

Cluster Matchmaking Event on agro-food manufacturing value-chains in EUROMED countries - Milan Expo 2015

6th and 7th of May 2015 – Milan, Italy

From the 6th to 7th of May 2015, a delegation of 26 cluster representatives from 12 European countries participated in a *Cluster Matchmaking Event on agro-food manufacturing value-chains in EUROMED countries* organised in the scope of the Milan Expo 2015.



On the 6th and 7th of May 2015, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs together with the Enterprise Europe Network conducted a *Cluster Matchmaking Event on agro-food manufacturing value-chains in EUROMED countries*.

In support of a policy aimed at promoting international cluster cooperation for the benefit of SMEs, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry launched in 2012 an initiative, which was renewed in late 2013, that contributes to the facilitation of specific cluster matchmaking missions to support cluster organisations and their SME members in their efforts to develop partnerships and business cooperation in global markets. Under this framework, Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação (SPI) organised and supported a delegation of European cluster representatives that attended the Event.

The Event was successful in promoting cooperation between cluster organisations and business networks in EUROMED countries. It is the expectation that the contacts made at the Event will develop into new partnerships that foster greater possibilities for European SMEs to grow through opportunities such as access to new markets, new products and services, and innovation projects.



The Cluster Delegation consisted of 26 cluster representatives from 12 European countries (Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and United Kingdom). They

represented a range of fields that included: food and drink manufacturing, innovative and high quality food products, safety and quality control, food traceability, food conservation and shelf life, and packaging materials and design. The clusters were selected primarily due to their willingness and understanding of the need to collaborate with other clusters and network organisations from EUROMED countries in order to better support their SMEs in a competitive global market.

The Cluster Matchmaking Event was comprised of several activities, which included:

- A conference focused on the business opportunities and the economic and industrial cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area;
- A Cluster introduction session;
- Cluster-to-cluster (C2C) and cluster-to-business (C2B) matchmaking meetings;
- A networking social event hosted by the Lombardy Region; and
- A guided visit to the Milan EXPO 2015.



During the afternoon of the 6th and the morning of the 7th of May, the European Cluster Delegation participated in C2C and C2B meetings, where they had the opportunity to discuss potential collaborations and partnerships. The cluster participants conducted more than 170 meetings with EUROMED clusters (more than 80 C2C meetings) and companies (more than 90 C2B meetings). These meetings allowed the Delegation to identify cooperation opportunities, including potential cooperation agreements and collaborative project ideas.

Furthermore, the European Cluster Delegation participated in a *cluster introduction session*, which provided each cluster representative an opportunity to make a brief presentation of their cluster in order to foster more C2C and B2C meetings. Additionally, a *cluster debriefing session* was conducted to obtain group feedback regarding the Event.



These sessions were complemented by more informal networking events such as a cocktail hour hosted by the Lombardy region and a guided visit of the Milan EXPO 2015. The Cluster Delegation took full advantage of these additional events to gain further international contacts. An overwhelming majority of the participating delegates found the Cluster Matchmaking Event beneficial to establishing new contacts and identifying new collaborative opportunities that will support their SMEs.