

## PRESS RELEASE

### AEROSPACE SMEs ARE GENERATING €50M OF NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

To generate and win new business in our Covid-19 world, innovation is more vital than ever. To reduce costs, manage risk and create opportunities, collaboration is key.

Over the last two years some members of the European Aerospace Cluster Partnership (EACP), co-supported by the European Union, have worked to create a pipeline of collaborative, inter-regional investment aerospace projects ready for public or private funding. The programme is known as EACP-EuroSME.

The latest tally of collaborative programmes in development now totals over €50M, embracing 90 organisations. It has created new links for SMEs across regions of Europe accessing opportunities, skills and specialist resources that would otherwise have been difficult to reach.

The EACP-EuroSME programme has involved over 300 SMEs, 46 clusters, 6 European regions, 20 technological centres and scientific parks from countries falling within the European Union's COSME Programme area. It has also made new economic connections across regional local authorities.

In addition, the programme has captured knowledge resources of Inventories of Centres of Innovation and Competence in the 6 participating regions of Italy, Czech Republic, France, Germany and UK. These include technological local innovation hubs, science parks or technology centres, universities and research centres in the aerospace sector active in each geographical area. They include declared technology transfer activities, research expertise and services offered, all aimed at accelerating progress and reducing costs.

New collaborative business opportunities have been promoted through events and themed webinars in priority areas of complementary regional aerospace strengths. The strategic opportunities for new business through the National, European and increasingly Global focus on the Circular Economy in aerospace have also been widely shared. Sources of public and private investment funding have been identified and mapped to projects.

The links to these resources can be found at the EACP-EuroSME links below.

The project is led by DAC (Campania Aerospace District - Italy) and is implemented in cooperation with five European clusters: Hamburg Aviation (Germany), Moravian Aerospace Cluster (Czech Republic), TeRN (Basilicata Technologies for Earth Observation and Natural Risks District, Italy), Aerospace Valley (France) and Northwest Aerospace Alliance (UK).

The EuroSME programme will complete at the end of September. It is proposed that the European Aerospace Cluster Partnership (EACP) will look to continue the work through its Technology Working Group and where appropriate funding can support this.

If you have business innovation project ideas you wish to develop and are interested to accelerate with collaboration, whilst reducing risks and creating opportunities, just get in touch.

"We hope that the European Aerospace Cluster Partnership (EACP) can continue the work through its Technology Working Group, where appropriate funding can support it - adds Gennaro Russo (Rino), EuroSME project leader on behalf of the DAC. Any SME with project ideas of innovation to develop and that is interested in new collaborations, reducing risks and creating opportunities, has only to contact us"

EACP-EuroSME Links:

<http://www.eacp-eurosme.eu/>

<http://www.eacp-aero.eu/projects/eurosme.html>

Naples, 3 September 2020

## Supporting elements

The EuroSME Partnership was set-up by aerospace clusters of six leading European regions: Campania (coordinator) in Italy, Hamburg Metropolitan Region in Germany, Moravia in Czechia, Basilicata in Italy, Occitanie & Nouvelle Aquitaine in France and North West England in UK. The Partnership facilitates the development of innovation investment projects through interregional cooperation. The process is bottom-up, open, inclusive and based on a transparent governance. The EuroSME Partnership is proposed to be the first aerospace partnership under the European Commission Thematic Smart Specialization on Industry Modernisation.

The Aerospace sector is one of the largest and dominant industries in the world characterized since many years by a continuous positive trend both in the aviation and in the space sectors. The sector in Europe was characterized in 2018 by a 200+ B€ turnover with 130+ B€ export and 600+ thousand direct jobs and has been estimated to continuously grow by 3 to 5% annually for many years. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed and is still imposing a dramatic stop to such a positive trend that will have important negative effects for years to come.

The project partners, agreeing on the fact that fostering innovation and development of aviation and space shall become a common objective, especially in this period of pandemic important impact, agreed to develop cooperation activities amongst their six networks. The main purpose was to support SMEs by:

- Increasing visibility of regional competences and capabilities of SMEs;
- Improving focus on RIS3 investments at both regional and European levels (interregional);
- Benchmarking business innovation capacities;

- Stimulating adoption of actions in agreement with circular economy philosophy and targets;
- Teaming up SMEs for joint strategic projects, supporting identification of public and/or private funding opportunities;
- Identifying inventory of regional Innovation Hubs and stimulating the creation of common competence centres in view to aggregate them to individual SMEs' projects;
- Improving cluster management and member services (promoting best practice exchange).

The EuroSME project allowed the definition of a *Joint RIS3 Cluster Partnership Strategy* defined on the basis of commonalities in the Aerospace smart specializations of the partners' regions. The project has set up a best practice generating a pipeline of business investment projects build upon cross-regional and cross-sectorial cooperation in a Circular Economy approach with regard to the entire Aerospace value chain. The transition to a Circular Economy does represent a systemic shift that builds long-term resilience, generates business and economic opportunities, and provides significant environmental and societal benefits.

The following activities have been conducted within the EuroSME partnership to achieve a complete more resilient aerospace supply chain:

- ✚ Correlation among Regional Innovation and Smart Specialization Strategies (RIS3) and agreement on 4 selected highest-ranked priority thematic areas to achieve a comprehensive aerospace value chain in Europe:
  - **Aircraft of the Future** – Green aviation, Faster aircraft, Hybrid propulsion
  - **Industry 4.0** – Manufacturing and maintenance digitalization, Virtual/augmented reality, 3D printing, Better management
  - **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles** – Urban air mobility, Drone for logistic services, Small and medium UAS
  - **Observation Technologies** – Nanosatellites, Satellite/aircraft payloads, Strategic infrastructures surveillance, Precision agriculture
- ✚ Defined cyclic Road Map
- ✚ Defined process to facilitate SMEs partnership
- ✚ Built an Innovation Project Scouting Data Base to Identify Potential Partners and funding opportunities
- ✚ Defined process to facilitate SMEs projects set up
- ✚ Injection of Circular Economy principles
- ✚ Created a pipeline of potential SME projects for partnerships.

The number of regions' representative actors committed to the Partnership was set to 6 (October 2018); the project is now widening in the perimeter of the European Aerospace Cluster Partnership (EACP), which includes 45+ regional clusters from 18 European nations, as well as relations with other 15+ clusters from outside Europe (US, Mexico, Canada, Japan, Brazil, United Arab Emirates, China, Malaysia, Russia, Singapore, South Africa).

The partnership has produced a list of 13 possible investment topics valued about 50 M€. Among them:

- 6 topics have produced partnership agreements and 7 proposals submitted to EU/ESA and national calls for a value of 33 M€. Two of them have already been approved for funding for a value of 3.8 M€.
- 4 others have launched preparation of proposals on next EU EIC Accelerator Pilot (former SME Instrument) or Fast Track to Innovation calls.

- 3 topics have produced formal signature of NDAs among SMEs

Private investment platforms have been identified that looks more appropriate for the kind of projects emerged so far. Their list and contacts are available for the SME partnerships' benefit.

The partnership has progressed at a fast pace in line with the EU industrial and cluster policies and supported by the strong interest of EACP. In order to guarantee continuity of the actions beyond the end of the EACP-EuroSME project, two specific elements have been set up by the six cluster partners:

- ✚ The **Joint RIS3 Cluster Partnership Strategy** associated with the related Partnership Agreement;
- ✚ The **Letter of Intent** between the EACP-EuroSME project partners and the European Aerospace Cluster Partnership (EACP) via its Working Group "Technology". It deals with the handover of the project results to the largest aerospace cluster partnership in Europe, which includes today more than 45 organizations from 18 European countries.

Finally, a major attention will have to be given even beyond the EACP-EuroSME project to COVID-19 effects on aerospace. Monitoring, discussion and support to companies (especially SMEs) to properly and timely react at both managerial and technical-innovation levels (towards green aviation incl. circular economy) will be of utmost importance.