation of this project, three more cluster organizations (Optence which during the project merged with Bayern Photonics to create Photonics Hub, BIOCAT and MEDICEN Paris Region) joined the consortium. Thus, at the end of this project, the consortium has brought together six clusters from the five EU Member States (France, Germany, Austria, Spain, and Lithuania) representing around 1600 companies and 100 science and research institutions in the fields of medicine, biotechnology and photonics.

The strategic objectives of the project were:

- To intensify a cluster and business network collaboration and the cross-sectorial learning in the fields of photonics, optics and health tech applications across borders and sectoral boundaries between the regional hotspots and entrepreneurial regions of Île-de-France, Rheinland-Pfalz, Hessen, Catalonia, Styria and Lithuania and beyond;
- To support the further development of the European Strategic Cluster Partnership in Photonics for Health to lead international cluster cooperation in the fields of strategic interest, namely, the joint development and marketing of innovative products for the use in health applications in diagnostics and interventional imaging, sensing, regenerative medicine and biomaterials in the target markets in Canada, the US East Coast, the US West Coast, Israel, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.
- To develop the Global Value Network, connecting the SMEs and cluster organizations with their counterparts in the target markets and in emerging sectors (such as digital health, advanced manufacturing) that can help to monetize value streams from the existing and planned high-tech SME product offerings within the partnership through the implemented model of the value network.

The specific objectives were:

- To create the measures and tools for creating a Global Value Network involving the partners from the target markets into the existing or potential collaborations with cluster SMEs in new product development or product adoption in the target markets;
- To gather intelligence about the unmet market needs in the target markets by creating a network of technology scouts and the network representatives (network affiliates) from the local photonics and health tech ecosystems, creating viable entrepreneurial opportunities for collaborating with them;
- To organize Global Value Network building activities based on a systematic analysis of the value streams of the SMEs involved in the participating clusters and match-making their value propositions with those of the companies from the business networks in the target markets to create business cases for collaboration on new products and to that end to prepare the Value Network Mapping Tool for assessing the product and technology offerings of a particular company in a specific target market;
- To prepare the detailed actionable plans for the extended partnership collaboration globally: the Roadmap for the development of the Global Value Network and LASER-GO for 2020-2025 and the Plan for the collaboration with the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships.

The expected impacts are based on the set of KPIs which were established in the work plan. The following KPIs have been met as a result of the accomplished project:

KPI 1: Number of cluster organizations and business networks from different COSME participating countries having benefited from the supported actions - 6

KPI 2: Number of Partnership agreements resulting from the supported actions - 6

KPI 3: Number of C2C events (workshops/ matchmaking events/working group meetings) organized - 3

KPI 4: Number of cluster and business C2B matchmaking meetings supported - 40

KPI 5: Number of SMEs having directly or indirectly benefited from the supported actions, resulting in cooperation projects - 240

KPI 6: Increase in the percentage of the turnover from international activities, and employment in Europe, of the SMEs having benefited directly and indirectly from the supported actions, as measured through a survey by the end of the action - 15%

KPI 7: Impact of the supported actions in terms of number of resulting cooperation projects between international cluster and business network partners - 6

KPI 8: Number of cooperation agreements signed - 27

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)

During the project, the consortium has explored the targeted export markets in Australia, Japan, the United States, South Korea, Malaysia, Israel, and Canada. The project helped to collect information about the market needs and new business relationships. Also, the project gathered insights about emerging markets, business intermediaries, and the opportunities for the company products and sales offers. At least 240 companies have benefited from this partnership with the increased sales figures and the better preparedness of the companies to enter the targeted markets.

During the first and the second reporting period the consortium dedicated the effort to three primary activities: 1) the in-depth analysis of the products of the cluster companies, 2) the opportunity scouting and the application market exploration in support the planned cluster missions to South Korea, Japan, Israel, and the United States, and 3) the preparation of the promotional materials both printed and online. As concerning the product analysis, the main product lines of 183 companies out of 240 directly and indirectly involved in the project have been analyzed using the gathered technical specifications and the publicly available marketing materials. The companies were approached to provide the details of the specific type of offering, which could enable to better match-making with the potential customers.

During the final (the third) reporting period the consortium has carried out the remaining missions to the targeted countries, organized the networking events and the so-called Roadshow activities and engaged in the follow-up of the established pre-leads with business intermediaries and companies resulting in a number of MoUs and another type of collaborative agreements being signed. A network of the affiliated and partner organizations was established and the roadmap for the activities in 2020-2025 agreed to ensure the continuity and the sustainability of the LASER-Go partnership.

The quantifiable outcomes are the following:

- The eight cluster missions are accomplished

- Twenty-two Cooperation agreements signed, additional 6 agreements are in the final preparation phase
- Sixty companies identified to act as business partners
- Sixty-two companies selected to act as potential distributors
- Five cooperation initiatives introduced, two cooperation cases initiated, two requests for partnership received
- Nine business cases identified
- B2B leads generated for 40 SMEs
- 6 follow-up visits completed
- Number of contacts established: 631
- Number of a meeting held: 220, of which 40 C2B events
- Number of clusters and SMEs met: 661 of which 264 from 3rd countries.

LASER-GO created a communication strategy to reinforce and sustain the knowledge about the project and activities, not only in the LASER-GO GLOBAL clusters but also in other European regions and abroad in the target markets. LASER-GO created a brand presence through a website, video clips for social marketing and brand items. Altogether 40 SMEs selected from each cluster provided the company data and the information about their products, which helped to prepare their product presentations in the targeted markets using LASER-Go branding and communication approach. A shortlist of 30 Innovation Champions with the detailed company profiles prepared in a form of the brochure (in print and electronically) was used to support the dissemination activities during the missions and the B2B and B2C events.

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)

The project has succeeded in establishing a network of six clusters bringing together more than 1000 SMEs from photonics, medical technologies and health sectors. The created LASER-Go Network in its current form is envisioned to consist of the following constituting and complementary parts:

1. LASER-Go European cluster partnership operating as a consortium of six cluster organizations which have accomplished the strand 2 project LASER-Go International,
2. LASER-Go International partnership consisting of additional 6 clusters from Canada, USA, Israel and Korea (Optonique, MEDTEQ, OpticsValley Arizona, New York Photonics, Israel Photonics and KAPID)
3. LASER-Go Global value network covering all eight targeted markets during the implementation of this project (Canada, the US East Coast, the US West Coast, Israel, Japan, Korea, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia) consisting of 60 companies, 62 distributors and 6 major international companies operating across multiple markets.

The following socio-economic and the wider societal impacts have been noticed as concerning the individual ecosystems that each partner organization represents within its respective region:

- Île-de-France (FR10), the Paris region which is a top 10 regional hotspot and a top 1 entrepreneurial region in Europe and one of largest European hubs in life sciences and innovation has benefited from the increased exposure to international markets attracting interest from business from the targeted markets, especially from Canada, the US but also from Singapore, Japan. The involvement of MEDICEN Paris Region and Systematic Paris Region (previously Opticsvalley) has generated a number of leads.

- Hessen (DE7)/ Darmstad (DE71), a top 10 regional hotspot for medical devices, has benefited from the internationalization activities run by the LASER-Go partner Optence (later Photonics Hub) located in this region which used the partnership to establish important contacts for the benefit of the regional SMEs in the US, Israel, Korea.

Cataluña (ES51), a top 2 entrepreneurial region in Europe and a key region in biopharmaceuticals, digital industries has benefited from the international activities of the LASER-Go partner BIOCAT which collaborated with the consortium partners to establish leads and increase the regional awareness among the business intermediaries and businesses in Israel, Japan.

Styria (AT22), a top region for medical devices, has experienced a renewed interest in certain target markets such as the US, Israel thanks to the involvement in the LASER-Go partnership; a new incubator initiative has been taken up thanks to the linkages between investors and startups from the target regions.

Lietuva (LT00), a top 10 entrepreneurial region and a regional hotspot for laser technologies, has benefitted creating sales leads and collaboration opportunities for its laser technology companies represented by LITEK, the coordinator of this consortium.

Address (URL) of the project's public website

<https://www.laser-go.eu/>