



Cluster

Internationalisation Best

Practices Guide

JAP action B2.2b

Systematic

April 2016



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www.be-wiser.eu



Preface

“Building Enterprises – Wireless and Internet Security in European Regions” (Be Wiser) is a FP7 Region of Knowledge project.

Be Wiser Goals

- Helping companies become more competitive by enhancing access to research excellence, funding mechanisms and innovation through the improved interconnection of the actors in the field of Wireless and Internet Security ;
- Promoting the collaboration, exchange and dissemination of policy initiatives and best industry and policy practices at European level and beyond;
- Sharing knowledge between the different regions through inter-clustering;
- Developing targeted actions for cluster actors especially for SMEs (via support to open innovation, commercialisation, internationalisation and technology partnering);
- Implementing targeted internationalisation strategies and pilot actions to demonstrate their feasibility and impacts;
- Preparing Be Wiser clusters’ members to exploit opportunities offered by EU-framework programmes such as H2020 and COSME.

Be Wiser Partners

The Be Wiser Consortium partners consist of seven ICT Triple Helix Clusters (THCs), drawn from different EU members states, namely:

- Systematic – Lead partner, and the Paris Region (France) ICT Triple Helix cluster
- Cork, Ireland – it@cork with its business membership plus relationships with the Cork Institute of Technology (including the NIMBUS Centre) and Cork County Council, form the Irish Triple Helix Cluster.
- Momentum, Invest NI and CSIT in Queens University combine to form the Northern Ireland Triple Helix Cluster
- CyberForum Germany – the Baden-Württemberg (Germany) ICT Triple Helix cluster
- EURECAT – the Catalonia (Spain) ICT Triple Helix cluster
- ICT Technology Network – the Slovenian ICT Triple Helix cluster
- Cyprus Computer Society (CCS) – a developing ICT Triple Helix cluster (Cyprus)

THCs support and animate a network of businesses, regional centres of research & technology, and public authorities responsible for investment in economic development.

These clusters share a common objective of stimulating ICT and Wireless and Internet Security innovation, but operate in different ways, bringing together different strengths and expertise. Through this project, the clusters can offer a greater breadth of competence to the marketplace and can exchange successful practices. They can also achieve a critical mass to attract additional ICT clusters into the network. The internationalisation aspect of the project will identify links with expert clusters which are already in place, with the goal of further developing these linkages during the Be Wiser project.

In addition to the Be Wiser technical THCs the Inno Group provides benchmarking analysis support.



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1. Introduction

An analysis of market insights and research coupled with surveys completed by international partners (identified through the Be Wiser consortium) has been performed at the beginning of the project, in order to create a Joint Working Plan.

The analysis resulted in a number of significant results which in brief are:

- While international cooperation exists, the cooperation is fragmented and usually performed on a bilateral or multilateral basis between organisations that already enjoy a good relationship.
- Cooperation within regions/nations does seem to exist but their international outreach (as above) is not holistic.
- Standard market analyses do not cover the Be Wiser topic particularly well, as they focus on a number of currently significant market verticals rather than the underpinning technology. There also seems to be a significant lack of focus on the security of data in transit.
- Although the market research shows that the significant markets are in North American and Europe there is particular difficulty engaging with other regions, where there may be some undiscovered markets in other regions.
- Europe has policies and strategies on openness and values which are not shared by every territory outside Europe.

2 Initial Internationalisation Situation

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2.1 SYSTEMATIC PARIS REGION

The French Government in 2005 credited Systematic as a “World Class” cluster, in 2011 Systematic were awarded a “Gold Label” Cluster Organisation Management excellence classification by the ESCA



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<http://www.cluster-analysis.org/> and is a member of EIT Digital (nodes: Paris, London, Berlin, Eindhoven, Stockholm, Helsinki and Trento).

Systematic focuses its development on European and international scenes on three priorities:

- to attract capital and talents to the Paris Region,
- to help laboratories and companies export their patents and products,
- to face the challenges of growing global competition from large systems integrators, low-cost software development and new players in embedded systems.

Systematic is involved in several European networks and projects. Participation in EIT Digital network provides business accelerator support and soft-landing opportunities to Systematic members.

Systematic has opened technological hubs in key places in the world: USA (Boston-Cambridge, MIT), China (Beijing, Z-Park), Tunisia (Tunis, Technopark Elgazala), and India (Bangalore) with the aim to:

- promote Systematic;
- to facilitate international partnership projects;
- to support SME export drive

The aim is to create optimal conditions for the development of innovative international SMEs

- Workshop to get to know their export markets
- Organization of “discovery seminars”, B2B meeting, trade missions
- Specifics support to fast growing “Champions” in terms of strategy, visibility

France & the Paris Region offer specific support to exporting companies through dedicated agencies. Business France supports exporting companies by:

- Evaluating their “export readiness”, providing technical advices
- Providing an international experts network to identify new market opportunities and support prospection (trade missions)
- Identifying project and international calls for tenders (on line data base)
- Financing international development (export loans)
- Helping local landing (consultancy, human resources : special contract such as “Volontariat International en Entreprise)

Chambre de Commerce et d’Industrie d’Ile de France (Paris Region Business Chamber):

- Organising meetings with experts, technical workshops and forums
- Providing customized coaching, support to prospection (trade missions, trade fairs, local landing)
- Accessing partnership through the EEN network



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Paris Region Entreprise: in charge of the Regional Internationalisation Plan (Plan Régional pour l'Internationalisation des Entreprises (PRIE)).

- French Tech flagship
- Individual coaching to structure and define international development projects: accompanying & financing solutions
- Local offices abroad as “one stop shop” connected with experts network



Image: Systematic Paris Region's international linkages

Highlights of the cluster ecosystem analysis:

- The V-LINC findings show the respondents serve customers both within France 45%, whilst 55% of outputs are exported. When the data for large firms and SMEs are separated a different perspective is gained; SMEs are more reliant on the French market (57%), whilst large firms export 64% of outputs.
- Île-de-France has Europe's highest concentration of R&D, V-LINC reports that R&D linkages made up 24% of the total linkages recorded, the 2nd highest frequency after outputs. R&D connections exist with companies, private research labs, private and public research institutes and universities. Interestingly SMEs engage in more R&D linkages than large firms; however more of these are within France for SMEs (77%) than for large firms (56%).
- Approximately 60% of the respondent input and specialist service linkages e.g. materials, services, technology or capital are sourced within France, showing the support industry provides for the local and national economies.
- The Île-de-France ICT security firms show strong linkages with government agencies: over 40% are in the High band and the remaining 60% in the Medium band. The majority of these linkages occur locally (53%) as government departments and other national state agencies are based in Paris.



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- Firms perceive local industry associations as important: 90% of linkages are in the top two bands. Twenty seven local industry associations’ linkages were recorded with 15 different bodies, comprised of broader ICT cluster organisations (or pôles de compétitivité) and focused security bodies. Systematic are a key connector here.

Suggested Target for International Market Development: The Midwestern United States defined by the United States Census Bureau, consists of 12 states in the north central United States: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Opportunities also exist in Africa and Australia.

2.2 European Tech Cluster - IT@Cork

European Tech Cluster - it@cork is a leading not-for-profit independent business organisation, representing the interests of the IT industry in Ireland. It is a unique blend of indigenous and international IT professionals, executives, multinationals, government leaders, public sector and academia. It currently represents over 300 member companies with over 30,000 employees.



Image: IT@Cork’s international linkages

Highlights of the cluster ecosystem analysis:

- Cork ICT companies are export focused. MNCs main market, by frequency and importance of linkages is Europe; SMEs rely more on the domestic market (44% of outputs) and thus opportunities for internationalisation exist.
- The Cork ICT sector has well developed linkages across Europe, partly due to the EMEA headquarters of MNC respondents being located in Cork.
- The Cork ICT sector is strongly connected locally. There are strong local linkages with industry associations (it@cork and Cork Chamber of Commerce), research and development (CIT, UCC, Tyndall and NIMBUS), training linkages and local specialist services. Overall 34% of the 571 linkages recorded are local i.e. within County Cork.

- Strong competition and co-operation locally are said to be key drivers of clusters, yet 90% of local industry peer linkages are reported as having low or tenuous perceived significance.
- Over 60% of R&D linkages occur in Ireland, the vast majority of which are with academia (Universities, IOTs or Research Institutes) which highlights a lack of co-operative R&D projects among ICT firms locally and nationally.
- There is a highway of linkages connecting Cork and Dublin, composed predominantly of Government Agency, Specialist Service and Training linkages.
- 69% of specialist service linkages occur within Ireland. The results note the importance of Specialist Services to respondents who continue to source services in Ireland in the face of competition from international sources.

Suggested Target for International Market Development: The Midwestern United States, South America and Australia. SMEs need the opportunity to first develop the closer European Market and may be better focused on development of connections in France, Germany and Spain.

2.3 Invest Northern Ireland's Digital Cluster

Invest Northern Ireland's Digital Cluster aims to support digital firms so they can prosper and grow their businesses. Networking and collaboration underpin everything we do and we are working with stakeholders in the region and throughout Europe to achieve results that will benefit our member organisations. Northern Ireland's Digital sector has enjoyed many successes and member companies have developed major expertise in: Telecoms and Mobile Telecoms; Financial Services; Specialist Public Procurement Solutions; Medical Devices/Health Technology; Education/E-Learning; Cloud Computing and Digital Content.

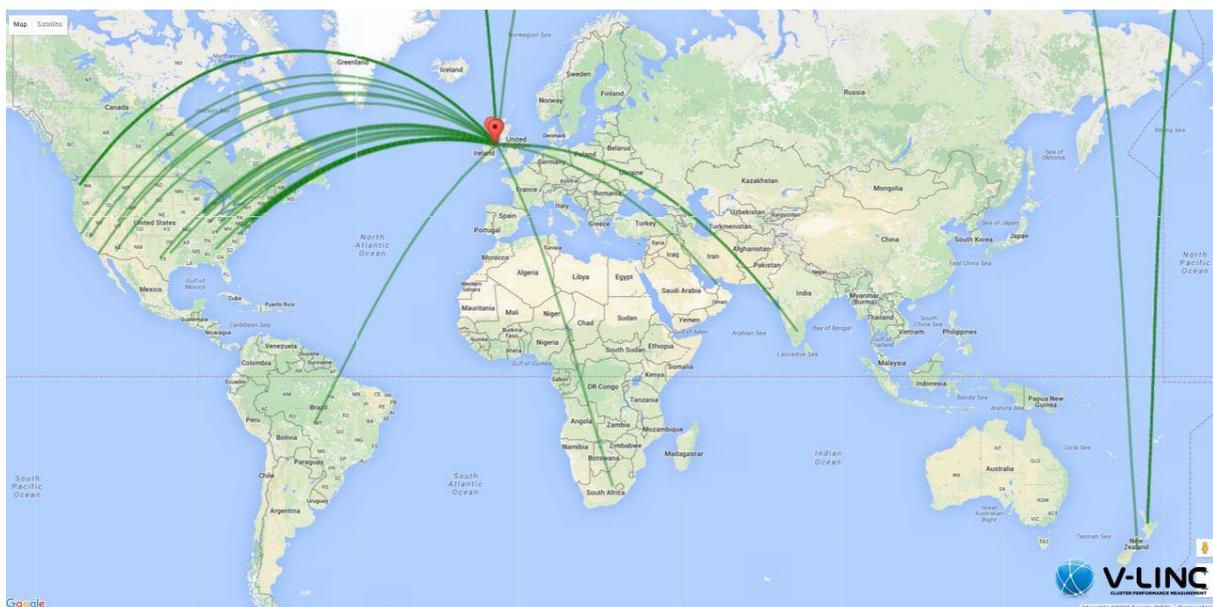


Image: Invest NI's international



Highlights of the cluster ecosystem analysis:

- In regard to demand conditions, Northern Ireland ICT firms are focused on the domestic market, NI and UK, and do not rely heavily on exporting their products and services abroad. There is a highway of linkages connecting Northern Ireland to London, composed predominantly of Output linkages.
- Less than 10% of all linkages are with European based organisations and three quarters of these are linkages to the Republic of Ireland. When linkages with the Republic of Ireland are excluded, a distinct lack of business linkages with continental Europe can be seen.
- The Northern Ireland ICT sector is strongly connected locally. There are strong local linkages with government agencies (Invest NI) industry associations (NI Chamber of Commerce), research and development (Queens University and University of Ulster), training linkages and local specialist services. Overall 49% of the 222 linkages recorded are local i.e. within Northern Ireland.
- A key driver of clusters according to Michael Porter (1998) is the strong competition and co-operation locally, 62% were local however, these connections were not perceived as important to the respondent firms; 58% of these connections were recorded in the Low band, a major contrast with Porter's cluster theory.
- Over 50% of R&D linkages occur in Northern Ireland, all of which are important and with academia (Universities, IOTs or Research Institutes), this highlights a lack of co-operative R&D projects among ICT firms locally and nationally within the United Kingdom.

Suggested Target for International Market Development: China and India, current linkages in New Zealand may suggest that transition into the Australian market is possible also.

2.4 CyberForum e.V.

Current international position of the cluster

The Karlsruhe Technology Region is one of Europe's most innovative regions. Especially its leading role in the areas Automotive, IT and Production Technology has been highlighted by the European Cluster Observatory e.g. in its report on the strongest cluster agglomerations in the most innovative regions in the European Union.¹ CyberForum has been awarded with the Europe-wide best mark for an IT cluster and the best mark for all clusters in the German federal state Baden-Württemberg:

- European Cluster Excellence Initiative Bronze (November 2011) then Gold Label (December 2013),
- Cluster-Exzellenz Baden-Württemberg (December 2013).

Moreover, CyberForum is one of the partners in the German top cluster "Software Cluster", one of the winners of the German "Spitzencluster" contest.

¹ Available at http://www.clusterobservatory.eu/common/galleries/downloads/Strong_Clusters_in_Innovative_Regions_Report.pdf.





Many transnational and European projects contribute to positioning CyberForum and Karlsruhe on the global innovation map, not mentioning the numerous projects involving its members. The region is characterized by a strong research orientation with a number of leading university and non-university research institutions, more than 4.300 IT-companies, outstanding start-up dynamics and a high degree of internationalisation. Beyond Cyberforum's participation in ca. 125 European projects, both CyberForum and the City of Karlsruhe have developed over the past few years an own internationalisation strategy (taking into account each other's' strategy), which is now being implemented.

As a result of this close collaboration between the City of Karlsruhe and CyberForum, a partnership agreement has been signed with the City of Pune (India) and the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Several other activities (e.g. the yearly "Stuttgart meets Pune" event, participation at the IndiaSoft fair) have been conducted jointly.

Generally, foreign delegations visiting Karlsruhe are also meeting representatives of CyberForum as a standard part of the local programme. The City helps hereby to market CyberForum and the other way round.

Internationalisation plays an important role for CyberForum and its members. Many activities have been managed/ operated by the cluster organisation in order to intensify international contacts and collaborations:

- Participation in numerous trade fairs/ conferences abroad with own booth/ speech etc. to present the cluster and its participants Matchmaking Events (e.g. with representatives from Estonia in the field of Mobility (mobile devices, apps....)),
- Participation in trade missions, international meet-the-buyer events, inward investment visits etc. and facilitation of the participation of cluster members in such activities,
- Presentations at delegation events, representing CyberForum and its local activities,
- Presentations at project events (e.g. international seminars, dissemination events / activities of EU projects like CentraLab, IT2Rhine2020, UPSIDE, Be Wiser).

In 2013, CyberForum and the Swedish Cluster 55° signed a Business Roaming Agreement (BRA) in order to support SMEs in their internationalisation activities. As of 2014, CyberForum took over the coordination of the BRA and now leads the further development of the related services.

The cluster has prepared a number of documents and web information in foreign languages that are available on the CyberForum website (<http://www.en.cyberforum.de>).



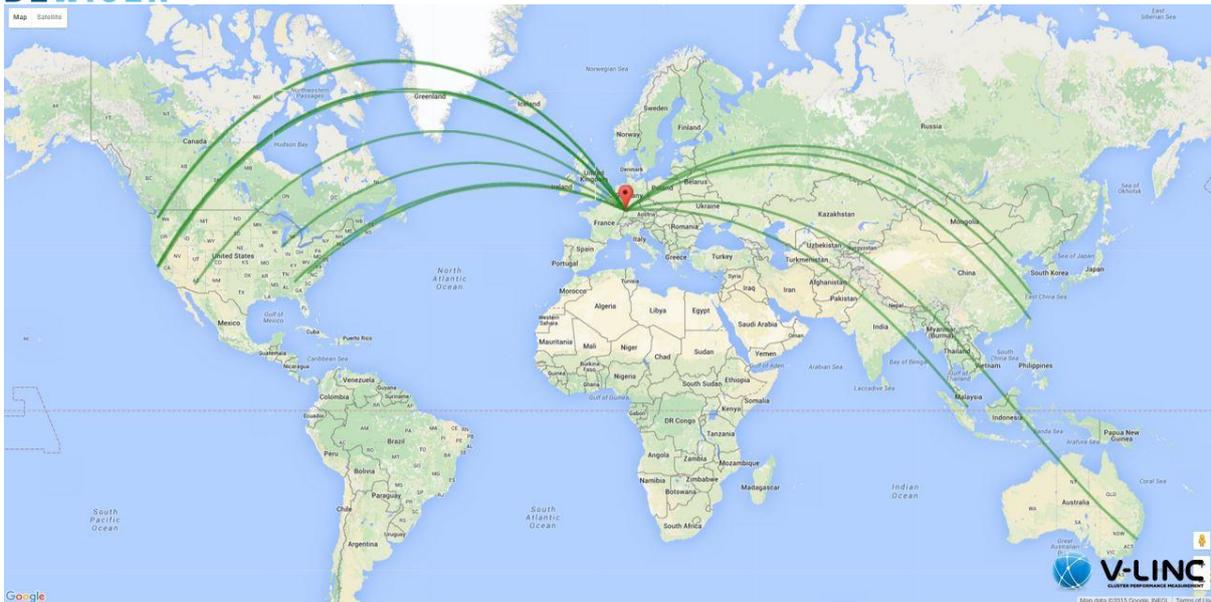


Image: CyberForum's international

Highlights of the cluster ecosystem analysis:

- Of the 382 linkages recorded, 39% are local linkages, 37% are national, 20% European and only 4% international however, international linkages are perceived as most important.
- It is strikingly apparent that the ICT firms in Karlsruhe have a heavy reliance on Karlsruhe and Germany for input factors and specialist services such as materials, services, technology and capital.
- In regard to demand conditions, Karlsruhe ICT firms serve sophisticated and demanding customers which are based in the local, national and European market. Interestingly, local outputs linkages are perceived as most important to the firms.
- Karlsruhe's ICT sector shows a connected local industry, with local linkages to industry associations (CyberForum and Bwcon) R&D linkages (FZI and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology), government agencies and industry peers.
- Strong competition and co-operation locally are key drivers of clusters (Porter, 1998): ICT firms surveyed in Karlsruhe compete but also cooperate directly with each other, as reported within the industry peer category where numerous local connections between the respondent firm group exist.
- 80% of R&D linkages occur in Germany. The majority of these engagements are with academic institutes and research centres, yet the majority of linkages at all geographic scopes are being reported in the low and tenuous bands.
- Comparing Karlsruhe ICT with the industry cluster model shows that the majority of the elements required for an ICT cluster are in place in Karlsruhe.

Suggested Target for International Market Development: The Midwestern United States, South America, China and India. SMEs have built connections to the closer European Market as a first step and now facilitated internationalisation is the primary focus of the CyberForum cluster.

EURECAT Cluster Digital is an Association of Innovative Enterprises (AIE) created as a meeting and networking place for start-ups, small and medium companies and other entities with the aim of boosting the competitiveness of Catalan ICT sector and promoting a new corporate culture based on collaboration and open innovation.



Image: Eurecat's international linkages

Highlights of the cluster ecosystem analysis:

- The ICT sector in Catalonia is well-connected locally. There are strong local linkages with industry associations (EURECAT) and Government agencies (ACCIÓ, Barcelona Activa and Generalitat de Catalunya). Overall 40% of the 318 linkages recorded are local i.e. within Catalonia.
- The local linkages map highlights the importance of Barcelona to the ICT firms based in Catalonia, where 84% of local linkages are with firms and organisations based in the regions' largest city.
- The V-LINC findings show that Output is the most frequent linkage category, representing 28% of the 318 linkages reported. It is clear respondent firms focus predominantly on domestic customers as 67% of output linkages are within Spain, whilst 33% are exports.
- V-LINC reports that R&D linkages made up 16% of the total linkages recorded, the 2nd highest frequency after outputs. R&D connections exist with companies, private research labs, private and public research institutes and universities. EURECAT members have well developed Research linkages across Europe (65%) and within Spain (35%).
- Approximately 61% of the respondent input and specialist service linkages e.g. materials, services, technology or capital are sourced within Spain, showing the support industry provides for the local and national economies.



- Government Agency linkages were the least frequent category recorded in the Analysis (n=14, all recorded at local and national levels); however, these relationships are perceived as important to the firms and Eurecat, as a Triple Helix Cluster organisation, also acts as a connector with such Government agencies.
- Forty five percent of industry peer linkages are recorded with firms in Catalonia. Not only were local industry peer linkages the predominant geographic scope, they were also perceived as the most important geographic scope for these linkages with 71% recorded in the High and Medium bands.

Suggested Target for International Market Development: The Midwestern United States, and China could be two target areas for the cluster. The linkages developed and cultural similarities in the South American market could be further developed to create further synergies here also.

2.6 ICT Technology Network

ICT Technology Network (ICT TN) was established in 2003 as a consortium of leading Slovenian companies and research institutions in the field of ICT, supported by the national government. Today, ICT Technology Network brings together approximately 50 partners, its activities are coordinated by the ICT TN Institute. By joining together companies, R&D institutions, technology developers, technology users, service providers and governmental agencies, ICT TN forms an ecosystem (Triple Helix cluster) for establishment, organization, implementation and dissemination of collaborative national and international projects focusing on joint R&D, cluster and intercluster development, technology transfer, innovation management, infrastructure and competence building, policy enforcements, living labs and pilot activities. Total budget invested in these activities was over 95 million € of which app. 60 % are private funds.



Image: ICT Technology Network's international linkages



Highlights of the cluster ecosystem analysis:

- Of the 339 linkages recorded, 201 are national linkages and approximately 65% of these national links are with organisations based in the capital city Ljubljana. It is clear national links are very important to the firms.
- Sixty one percent of output linkages in this study are national, 27% are with European customers and the remaining 12% with International customers, suggesting an overreliance on the national market.
- Slovenia's ICT sector shows a connected national industry, with strong national linkages to industry associations (ICT TN and GZS Chamber) and R&D and training linkages (University of Ljubljana and Institut Jozef Stefan).
- Research and Development linkages were the third most frequent category, the majority of which occur at a national level rather than with European or international partners. Of these national R&D links, 72% were linkages with academic and research institutes rather than B2B with industry partners.
- ICT firms in Slovenia source almost 75% of their specialist services within the country; however less than half of their inputs are sourced nationally, these national links however are very important to the firms.
- The majority of ICT firms surveyed do not compete directly with each other, but there is evidence of some cooperation among Slovenia's ICT sector. A total of 25 industry peer linkages were recorded, 60% of which with peers in Slovenia.
- While many of the elements required for an ICT cluster are in place in Slovenia, one key element that the V-LINC analysis highlights is missing is strong supportive linkages with national Government agencies. The least frequent linkage category was linkages with Government agencies.

Suggested Target for International Market Development: The Midwestern United States, China and India. Slovenian SMEs need the opportunity to first develop the larger European markets and may be better focused on development of connections in France, Germany and Spain.

2.7 Cyprus Computer Society

The Cyprus Computer Society was established in 1984 and has more than 1,000 members. It functions as a non-profit organisation seeking to improve and promote high standards amongst ICT professionals in recognition of the impact that ICT has on employment, business, and society but also on the quality of life of citizens. The CCS plays a key role in linking Academia with Industry through the promotion of key elements of Informatics, in particular in the areas of digital literacy, professional skills, professionalism, education, training and research.



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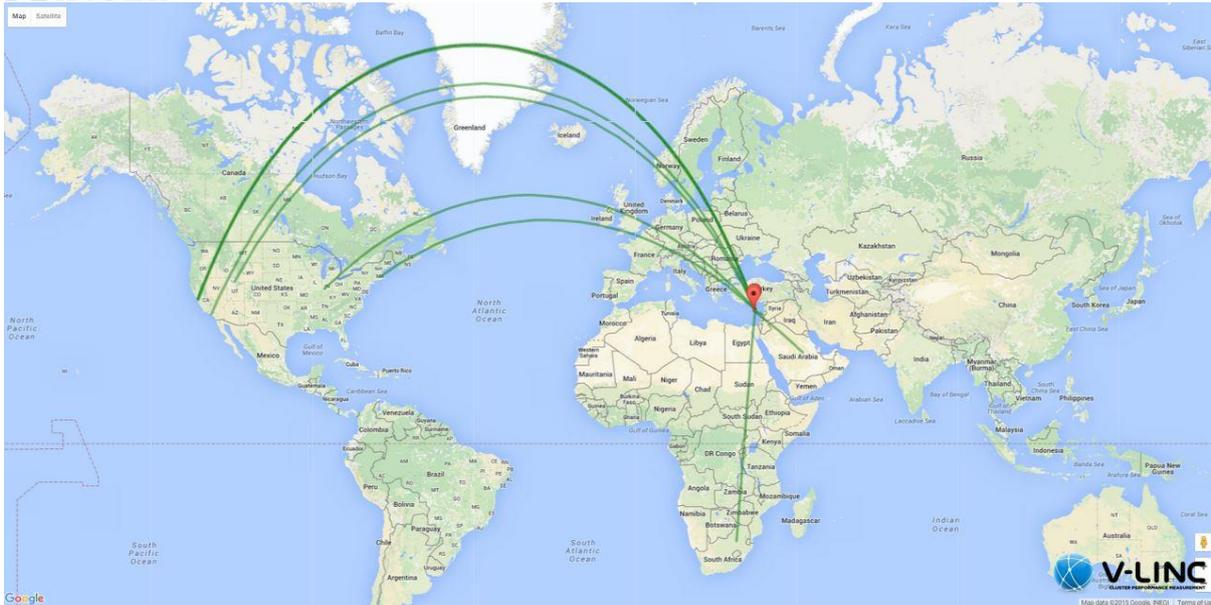


Image: Cyprus Computer Society's international linkages

Highlights of the cluster ecosystem analysis:

- Cyprus' ICT sector shows a connected national industry, with strong national linkages to industry associations (Cyprus Computer Society and CITEA) and R&D and training linkages (European University Cyprus and Research Promotion Foundation).
- National links are most important to the surveyed firms: Of the 133 linkages recorded, 70% occur in Cyprus and approximately 60% of these 94 national links are with organisations based in the capital city Nicosia.
- Seventy six percent of output linkages in the analysis are national, 19% are with European customers and the remaining 5% with International customers, suggesting a major overreliance on the national market.
- Research and Development linkages were the 2nd most frequent category, the majority of which occur at an EU level rather than with national or international partners. Of these national R&D links, 75% were linkages with academic and research institutes, highlighting a lack of research links with industry partners.
- ICT firms in Cyprus source almost 90% of their specialist services from within the country; however just more than half of their inputs are sourced nationally, these national links however are extremely important to the firms, with all reported in the high and medium perceived significance bands.
- While some of the elements required for an ICT cluster are in place in Cyprus, a number of key elements are missing from the potential cluster. The V-LINC analysis finds very little evidence of cooperation (industry peer linkages) and linkages to government agencies among Cyprus' ICT sector, a strong contradiction with Porter's cluster theory.



Suggested Target for International Market Development: The Midwestern United States and India may well be a focus for the smaller Cypriot firms. Again a more European focus may be a better focus for the development of the country's fledgling ICT sector.

3 Be Wiser Internationalizations Tools

The platform from which to reach the defined goals and aims has been developed through several internationalisation tools which have been applied, further developed or established within the Be Wiser project:

- V-LINC <http://www.cit.ie/vlinc> (applied in each Be Wiser partner region)
- Be Wiser Connect <http://bewiserconnect.cit.ie/> (established and developed within the Be Wiser project)
- Business Roaming Agreement (BRA) <http://clusterize.org/> (further developed through the Be Wiser project).

A synergy has been developed between the three tools within the Be Wiser project. Each of the three tools is linked and they rely on each other to multiply their individual benefits. Each website is linked to the main Be Wiser website and they all hyperlinked to each other to allow visitors to move seamlessly between content.

In the following sections the tools and their applications are described, followed by some proposed future actions towards internationalisation:

3.1 V-LINC analyses



V-LINC (Visualisation of Linkages in Networked Clusters) is a methodology and software application which identifies, visualises and analyses firm linkages to investigate cluster ecosystems.

The strength of the V-LINC analysis is its ability to assess and articulate the importance of inter-firm linkages within a cluster and thus to allow policy makers develop targeted strategic short, medium and long term policies for industry sectors based on regional/national capabilities to leverage a region's strengths.

In terms of allowing the Be Wiser consortium to develop additional international connections, the deep understanding and close connections within regional development authorities, cluster organisations and member firms, position the V-LINC analysis as an appropriate Internationalisation tool which can be leveraged within the Be Wiser Internationalisation Strategy.





3.2 Be Wiser connect



Be Wiser Connect is an online match making tool which showcases 70 ICT firms across Europe (Cyprus, France, Germany, Ireland, Slovenia, Spain and Northern Ireland) who participated in a V-LINC analysis as part of the Be Wiser project. The purpose of this tool is to facilitate introductions and connections between firms within these regions, in order to promote collaboration and create additional linkages between European clusters.

Any interested firm or research organisation can use the 'Connect' function to engage in facilitated connections with the listed firms from the Be Wiser partner clusters. These connections can provide opportunities not only for firms to network with industry peers across Europe but also provide a platform from which firms can collaborate on a wide range of activities; from the creation of market opportunities to research innovations between partners.

Be Wiser Connect will be expanded during the remainder of the Be Wiser project, this expansion will take two forms:

1. The addition of the Chicago ICT firms to the 'Connect' section of the site to increase internationalisation of SMEs across the consortium and develop transatlantic connections.
2. Development of an additional tab to deliver the Be Wiser RD&I Database (part of the Joint Action Plan), which will provide an opportunity for firms to develop connections with RTD Labs and Technological Research Centres based in Cyprus, France, Germany, Ireland, Slovenia, Spain and UK.

Before the end of the project, the Be Wiser Connect tool will include the **Be Wiser R+D Database**, with the aim to gather and map the efforts of R+D in IT in Europe, and especially in cybersecurity. This will help to develop the Be Wiser International HUB, incorporating the R+D perspective to the internationalisation strategy. The R+D database: (i) Contains a Directory of organisations active in cyber-security RD&I in Europe (Tech Centres, Companies, Academia and ICT policy/regulatory bodies like BEREC, ETSI, ITU and CEPT); (ii) identifies existing cyber-security initiatives (events, agendas, projects, technology days, European and transnational calls etc.).





3.3 Business Roaming Agreement



The Business Roaming Agreement (BRA) is a service for cluster members of any affiliated Organisation in this network of clusters. The idea behind the network is to increase the collaboration between clusters and become a useful tool in internationalisation processes, for the cluster's members. The goal is to visualise the cross-border connections between business service entities and make them all accessible for small and medium sized enterprises globally.

Each partner will provide its location(s), infrastructure and services, and in exchange its member companies will get access to the locations of all other members in the Business Roaming Agreement. In other words, the Business Roaming Agreement is an exchange program, where companies from one region can use the knowledge, networks and locations provided by other organisations in various other regions, for free for a certain time period.

When becoming a member of the network, each organisation accepts to, reciprocally, provide support for each other's members and offers a baseline of free service and possibility for attendance at local events which occur during the organisations visit. These are the minimal requirements for participating clusters; further commitments are of course favourable.

The vision of the Business Roaming Agreement is to achieve increased cooperation among organisations worldwide. The fundamental idea is to facilitate doing business for each individual organisation e.g. member companies.

4 Proposed internationalisation actions

Based on the strategic framework and tools described above, a series of actions has been developed to develop a coherent approach towards achieving the Be Wiser projects strategic internationalisation goals.

4.1 V-LINC application

- The International Strategic Cooperation Award (ISCA) operated by Science Foundation Ireland is interested in the V-LINC research team applying the analysis to two sectors in partnership with the Institute for Competitiveness in India. There is an opportunity to ensure that ICT including Cyber Security firms are analysed as part of the application, which creates the possibility for research and trade connections to be developed through Be Wiser Connect and the BRA.
- The International Strategic Cooperation Award (ISCA) partnership with the Institute for Competitiveness in India, may provide further expansion of the firms and research centres listed.





4.2 Be Wiser Connect Development and Building Usage

- Highlight a case study of a successful international connection developed and facilitated through the Be Wiser Connect micro site to showcase its use and promote further use of the tool.
- ICT including Cyber Security firms analysed as part of the application of International Strategic Cooperation Award (ISCA) in India, will be included in the Be Wiser Connect micro website, to create the possibility for research and trade connections towards India.
- Expansion of the tool, by inclusion of an R+D Database: this will help to monitor and disseminate information with regard to future RD&I initiatives across Europe and internationally, and recording engagement levels with RDI actors across Europe. The engagement will be presented in the same format as the Be Wiser Connect initiative, complementing firm matchmaking with R+D entities. This R+D perspective would add a new dimension to internationalisation initiatives, letting firms not only interact with other firms, but with R+D centres. Also, this would benefit R+D centres to disseminate their initiatives internationally and to market their innovation not only at European level, but internationally.

4.3 Business Roaming Agreement Expansion and Promotion

- The BRA will be further developed and the International Strategic Cooperation Award (ISCA) partnership with the Institute for Competitiveness in India, may provide further expansion of programme with the addition of access to the Indian market.
- To promote further use of the BRA tool, by firms whom are members of clusters signed up to the agreement, this will be done initially through a newsletter which can be sent to member clusters for release to their membership. This newsletter will have a 'Cluster in Focus' section, share news from across the clusters and also showcase new members joining the agreement.
- Highlight a case study of a successful international connection developed and facilitated through the Business Roaming Agreement to showcase its use and promote further use of the tool.

4.4 Joint Marketing and Communication

In order to build further collaboration with relevant partners all over the world and develop a stronger public image of the Be Wiser clusters, being visible in the global cluster community and business arena is a must. The joint marketing and communication activities include further development of participation in relevant ecosystem events, targeted communication in international markets and supporting cluster members in approaching relevant communication channels.





4.5 Upgrading Cluster Management, Skills and Processes as a Basis for Internationalisation

This activity focuses on strengthening cluster management and processes as a basis for high quality service provision to SMEs and other partners. Activities include upgrading internationalisation skills (via. e.g. trainings, workshops), study visits to facilitate international collaboration, staff exchange programmes, mentoring additional clusters.

4.6 Organization of International Trade Missions

Trade missions' organisation is part of the Be Wiser Joint Action Plan of the project, in order to ensure that the market requirements and business needs of the ICT sector are addressed through (i) the facilitation and development of technological and business relationships between actors associated with Be Wiser clusters, and (ii) developing & influencing ICT policy related to security. To obtain effective and concrete collaboration, Be Wiser must reach out to international organisations and regions engaged in relevant activities. As ICT and Cybersecurity are a global industry, research policy and industry led decisions taken anywhere can affect the entire sector across the globe. Engagement with regions outside the EU is important from both a learning perspective for Europe, and the enhancement and acceptance of European ideas, technology and entrepreneurship.

In order to achieve this, Be Wiser is organising international trade missions in targeted regions outside the EU, which coincide with relevant technical conference in the field of ICT and Cybersecurity. Trade missions are frequently mentioned in the how-to-export literature as an established mechanism to quickly develop sales in foreign markets. Participants can learn about doing business in host market(s), and gain exposure to the social and business cultures while experiencing first-hand the services offered by the host country.

The program can include: business briefings, market and sector presentations/discussions, effective networking events, business-to-business meetings, site/companies visits.

The Be Wiser project will support financially the participation of member region SMEs in such trade missions.

The collected actions offer a broad range of activities that means that not all Be Wiser partners will necessarily take part in each and every activity but develop the actions most relevant to them. Therefore, some activities can also involve two or three partners. The selection of which activities to take part in is strongly related to a) target markets and b) the maturity of the clusters (as some topics are relevant for more mature clusters while some address specifically the needs of the growing and developing cluster organisations).

5 Financing the proposed actions

The present paragraph aims to collect internationalisation support measures in each partner's country on local / regional / national level, for clusters and for companies.



In Germany, different tools supporting internationalisation activities of clusters exist. In particular following ones are interesting for the support of the Be Wiser internationalisation strategy:

On regional level (state Baden-Wuerttemberg)

Financial support provided by bw-i (Baden-Württemberg International) for:

- Developing internationalisation strategies for clusters
- Delegation visits of clusters managers to foreign markets / target regions
- Clusters' participation in fairs
- Realisation of international trips for cluster experts to target regions
- Organisation of experience exchange and matchmaking events with visiting (foreign) delegations

Developing internationalisation strategies for clusters:

Cluster initiatives and networks have the opportunity to get funding for the development of internationalization strategies. In these internationalization strategies target markets and cluster-specific measures to open up foreign markets as well as international location marketing should be derived.

Funding scheme:

Maximum funding: up to EUR 10,000, however max. 80% of the total cost (20% own contribution is expected).

Delegation visits of clusters managers to foreign markets / target regions

With these vouchers the participation of cluster and network managers of cluster initiatives and networks will be supported at the following measures:

- the regional (Baden-Wuerttemberg specific) program for accessing foreign markets provided by bw-i, BWIHK (Baden-Wuerttemberg Chambers of Commerce and Industries) and BWHT (Baden-Wuerttemberg "Handwerkstag")
- the bw-i programs for international location marketing
- attendance of international meetings and conferences or activities organized by third parties (if these make a significant contribution to achieving the objectives of the program)

Maximum funding: up to 3000 EUR, however max. 80% of the total cost (20% own contribution is expected).

Clusters' participation in fairs

These vouchers will encourage the participation of the cluster management in international trade fairs.





Maximum funding: up to EUR 5,000, however max. 70% of the total cost (30% own contribution is expected).

Realisation of international trips for cluster experts to target regions

Based on strategic considerations and the identified target markets bw-I supports cluster experts to consolidate their internationalisation strategy by participating in trade missions or similar activities.

Experts from the clusters and networks (max. 3-5 persons) should gather in selected target markets cluster-specific information about the target market and identify potential partners.

Maximum funding: up to EUR 10,000, however max. 80% of the total cost (20% own contribution is expected).

Organisation of experience exchange and matchmaking events with visiting (foreign) delegations

Funded are expenses for the organization and representation of Baden-Wuerttemberg clusters and cluster initiatives in conjunction with the visit of foreign cluster representatives (i.e. meetings with German and foreign cluster representatives in Baden-Wuerttemberg).

Travel and subsistence expenses of foreign cluster initiatives and networking organizations invited to Baden-Württemberg, are not eligible.

Maximum funding: up to EUR 10,000, however max. 80% of the total cost (20% own contribution is expected).

On national level

Internationalization of Leading Edge Clusters, future projects and similar networks

On national level, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research has launched a Funding Scheme for the internationalisation of clusters called “Internationalization of Leading Edge Clusters, future projects and similar networks”.

Funding scheme: 50%.

go-cluster

On national level, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research has also launched a Funding Scheme to support the excellence of clusters. Services of this programme are:

- Support of the most powerful national innovation clusters in their development to become internationally excellent clusters
- Support of novel cluster services to provide cluster managers an impetus for new services
- Increasing the international visibility of the innovation cluster involved
- Analysis of trends in international cluster policy in order to obtain recommendations for the design of the German perspective



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Additional funding for internationalisation actions may come from the following supporting agencies:

- **Paris Region Entreprise**, under the AIMA process (Aide à la Maturation de Projets Innovants) funds markets studies & research costs needed to access European projects. Beneficiaries are SMEs and Clusters.
- **BusinessFrance** offers prospection insurance and export loans to exporting companies. It also organises trade missions and offers logistic support to attend international events.
- **VIE solution** (Volontariat International en Entreprise) which provides tax credit opportunity and reduced administration costs on expatriate human resources.

5.3 Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland's economic development agency, Invest NI is committed to helping local clusters and collaborative business networks establish meaningful international connections that enable companies to

- access overseas markets;
- expand their skills base and
- remain competitive on a global basis.

One of the tools used by Invest NI to promote collaboration and further the internationalisation agenda is the **sub-cluster initiative of Collaborative Networks Programme**.

Clusters/Networks are encouraged and facilitated to carry out best practice study visits to appropriate international clusters. Groups are also signposted to brokerage and matchmaking events in overseas locations and, where appropriate, overseas partners can be admitted as members of Collaborative Networks.

Invest NI teams work closely with both the **Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)** and the Invest NI overseas offices to ensure that local networks/clusters are aware of specific commercial partnering opportunities with international companies, as well as opportunities to participate in quadruple helix consortia, making joint funding applications under H2020, COSME, InterReg etc. This is particularly important since all clusters/collaborative networks are expected to become self-sustaining once Invest NI funding has come to an end.

The Northern Ireland EEN is hosted by Invest NI, thereby further embedding the internationalisation agenda by sourcing dynamic, competent and trustworthy partners and facilitating the development of a working relationship.

The EEN uses a Partnering Database which offers thousands of company profiles and is updated daily. By preparing and submitting their own profiles, companies can join this database and receive regular updates about potential international collaborators. The EEN can then actively work to broker a partnership.





In addition the EEN hosts Matchmaking Events throughout Europe, where one-to-one confidential are facilitated between potential collaborators. Many of these events take place at international fairs. Advice and support is offered at each step of the new relationship building process.

5.4 Cyprus

Several Institutions and Associations have been implemented in Cyprus with the aim to support innovation and internationalization, especially for SMEs.

The **European Office of Cyprus** (www.eoc.org.cy) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Nicosia, with a representation office in Brussels. It was co-founded in 2007 by 18 organisations from a wide spectrum of sectors and interests. Today, it numbers 27 members, including national and international academic institutions and research centres, local authorities, NGOs and semi-governmental organizations.

The European Office of Cyprus aims to offer support to its members, so they can maximize the use of funding and development opportunities offered by the European Union. To fulfil this assignment, the EOC has developed three basic activities:

- Representation, visibility and promotion of the EOC members' positions, as well as networking opportunities.
- Provision of conclusive information and consultation on EU funding opportunities.
- Development of partnerships and participation in European networks.

The **Cyprus hub** of the Enterprise Europe Network (see: <http://www.bsccyprus.org.cy/>) consists of industrial associations, research and technological organizations, commercial chambers and well known associations in the area of innovation and SMEs.

The **Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry** (www.ccci.org.cy) and the **Federation of Employers and Industrialists** (www.oeb.org.cy) offer opportunities to participate in their organized commercial delegations to other countries with the aim to promoting international cooperation of Cyprus organizations and foster foreign investments in Cyprus.

The EU Erasmus programmes are also available for Universities and University employees, both academic faculty and administrative personnel.

The **Cyprus Investment Promotion Agency** (CIPA, www.cipa.org.cy) was established as a registered not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, funded by the Cyprus government. "Invest Cyprus" is the brand under which CIPA takes the lead in promoting Cyprus as an attractive FDI destination. The Agency follows a threefold mandate:

- To promote Cyprus as an attractive international investment centre in key priority growth sectors;
- To advocate reform in Cyprus required to improve the regulatory and business environment and infrastructure;





- To provide investor support with aftercare and further services.

Its delegation tours, forums and matchmaking events organized in various target countries, provide support for the internationalization of the developing CCS cluster.

5.5 Slovenia

In Slovenia there is a special and dedicated financing announced by Slovenian government for the period of 2016-2020 to support internationalisation with regards to so called Strategic Development and Innovation Partnerships, which are kind of cluster or network associations. This funds are part of the national RIS3 (Smart specialization strategy) and both clusters and SMEs will benefit from this. More details will be revealed in 1Q2016.

Moreover the national government supports individual companies in international events (expositions, matchmaking events, trade fairs, ...) though, e.g. ad-hoc group of companies visits to certain countries with the diplomacy (no financial support and organized by different ministries and Chamber of commerce)

At the regional level, companies can benefit from particular activities of Technology parks and Science parks by the Slovenian Entrepreneurship Fund (SEF-Ministry of economic development and technology).

5.6 Spain

In Catalonia there is the Catalonian cluster program (<http://accio.gencat.cat/cat/estrategia-empresarial/clusters/catalunya-clusters/>) created to: i) systematize the actions of the Government of Catalonia in the field of cluster policy; ii) contribute to the rationalization of clusters associations in Catalonia.

Within the program clusters have access to different services:

- Using the brand associated with the program.
- Strategic orientation.
- Specific training for cluster managers.
- Mentoring and advice regarding international cooperation and innovation.
- Networking activities.
- Other services that the Department of Enterprise and Employment promotes in the field of dynamic clusters

5.7 Ireland

A number of organisations in Ireland Assist internationalising SMEs:



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Enterprise Ireland (EI), the state financed business and export promotion agency for Irish businesses offers a broad range of services and supports to SMEs who want to internationalise. EI is committed to helping companies strengthen their export readiness and export selling capabilities. EI offers customised training and access to experts, matched to the company's level of export awareness. Availing of these supports will save time and money and increase companies' chances of export success. EI exports events, workshops and programmes for new and early exporters can help SMEs develop the tools and techniques they need to succeed in export markets:

- **Export Awareness events:** These short workshops (typically two-hour duration) are run regularly in a number of locations around Ireland and are aimed at companies thinking of exporting for the first time.
- **Exploring Exporting workshops:** focused on helping first-time exporting companies become export ready. Topics include conducting market research, defining your export value-proposition, processes for exporting and the exportable offer. Business mentors are available to work with firms to identify the issues you need to address to become export ready.
- **First Flight One-to-One Assessment:** a market-readiness assessment for new and early exporters, which aims to help companies save valuable time and money and help them manage the risks associated with exporting for the first time. Companies attend a short introductory workshop and are matched to an experienced business mentor, who will advise and guide them on developing their export strategy and export development plan.
- **The EI Market Research Centre** can provide access to the business intelligence you need to explore opportunities and compete in international markets. Enterprise Ireland provides the service of market information specialists to help client firms conduct their own market research.

Irish Exporters Association (IEA) is the independent representative body for Irish Exporters. It offers a range of practical help and support to Irish exporters under three main pillars.

- Supporting Irish exporters to conduct business in specialist markets through a full calendar of educational and networking events.
- Helping Irish exporters connect in all markets through the IEA's network of business and government contacts, the Irish embassies, and the diplomatic community in Ireland.
- Developing and promoting Irish trade through lobbying, policy development, and direct intervention with government and key stakeholders to find solutions for member companies.

Enterprise Europe Network

Cork Chamber of Commerce is the local representative of EEN and as members it is linked through powerful databases, sharing their knowledge and sourcing technologies and business partners across all EEN countries. EEN is also closely linked with the European Commission, which enables them to keep abreast of EU policies and to feed small companies' views on them back to Brussels.

Cork Chamber of Commerce as the local representative of EEN, assists companies in their international business activities. If a company has a question relating to exporting, EU legislation, sourcing suppliers abroad, or any other aspect of doing business outside of Ireland, contact Katherine



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Fitzpatrick at the Chamber, for help. If Cork Chamber doesn't know the answer to your question, it will work with international contacts to find someone who does. Across the globe, 14,000 Chambers of Commerce, representing 40 million companies, offer trusted sources of local business knowledge. Cork Chamber is happy to make contact with any of these organisations on behalf of our members, to help companies with their international business requirements.

Increasing Sales and Exports: Ireland's recovery since 2011 is founded on a deliberate policy of driving export growth across the economy and supporting successful Irish based enterprises in international markets. Enterprise Ireland through its programmes and overseas office network target support clients to achieve €19 billion in exports in 2015.. the Irish Government extended the Special Assignee Relief Programme to 2017 and further improve the attractiveness of Ireland's offering. IDA Ireland and EI are working to secure an additional €30 million in sub-supply and sourcing contracts for Irish based firms to foreign subsidiaries in 2015, building on the progress since 2011. Ireland will provide over 300 tailored mentoring programmes to support growing enterprises. A programme of 18 overseas ministerial-led trade missions and events will take place in 2015

5.8 European Cluster Collaboration Platform ECCP

This platform provides online quality information and networking support for clusters (organisations and members) aiming to improve their performance and increase their competitiveness through the stimulation of trans-national and international cooperation. This online portal rich in features and information has been developed aiming to build communication bridges between cluster players from the same or a different sector. The ultimate goal is to facilitate cluster cooperation, both between cluster organisations, as well as between cluster members (i.e. companies, R&D institutions, other players).

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform is embedded within the European Cluster Excellence Initiative and financed by the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, since it is an instrument provided by DG Enterprise & Industry to enable cluster organisations to actively play a role on the international cluster arena. This can be achieved either through a professional presentation of their activities/members, through a dynamic interaction in virtual or personal dialogue with peers in communities or through accessing structured cluster information and using it to become better.

The ECCP platform targets a quality approach through quality information provided by its users in their profiles, through their contributions, postings, intensity of use, but also in their feedback on how the platform could better serve their expressed needs. The European Cluster Collaboration Platform is a user-driven instrument. The basis for its development lies in the results of the largest European survey among cluster organisations and cluster policy makers. 420 cluster players provided detailed input regarding their expectations from such an online portal that were considered in the technical development.

ECCP organises partnerships and MoUs with major non-European markets, matchmaking missions of industry clusters and SMEs to major external markets. ECCP also supports European Strategic Cluster Partnerships (ESCP) and European Cluster Consortia to help internationalise clusters and their member firms. www.clutercollaboration.eu



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European Industry clusters and their SME members benefit from access to Horizon2020 funding through programmes like Innosup and Cosme - Cluster Go international. SMEs also benefit from the SME Instrument and participation in programmes like Fast Track to Innovation

5.9 Enterprise Europe Network

The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) is a key instrument in the EU's strategy to boost growth and jobs.

The EEN helps SMEs make the most of business opportunities in the EU and beyond. It offers many services free of charge including internationalization support. When a company expands its business to another country, it needs competent and trustworthy partners. The EEN helps firms find them. EEN business database contains thousands of company profiles and companies can meet potential business partners in person at EEN matchmaking events.

With hundreds of new company profiles added every week, EEN's business cooperation database is one of the world's largest. When a company gets in touch with the Network, EEN enters its cooperation offer or request into the database. The client company will then receive updates on companies interested in the same kind of cross-border business.

EEN organises matchmaking events across Europe where firms can meet potential business partners in person. EEN schedules meetings for companies and helps firms prepare for them. Matchmaking events often take place at international fairs, which helps keep travel and accommodation costs down.

Whether an EEN client company finds new business partners via the EEN database or at an event, EEN can advise and assist the client from the initial contacts to making the deal.



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6 Conclusions

This document compiles the best practices identified & initiated by the Be Wiser consortium regarding internationalisation strategy, especially for SMEs who find themselves in a disadvantaged position compared to larger competitors.

In most EU regions, supporting organisations are actively helping companies to reach out to international market through market analysis, organisation of trade missions and financing.

In the EU, clusters are a key instrument to support SMEs in particular to remove hurdles associated with smaller firm size. International cooperation between companies can be facilitated when they are affiliated to a network or cluster. World class clusters can help drawing the attention of foreign companies, potential partners and customers to companies within the regions.

The Be Wiser project has identified & developed a set of internationalisation best practices to reach the defined goals, including different tools and initiatives such as match making tools and combined trade missions. Each of the initiatives is linked and relies on each other to multiply their individual benefits. In the current document we described these mechanisms, their regional and community applications and future suggested actions towards internationalisation.

