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European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Results of ECCP cluster matchmaking events

Summary of results achieved through cluster matchmaking
events supported by the ECCP in 2016-2017

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The European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) facilitated the implementation of ten cluster matchmaking events in the period 2016-2017. The objective of the cluster matchmaking events is to foster the cooperation and establishment of partnerships between European cluster organisations, as well as with third-country cluster-like organisations.

The events have allowed European cluster organisations to gain knowledge on the opportunities and challenges of the different countries, and to meet the key players of the respective markets, which in most cases would not be possible by their own means. The cluster organisations had the chance to lay the foundations for building a better international business network, learn about new markets, increase their visibility, as well as sign cooperation agreements that serve as inspiration for their peers. In addition, the cluster organisations were able to continue fostering their relationship with other European organisations.

These outcomes have also had a positive repercussion on the members of the cluster organisations, especially the SMEs. Building on the achievements attained during the events, SMEs have gained greater access to new clients and distributors as well as increased their participation in B2B events, among others.

Summary of organised events

The ten events comprised: four outgoing events to Iran, Mexico, Thailand and the United States; three incoming events that brought to Europe delegations from Brazil, Taiwan and the United States; and three intra-European events, as listed in Figure 1.



Outgoing events

- EU-Iran Cluster Matchmaking Event (October 2016, Iran)
- EU-Mexico Cluster & Business Cooperation Seminar and Matchmaking Event (October 2016, Mexico)
- High- level EU Cluster Mission to the USA (May 2017, United States)
- EU-Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event (September 2017, Thailand)

Incoming events

- EU-US Matchmaking Event at Hannover Messe (April 2016, Germany)
- EU-Brazil Cluster & Business Matchmaking Event (November 2016, France)
- EU-Taiwan Cluster Matchmaking Event (June 2017, Belgium)

Intra-European events

- EU Cluster Matchmaking Event in conjunction with the European Cluster Conference 2016 (November 2016, Belgium)
- European Cluster Matchmaking Event on Cross-Sectoral and Inter-Cluster Opportunities in the Aerospace Value Chain (June 2017, France)
- European Cluster Matchmaking Event in the context of the 82nd Thessaloniki International Fair (September 2017, Greece)

Figure 1 - ECCP Cluster Matchmaking Events

Figure 2 below summarises the key figures achieved through the implementation of these events.

10 MATCHMAKING events



4 outgoing
events



3 incoming
events



3 intra-European
events



PARTICIPANTS



>200 European clusters
28 European countries



143 third country
participants

RESULTS



2210
C2C meetings



202
cooperation cases



27
formal agreements

Figure 2 - Key facts of the matchmaking events



Cluster participation

More than 200 cluster organisations from 28 European countries participated in the ten matchmaking events. Those countries with the highest number of cluster organisations were from southern Europe, mainly: France, Spain, and Italy (Figure 3). Additionally, the outgoing and incoming events included a total of 143 organisations from third countries.

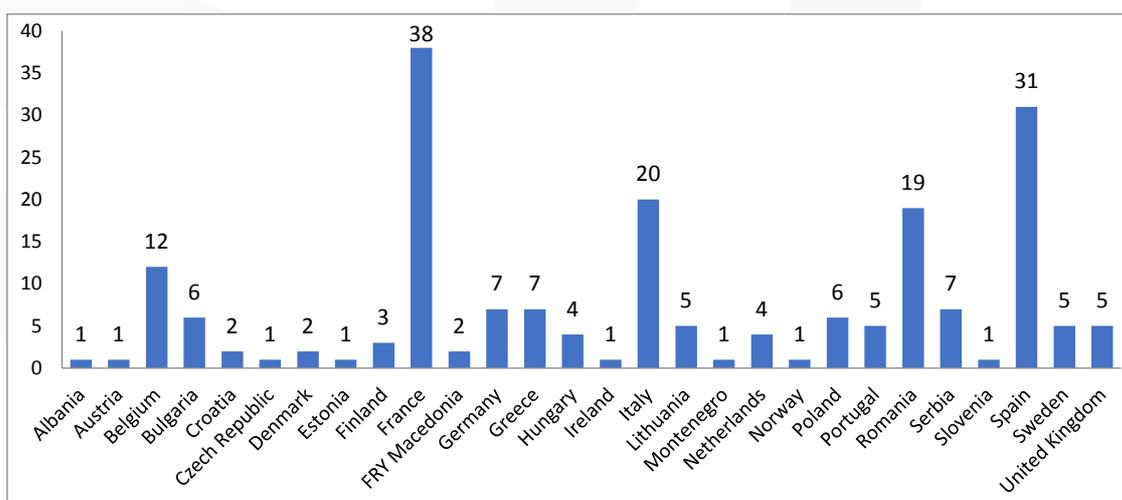


Figure 3 - Number of participant cluster organisations per European countries

Regarding the activity field of the European participants, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Automotive, Mobility and Logistics, Agrofood industry, Energy and Healthcare were the most targeted sectors among the cluster organisations. Aerospace and Cleantech were also fairly significant.

Cooperation and formal agreements achieved through the events

As a result of the ten events organised, a total of 202 cooperation cases and 27 formal agreements were achieved. In terms of cooperation cases, 47% took place with other European organisations and 53% with non-European organisations; while in terms of formal agreements, 63% were signed between European clusters and 37% with non-European organisations (Figure 4).

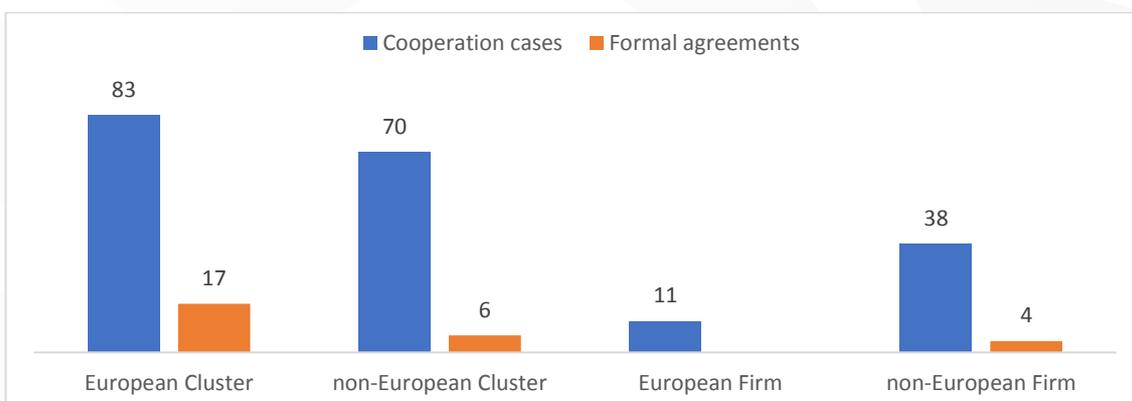


Figure 4 - Cooperation cases and formal agreements reported overall

With respect to the type of cooperation established between participants, **knowledge sharing and information exchange** was the most common. **Technology transfer** and **research and development** were frequent as well. These four types of cooperation account for almost 60% of the cooperation initiated. To a lesser extent, but still important, the establishment of business contacts and the organisation of joint events are among the activities explored by cluster organisations (Figure 5).

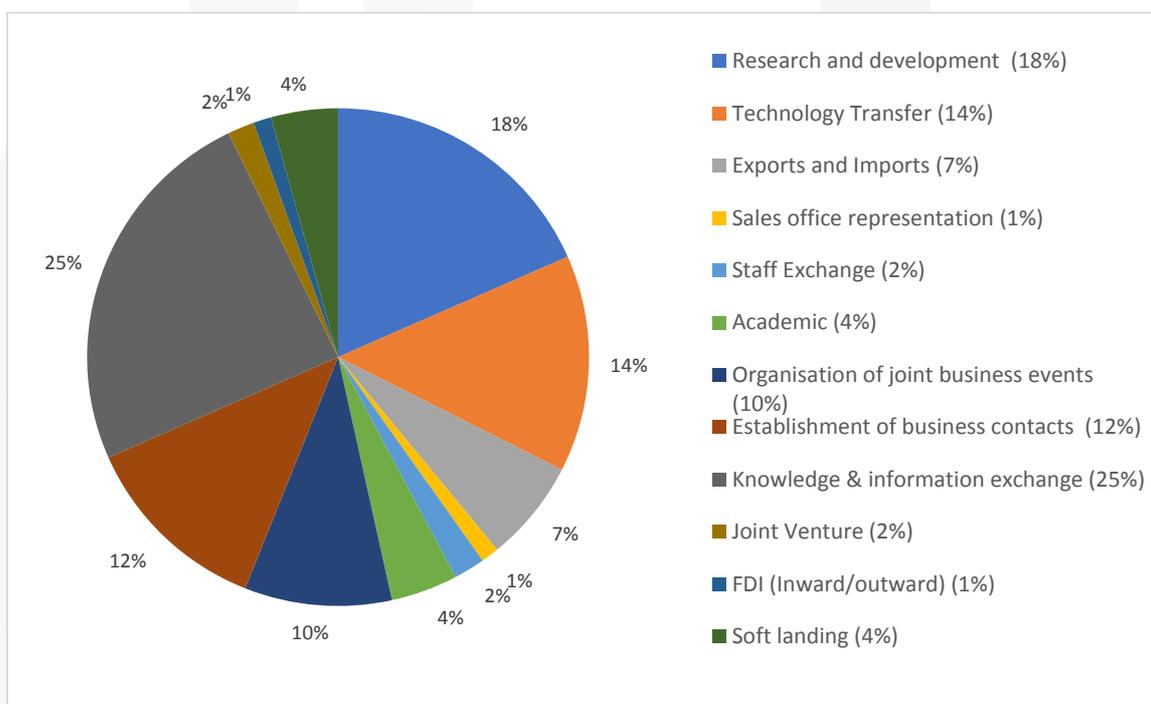


Figure 5 - Type of cooperation initiated through the events



Impact of the events on the SMEs

The participant European clusters reported that a total of 255 of their SME members benefited directly from the ten ECCP cluster matchmaking events¹. The benefits obtained by SMEs through the participation of their cluster organisations in the events are principally related to the access to new clients and/or distributors followed by participation in B2B events, 36% and 22% respectively. On the contrary, staff exchange seems to be the least explored option (Figure 6).

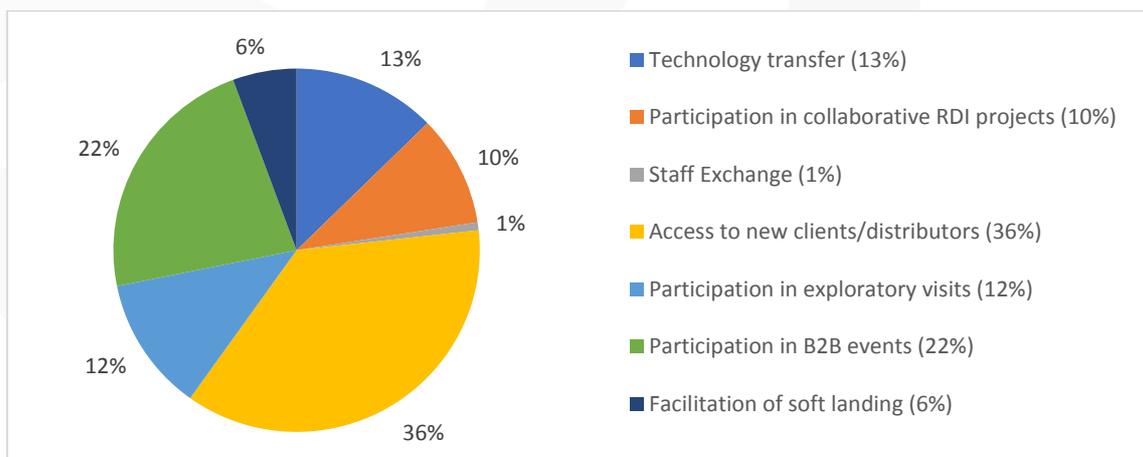


Figure 6 - Type of benefits obtained by SMEs

Testimonials and success stories

Some testimonials and success stories collected at the different events are presented below, further demonstrating the impact of the events both from the European Union and third country perspective.

“The opportunity to meet with European clusters at the Hannover Messe generated huge interest from U.S. clusters and economic development organisations. Many of them told me that they really benefited from exchanging information and learning about European clusters in advanced manufacturing. The matchmaking event was well-organised which allowed the participants to focus on making contacts and establishing relationships.”

Tshanda Kalombo, U.S. Department of Commerce

¹ The number of SMEs benefited is an estimation made by the participant cluster organisations. Thus, it depends on what each cluster organisation considers a direct benefit.



“The overall organization of the mission was excellent: I received comprehensive information before travelling to Iran. Tips on how to get a visa in Iran were much appreciated, the Iranian Embassy in Warsaw had been informed about the mission, and I could receive the Iranian visa within 40 minutes. Information on travel and accommodation were on time and complete. During our stay in Tehran, all organizational issues are transparent. As I represent Bioenergy for the Region Cluster and our activities are related to renewable energy and waste management, so from this point of view, the mission was very useful. We highly appreciate all seminar presentations, because they gave us opportunities to better understand the socio-economic situation in Iran and conditions for the perspectives of eventual cooperation with partners from Iran.”



Ewa Kochanska, Cluster manager at Bioenergy for the Region Cluster, Poland



“Good professional organization of the 2 days events and good balance, both political and operational, of the mission. In general, Iranian business people are welcoming but maybe missing depth in the way we can do business with them. In general, they are reluctant to initiate / follow up on different actions unless it concerns direct investments and concrete proposal from our side on how we can help them (maybe this is because of the history...)”

Alberto Bichi, Executive director at EPSI

“My cluster is active in the fields of Biomedicine, Biotechnology, e-Health and Ambient Assisted Living, so the cluster visits in Philadelphia, PA, which is a hub for life sciences, were of particular interest to me. It was very useful to understand the research and innovation landscape in the USA thanks to the presentations, meetings and visits, as it differs from the system we know from Europe. I am glad I can bring specific information home to my cluster’s member companies: indeed, I could already schedule a concrete appointment for one company that is visiting Boston next week with the group in charge of the Biomufacturing Program at MIT, and with the Fraunhofer Centre for Manufacturing Innovation, two of the organisations met in Boston during our cluster visit.”



Laura Cerni, Cluster Manager CBM SRL, Italy



“EU Cluster Mission to USA has been significantly important to further Lublin Medicine - Medical and Wellness Cluster development. During five days, thanks to good organization of the mission we had the opportunity to meet a number of key market and research players. We have gained the knowledge about the US system supporting economic and scientific development. We could also discuss the business model of our potential partners.

Matchmaking meetings in Washington allowed us to introduce our cluster directly to US and European organizations. The scope of potential cooperation has been defined. In two cases, we have already decided on signing the agreement on cooperation in the nearest future. Meetings in Philadelphia and Boston besides very professional presentations gave us an opportunity to meet personally people who are in charge of well-recognized US institutions. After being back to Poland and Lublin we have started to work on individual bases with partners we had met, structuring our initial ideas for cooperation.”

Marzena Strok-Sadło, Lublin Medicine Cluster, Poland

“Thanks to everyone involved in the EU-US Bilateral Cluster Mission. I can’t speak highly enough of what a fantastic opportunity it was for Cambridge Cleantech as a technology cluster. I met over 70 potential collaborators and since returning have already followed up with 3 potential partner organisations with concrete next step actions, (two meetings scheduled in London and an outline for a US-EU Summit on Smart Grid Technology). Participating on the mission with over 20 other EU technology clusters was also extremely valuable and has exponentially grown our international network with other technology clusters in Europe within the space of just a few days. Likewise, this has already led to a concrete joint bidding activity for cluster collaboration. I was impressed with the work and activity of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform before this mission but now I’m positively evangelical; active participation in international cluster collaboration is hugely valuable for our members – particularly those who are looking for international research and collaboration opportunities - and the ECCP is a fantastic source of information and resources for us to support them in doing this. Thanks again to everyone who was involved and organised such a fantastic mission – I can’t stop telling people about it and it was a real privilege to be involved”.



Sam Goodall, Cambridge Cleantech, UK



“The cluster matchmaking event in the context of the 3rd EU-Taiwan Industry dialogue was my first experience in such an event, and it was my first time with Taiwanese clusters. It was a great opportunity to know better about the Taiwanese industrial environment. A very important thing was to have the opportunity to meet the Taiwanese research centres to collaborate on R&D projects, also through the tools available at the European Commission. Our next goal, as a cluster, is to organize a mission into Taiwan with our companies and the contacts created through this event will make it easier!”

Roberto Caminiti, Technical Advisor, Mesap Innovation Cluster, Italy



“The EU – Taiwan Cluster Matchmaking Event was very interesting. It was the first time that Cluster Inteligentna Energija met with Taiwanese organizations and therefore, it was a good opportunity to learn about their business culture as well as know more about their vision regarding Croatia. In fact, I believe I found some potential collaboration in the power industry and waste management. In addition, the seminars were very useful since they provided insightful information about renewable energy sources. We gained more understanding about what the world is doing and found some interesting things for our cluster.”



Mladen Perkov, Inteligentna Energija, Croatia

“The ECCP services have been really helpful for our Cluster, specially the matchmaking events and the Clusters Database. The events have allowed us to start collaborations with other clusters and similar institutions, not only at a European but also at an international level. The Cluster Organisations mapping is a really useful tool for learning and searching potential new partners to collaborate and develop new projects together. We went to the EU-US mission this year, which gave us new contacts from both USA and Europe. And we have also started collaborating with different clusters met in the Clusters Matchmaking events and through the platform”.

Silvana Sanfelio Giaimo, Torino Wireless, Italy

“Triggered by the matchmaking event, REINA Plus organised a very successful visit to Boston in which several SMEs participated to get access to the latest know-how in the digital transformation, to start new collaboration with IT/energy specialists and to improve access to potential clients. Therefore, the USA matchmaking was very useful in improving our economic competitiveness.”

Christiane Egger, Cleantech-Cluster (Oekoenergie), Austria

The EU-Taiwan Event unveiled information about Taiwan organization involvement in R&D and commercialization of leading technologies as: 5G, Intelligent transport, Energy efficiency.

The Event helped to create an opportunity for building commercial partnership among Taiwanese and Bulgarian companies. It also allowed ICT cluster and Taiwanese standardization body to plan common activities in field of inclusion of SME into standardization process and its impact over educational process and systems.

Peter Statev, Bulgarian ICT Cluster, Bulgaria