EUROPEAN CLUSTER COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Special Edition:
Welcome to the Trend Universe

Summary

EU Clusters Talks
21 June 2023, 8:30 – 9:30 CET

An initiative of the European Union

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Special Edition: Welcome to the Trend Universe

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform organised this EU Clusters Talk on 21 June 2023, 8:30 – 9:30 CET, to introduce the ECCP Trend Universe, show the functionalities, learn about the benefits for cluster organisations, and discuss the importance of strategic foresight.

Agenda of the meeting
Moderation: Zivile Kropaite
1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
   Nina Hoppmann, team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform
2. Video: The ECCP Trend Universe
3. Introduction to the Trend Universe
   Jan-Philipp Kramer, Head of EU Services, Prognos; team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform
4. How to use the Trend Universe
   Franz Bailom, CEO, in-manas: intelligent management solutions
5. Panel debate
   Antonio Novo, Managing Director, Cluster IDiA; President, European Clusters Alliance
   Fritz Fahringer, Thematic Platform Digitalisation and Resilient Production, Standortagentur Tirol
   Jan-Philipp Kramer, Head of EU Services, Prognos; team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform
   Tanja Zegers, Policy Officer, Secretariat-General, European Commission
6. Funding opportunities
   Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Key messages
- The Trend Universe as a tool for strategic foresight allows to make data-driven decision-making.
- The tool can provide concrete and reliable data for reports and recommendations that clusters make to policymakers, which increases their credibility.
- It can be used to make an honest assessment of an organisation's competence compared to others and identify areas for improvement.
- The tool can help bring external input to companies to foster innovation.
- The Commission is interested in understanding which trends the businesses pick up, as it might influence policymaking.

Strengthening the European economy through collaboration

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1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Nina Hoppmann, team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform

After the introduction by moderator Zivile Kropaite, the following news item were presented:

1. [Feedback survey](#) to the EU Clusters Talks until 1 August
2. Presentation of the [Horizon Results Platform](#), which provides more than 2,700 Key Exploitable Results from EU-funded programmes
3. Call for expression of interest to join [Industry 5.0 Community of Practice](#)
4. [Survey "Preventing cyber-theft of trade secrets"](#) to set up awareness-raising tools to help EU SMEs and the research community fight cyber theft
5. Announcement of the [upcoming Clusters meet Regions events](#)

2. Introduction to the Trend Universe

Jan-Philipp Kramer, Head of EU Services, Prognos; team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Jan-Philipp Kramer described the background to the development of the Trend Universe, a foresight tool for clusters and other stakeholders, and the importance of foresight and trend scouting. The tool allows to develop a comprehensive "start-to-finish" future perspective on a domain and explorative and normative visioning to design preferable futures. It includes functionalities like scanning trends, identifying drivers, addressing issues, and making projections. The goal is useful to mitigate biased thinking by focusing on a broad future perspective rather than relying solely on past successes or failures.

Jan-Philipp Kramer also explained the access to the tool. It is available to Pro Users of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP), one of the two profile types available to organisations. Pro Users are those who provide not only mandatory information but at least 50% of the optional information in their profile. Being a Pro User grants access to additional functionalities and services on the ECCP, such as the Trend Universe.

Regarding any questions and technical issues with the Trend Universe, users can write to eccp-trend-universe@clustercollaboration.eu

3. How to use the Trend Universe

Franz Bailom, CEO, in-manas: intelligent management solutions

Franz Bailom introduced the logic and structure of the trend radars. They are based on the concepts of megatrends and macrotrends, which provide a specific view on each ecosystem and describe the highest impacts of trends on a company, organisation, or region. The result is a comprehensive picture of the most important trends for each ecosystem, along with strategies and measures that derive from the evaluation.

For each ecosystem, the trend radars provide basic information, megatrends, macrotrends, key insights, and statistics. They also feature a benchmark evaluation which summarises the evaluations of previous participants in each industrial ecosystem, and an expert evaluation. Furthermore, the radars offer strategic recommendations in form of norm strategies and measures, which result from the assessment of trends and competences in the respective trend fields. The trend portfolio presents the relevant megatrends and macrotrends in form of a matrix, showcasing influence and competence. Clicking on individual trends provides detailed descriptions of trend facts and norm strategies. Having this assessment allows users to understand the most relevant trends, analyse their position in relation to these trends, and determine strategic actions to address them.

Franz Bailom highlighted that the users need to dedicate some work into feeding the tool to get the most out of it. The benefits of using the tool grow the more users provide data for the assessment.

4. Panel debate

The panelists discussed the importance of strategic foresights for cluster organisations and their members as well as the benefits of the Trend Universe offered by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform. They agree that the initial time investment for the users pays back with increased competitiveness and resilience.

Antonio Novo explained that one of clusters' activities is benchmarking at regional level. The tool is very useful for clusters as it can **provide concrete and reliable data to underline the analysis and recommendations** that clusters make to policymakers. Backing reports with data related to the reality increases credibility, e.g., the re- and upskilling needs for megatrends.

Jan-Philipp Kramer said that while the tool cannot predict unforeseeable events, it can help prepare and improve resilience by strategically developing competences and activities. He gave the example of demographic change as a disruption on the labour market, for which we currently are not mitigating the risks. He emphasised that it is important to make an **honest assessment of an organisation's competence** compared to others and identify areas for improvement. Together with the members, clusters can identify their areas of work, e.g., develop skills or identify strategic investment priorities.

Fritz Fahringer explained that the agency in Tirol uses a similar tool to understand the trends in the industry to adapt their own strategy, which in their case were in digitalisation, energy and sustainability, and health. This approach allows for **data-driven decision-making**, which is the point of foresight tools. Based on this analysis, they organised events with clusters to discuss how to deal with these trends.

Tanja Zegers from the Commission's Secretariat-General, which deals with all cross-cutting matters and coordination across policies, emphasised the increasing momentum of strategic foresight, particularly under Ursula von der Leyen's presidency. She said that strategic foresight always needs to be **tailored to the target**, in this case the businesses. In contrast, the Commission is doing a similar exercise of analysis, but tailored to the evaluation and actions for policymaking. For the Commission, it is important to see which **trends the businesses pick up, which in turn can influence policymaking**. Using the tool and developing different future scenarios comes back to preparedness, creating resilience and being able to use opportunities, independently of the entity.

Fritz Fahringer added that innovation does not only come from the inside of a cluster, but also from outside. It is crucial to think outside the silos and **bring external input to the companies**, e.g., through new project ideas or workshops. Their cluster is working on the digital skills of their members so that the companies can use the tool and integrate it into their long-term decision-making.

Franz Bailom highlighted that while it is interesting to discover the trends in the radar, it is important to **understand the innovation** that is in these trends. Many SMEs do not understand what is out there, but it is good to share examples and use cases. Clusters should give their members a clear indication of the opportunities.

Regarding the practical use, Jan-Philipp Kramer said that there is a **training video** available online to facilitate the understand and access to the Trend Universe.

5. Funding opportunities

Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Closing the EU Clusters Talk, Nina Hoppmann shared the following examples of funding opportunities:

1. Innovation Fund Small Scale Projects; Deadline 19 September 2023
2. Beyond the horizon: A human-friendly deployment of artificial intelligence and related technologies; Opening on 4 October 2023
3. Industrial leadership in AI, Data and Robotics boosting competitiveness and the green transition (AI Data and Robotics Partnership); Opening on 15 November 2023
4. Opportunities for SMEs: Calls from Euroclusters; published on European Cluster Collaboration Platform

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