

European Cluster Alliance Against Coronavirus

Thursday 21th May, 2020 at 8.30

Working format is based on “*Gilles Rules*” (designed to allow everybody to speak and share, optimizing time)

[Link to registration of the session](#)

Topic of the day: **Clusters Continuity through the Crisis**

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Today was a **brainstorming session** composing an overview about **Cluster organisations’ needs** during the crisis period.

In first, it is important to underline that **European Alliance** is not only about Clusters, but it is an **inclusive and favourable environment** to dialogue with companies, civil society, research entities and other type of organizations.

There is the need to distinguish the concept of Clusters, that refers to a main concentration of companies, technological centers and networks, public and private entities that are naturally connected with territory and locally aggregated. Then there are Cluster organisations that are usually considered as those actors who facilitate the connections between University and companies, institutions and schools, civil society.

IDENTIFICATION OF DISRUPTIONS AND NEEDS

- Clusters are facing the **financial challenges**, a situation generated by the reason that **companies are struggling to pay**
 - In some Clusters **innovation projects have been stopped** by companies, that means that cluster organisations as intermediaries have stopped projects
 - Need to **reinvent the activities and services for members**, facing now also a lack of visibility, **reinforce trust relations** as intangible asset inside clusters but **building relations with members outside** the clusters and include more civil society
 - Difficulties in transferring to members the concept that **companies part of clusters perform far better** instead those outside (alone companies are not well connected)
 - Resolve problems concerning compromise with public administration: there are cases in which **public administration is not flexible** and do not give the opportunities to change the program (i.e. from offline event to online / web event, that happens also in training context)
 - Facing situation of **fake bureaucracy**
 - Funding problem: distance from what is decided at high level and what is happening in the concrete daily life
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SOLUTIONS

- Clusters are mostly composed by SMEs, that is good to give them the opportunity to participate in projects, reaching knowledge and reaching opportunities that they alone cannot achieve
- Governance really matters. In this moment of shared management need, actors that think to go alone are not helping to move forwards.
- Clusters are value creator in society. The country that survive are those country who are able to build strong connection between policy makers at any level with other actors. Government that go in hand with people
- Clusters challenge in building trust, listening to the needs and giving solutions
- The countries that have handled the crisis well are those where the state maintains a productive relationship with value creators in society. For example it is possible to check this article published on Project Syndicate regarding the “[big failure of small governments](#)”
- For a deep knowledge on **impact of COVID policy measures** on EU regions it is possible to [read this paper](#)