ClusterXchange

An initiative of
the European Union

XCHANGE

For cluster members who want to...

Acquire new skills

Improve their services
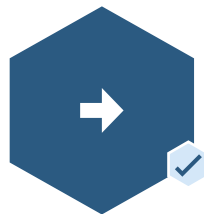
Create innovative ideas

Find new partners

Internationalise

And more

#ClusterXchange | #EUCluster | #ECCP

ClusterXchange

What is ClusterXchange?

ClusterXchange is a new pilot scheme for short-term exchanges between actors member of a cluster within a similar or from different industrial ecosystems. ClusterXchange is funded by the European Union and aims to facilitate transnational cooperation, learning, networking and innovation-oriented activities between the participants.

Who runs ClusterXchange?

ClusterXchange is implemented by the European Cluster Partnerships | Excellence (Partnerships) , with the support of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform. The Partnerships launched in 2020 gather 69 clusters from 21 different European countries and they focus on different areas of specialisation such as Water, Eco-industries, Smart building, Smart Lighting, Health, Emerging technologies, Advanced manufacturing, Textile, Plastic, Automotive, Railway, Multimodality, Urban Mobility, Packaging, Food services, nearly Zero Energy Buildings, Smart City, Energy, ICT and Sport. The Partnerships accompany the exchange participants all along the process and serve as contact points for the registration, selection and implementation of the scheme.

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform will assist in the execution of the scheme by providing:

- the ClusterXchange IT Tool that will facilitate the execution of the scheme for all participants;

- a dedicated ClusterXchange Support Office for general information and guidance on participation in ClusterXchange. The Support Office will also support the Partnerships in their tasks and on communication activities.

What is an exchange?

An exchange in ClusterXchange constitutes a stay abroad by a visiting organisation (visitor) at a host organisation (host) to explore collaboration and growth opportunities.

The Partnerships financially contribute to exchanges by providing a lump sum to visiting organisations to cover part of their travel and accommodation expenses for the stay. An exchange can be minimum three working days and maximum one month executed consecutively, excluding travel time. All steps that relate to the participation in exchanges (registration, matching, exchange building and exchange finalisation) are managed via the ClusterXchange IT Tool.

Who can participate in ClusterXchange?
You can participate as a VISITOR or HOST if you are:

- A cluster or similar business network organisations
- A scaling-up support organisation (technology centre, research institute, fab-lab, resource-efficiency service provider, [digital] innovation hub, creative hub, incubator or accelerator) that is a cluster member or
- A small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) that is a cluster member

Eligible participants must be from countries participating in the COSME programme of the European Union. These countries include all European Union Member States and other third countries, as has been listed at: https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/39579

What can an exchange entail?

The activities to be implemented during the exchange will be defined during the matching process via the IT Tool in the form of an action plan agreed upon by the visitor and the host. These may include:

- Individual or grouped capacity building provided to visitors
- Sharing of knowledge, experience and information in specific areas
- Project development, innovation and research and development
- Market research
- Networking, identification of new partners and creation of business opportunities

ClusterXchange | Hosts

As a host, you are the non-travelling party of the exchange. Hosting exchanges will allow you to receive short visits of foreign cluster members that are active in business areas relevant to your organisation.

The Partnership of your choice will be by your side to guide you during the preparation, implementation and finalisation of the exchanges. With the support of the IT Tool, you have the freedom to choose the profiles and number of visitors to host, focusing on your needs and the competences that you can offer to visitors during the exchange.

How will hosts benefit from ClusterXchange?

Hosting an exchange will allow you to:

- ✔ Increase the visibility of your organisation, services and products in relevant communities (this exposure can be increased if you host multiple exchanges)

- ✔ Share your knowledge, experience and information in specific areas

- ✔ Learn new skills and knowledge from your visitors

- ✔ Expand your network of contacts and develop new cross-border partnerships

- ✔ Gain knowledge on visitors´ foreign markets and develop business and collaborations with them

ClusterXchange | Visitors

As a visitor, you are the travelling party of the exchange, allowing you to visit a foreign cluster members active in business areas relevant to your organisation.

The Partnership of your choice will be by your side to guide you during the preparation, implementation and finalisation of the exchange. With the support of the IT Tool, you have the freedom to choose the most suited host that can best fulfil your needs (e.g. capacity-building, organisational, technological and commercial) during the exchange.
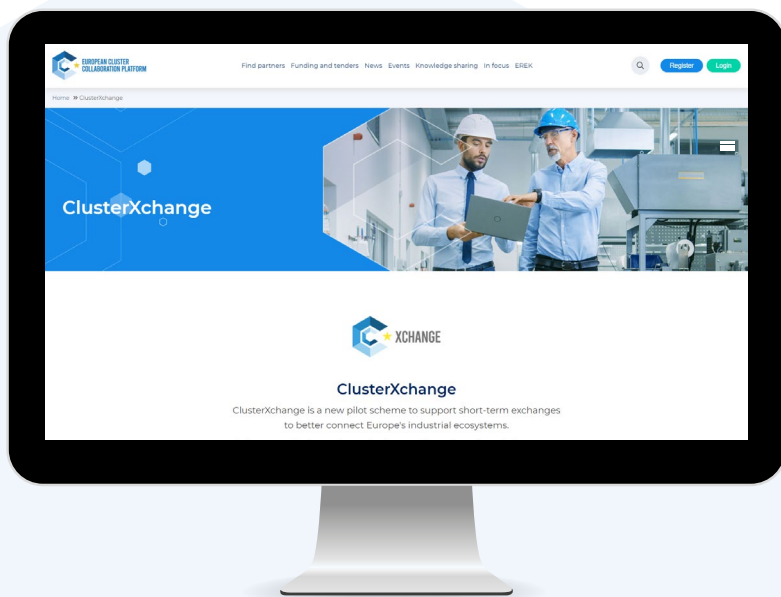
How will visitors benefit from ClusterXchange?

A stay abroad with a selected host in another participating country will allow you to:

- Broaden your sector- and non-sector specific skills and knowledge through capacity-building

- Gain insights into the operation and techniques used by your host organisation

- Expand your network of contacts and develop new cross-border partnerships

- Find innovative solutions to upgrade your business, products and services

- Create new business opportunities and get involved in new innovative projects

- Gain knowledge on foreign markets and cultures

- Benefit from financial assistance for your exchange

The ClusterXchange portal

The ClusterXchange online portal is housed in the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) website. The ClusterXchange portal provides you with **access to detailed information on ClusterXchange** such as the eligibility criteria, information on the registration, matching, exchange building and finalisation processes, financial assistance stipulations for the visiting organisations, background information on the Partnerships and the ClusterXchange Support Office and importantly, **access to the IT Tool** where you can apply to the scheme.

You can also **sign up for news and updates** on the activities and accomplishments of the Partnerships and the ClusterXchange scheme.

To find out more, please visit the ECCP website or get in contact with the ClusterXchange Support Office via phone or email.

How to be a *host* **or a** *visitor***?**
It is easy...

Eligibility

✔ Check the profiles of the Partnerships on the ECCP webiste to see which one will be most suited to assess your application and supervise your exchange.

Registration

✔ Prepare your CV and motivation statement for your application.

Use the ClusterXchange IT Tool on the ECCP website to register either as a host or a visitor, select your preferred Partnership for the assessment and validation of your application and submit your application.

Matching

✔ After your application has been accepted, the IT Tool will give you access to the catalogue of all the registered participants that best match your profile and preferences.

Choose your preferred partner and establish contact with it via the IT Tool.

Plan your exchange with your chosen visitor or host with the support of your and your partner´s Partnerships.

Participation

✔ Prepare your action plan and sign the financial and commitment to quality agreement of the exchange.

Participate in the exchange and submit a brief closing report on the exchange via the IT Tool.

Receive your financial assistance as a visitor of the exchange after the closing report has been accepted by the Partnerships.

Getting in touch with the EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: **https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en**

On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

    – by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),

    – at the following standard number: +32 22999696 or

    – by email via: **https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en**

Finding information about the EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: **https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en**

EU publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications at:
https://publications.europa.eu/en/publications.

Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see **https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en**).

EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1952 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: **http://eur-lex.europa.eu**

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (**http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en**) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, both for commercial and non-commercial purposes.

Strengthening the European economy through collaboration

For further information:

Visit our website **www.clustercollaboration.eu** and **clustercollaboration.eu/clusterxchange** for detailed information on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform, the ClusterXchange scheme and the Partnerships.

Contact the ClusterXchange Support Office for queries and guidance at **ClusterXchange@clustercollaboration.eu**

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