

e-newsletter

OCTOBER 2014

INTRODUCTION

We wish you pleasant reading of the 4th e-newsletter ClusterPolISEE. More information about the ClusterPolISEE project is available on the website: www.clusterpolisee.eu.

“Boosting innovation through interclustering strategies and smart specialisation policies”, 6-9 October 2014, Brussels

ClusterPolISEE and Clustrat Strategic Projects will jointly organize the thematic debate “Boosting innovation through interclustering strategies and smart specialisation policies” during the next edition of European Open Days, 6-9 October 2014. The main objective of this workshop is to facilitate the discussion about the “better regional/national/transnational Governance” about Custer Policies and Smart Specialization Strategy.

Following the results and produced outputs in both the projects, during the debate will be analysed the contribution of “Smart Regional Policies” on the economic growth, new jobs creation and future development of emerging industries and key technologies.

The debate will be followed by a “networking session” wherein participants, international relevant stakeholders and regional organization will discuss on Clusters future development and opportunities.

The debate will take place Wednesday 08 October, from 09:00 to 10:45, at the Committee of the Regions (Van Maerlandt Building, Room 1). The networking session will follow from 10:45 to 12:30 in the Foyer 6, construction JDE (Open Days Secretariat will assist participants for the rooms transfer).

More information is available on ClusterPolISEE Website <http://www.clusterpolisee.eu/> and ClusterPolISEE S3 Platform <http://www.clusterpolisees3.eu/>.

International Cluster Cooperation and Networking working group

The main objective of WG3 is to contribute to a broader understanding of the formation of policy in international cluster cooperation and networking, to anticipate future needs and to encourage greater cooperation between experts, policy makers, and decision-makers of public administration and business.

Since most of the Countries are small, with Clusters at an early development stage, that Agencies can achieve a lot in the next few years by making a few strategic interventions:

- Building of services from a larger Menu to allow Clusters to select the one or two with most impact (from maybe 5 to 10 measures);

- Voucher systems to enforce appropriate usage of financial assistance. With Pre-Registration of “active” Clusters;
- Sub-groups within Clusters of Export-oriented SMEs to focus on Internationalisation;
- The piloting of “Export Hubs” within strong Clusters, as a way to exploit the potential of Groups to develop awareness, skills and activities, amongst large numbers of SMEs;
- General support of Export Consortia, similar to the Italian model;
- Increasing Networking Opportunities with the Clusters in neighbouring Countries – structured at a SEE/Danube/Black Sea level; regularised for specific sectors or specific areas of activity; using Regional Events to bring together Clusters to exploit new Markets; travelling to events outside Europe as representatives of SEE Clusters in a specific sectoral area; developing Social Media training on a SEE level to exploit new techniques.



Financial Framework Improvement working group

Cluster financing is a complex issue since practically all aspects of cluster operation require funding, be it cluster management, joint projects or grants targeted at other beneficiaries but indirectly assisting clusters.

WG4 thematic area aimed to map, analyse and make recommendations for the improvement of the financial practices of the involved countries/regions in terms of cluster support. The following areas were considered and analysed thoroughly:



Smart Specialisation: Smart Specialisation needs to form the backbone of development policy all over the Union and all states and regions need to observe the consequences of it. The Smart Specialised industries will find themselves hastened toward innovation- and co-operation-based competitiveness.

Managing bottom-up initiatives: This is closely connected to the Smart Specialisation process. Existing and newly emerging initiatives will also require funding so the funding bodies should develop innovation and financing programmes making sure that the funding matches the needs of clusters and cluster members.

Adaptive financing: A diversified financing structure is needed with a consistent development path. The financing should follow the cluster lifecycles (start-up, developing, innovative and mature clusters).

Co-operation: Adaption to funding co-operative initiatives among clusters will also be needed without clogging the projects with excessive administrative burdens. A sustainable model needs to be developed to motivate inter-disciplinary co-operation.

Internationalisation: Another key dimension of developing world-class clusters is engaging innovative and mature clusters in international co-operation efforts.

Project administration streamlining: It is a delicate task to find a balance between the effectiveness and efficiency of Structural Funds.

Planning and monitoring: Monitoring needs to be more systematic, for it has the potential to make cluster financing more responsive and effective, which is a key aspect if a truly competitive and adaptive system is to be put in place.

Clusters and Regional Specialisation working group

Work realised in the frame of WG5 thematic area generated a rich pool of knowledge and important learnings in respect to clusters and regional specialisation in SEE. Taking a quick snapshot, among others, some of the main characteristics of the SEE area are listed below:

- Difference across nations exists in the organization of cluster development at national, regional and local levels (bottom-up # top-down cluster initiatives).
- The three prevalent categories of cluster policies supporting cluster development through different modalities of policy design and implementation are: 1. Cluster development policies, 2. Cluster leveraging policies and 3. Cluster facilitating policies.
- Clusters of different stages of development exist across SEE: immature clusters, mature clusters (which can be either national champions or world-class clusters) or clusters in transition which are at the crossroads of becoming immature again, experiencing a renaissance or developing emerging industries.
- Weak coherence among national, regional and EU cluster support policies.
- Lack of systemic assessment mechanisms and tools to evaluate the impact of cluster policies.

A number of recommendations and policy measures were suggested towards smarter and more effective cluster policies in SEE. In brief, some important parameters to be taken into consideration are the following:



- Smart specialization demands a thorough assessment of the (regional) innovation system in order to appreciate and understand the evolutionary nature of regional economies, and also the design of appropriate policy-making.

- Each cluster has its specific development needs with regard to its different dimensions of cluster management organisation, cluster participants and framework conditions. Cluster initiatives also depend on

the wider micro economic policy environment they belong to. Consequently, there is no “one-size-fits-all” policy or programme, but the need to develop & implement different policies or programmes that address the different groups of clusters.

- EU and SE Europe need to further support cluster structures towards integrated cluster development policies designed on the basis of the specific context in which they operate and involving all innovation actors in order to reach higher-value and higher-performing levels and reach Professional “excellence” Standards.
- Each of these potential “World Class” Clusters needs to develop itself as a “Hub” for Applied Research; for Innovation and Product development; and for Exporting, Internationalisation and International Collaboration.

The full report on “Clusters and regional specialisation” can be accessed to the project’s platform.

Pilot Regions

The six pilot actions coordinated by [Corallia Clusters Initiative](#) were successfully implemented for a 6 months’ period (January 2014 – June 2014) aiming towards the exploitation of existing competences and the support of the strong emerging sectors of their regional innovation ecosystem through improved and effective cluster policies in specific thematic priority areas (Innovation, Sustainability, Internationalisation, Cluster Financing, Clusters and Regional Specialisation and New skills and Jobs creation).



The pilot actions’ implementation final results unfold the significant variation observed across the SEE participating regions and reflect their historical trajectories, different stages of economic development, their institutional and industrial structures and the cluster support policies followed. All results are under evaluation process in regard to the lessons learnt, difficulties faced and benefits gained.

Following the successful implementation of the six aforementioned pilot actions, two additional pilot regions/partners (IPE - Romania and MAG - Hungary) have selected and started implementing their pilot actions in alignment with their regional needs and challenges.

Events

- ❖ Open Days 2014, 6-9 October 2014, Brussels, <http://www.clusterpolisee.eu/en/news-detail/European+Open+Days+2014+%E2%80%93+Bruxelles++6-9+October+165>
- ❖ European Cluster Conference 2014, 20-21 October 2014, Brussels, <http://clusterconference2014.eu/save-the-date.jsp>

- ❖ Cluster matchmaking event organized within the project V4Clusters which comprises partners from all 4 Visegrad countries (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland), 4-5/11/2014. The cluster matchmaking event will take place in Ostrava, Czech Republic. The main aim is that the identified leading clusters from 4 Visegrad countries will present their cooperation action plans which will serve as an input for the further V4 strategic programming reflecting the cluster development needs.
- ❖ Startup Nations Summit 2014, 23-25 November 2014, Seoul, Korea, Entrepreneurs are the modern heroes to make the better world, <http://startupnations2014.com/index.php>
- ❖ International Cluster Conference Cross-Linking Clusters for Innovation 22 October 2014, Vienna, Austria Bringing together cluster experts from all over Europe with a special focus on the Danube Region and the Baltic Sea Region the conference will give the opportunity to share and get inspiration from different cluster concepts in other regional contexts and learn about EU interregional cooperation, state of play and perspectives. For more information please visit: http://www.clusterpolisee.eu/en/event-detail/INTERNATIONAL+CLUSTER+CONFERENCE+CROSS-LINKING+CLUSTERS+FOR+INNOVATION_176

Latest News

„New Danube Region Project Fund – START“: It is a new pilot initiative of the EUSDR and provides seed money for the development and implementation of Danube Region projects. More information: http://www.clusterpolisee.eu/en/news-detail/START+%E2%80%90+Danube+Region+Project+Fund_183

“Corallia among best stories in the EU Cohesion Policy”: As one of the most successful achievements of the EU cohesion policy, Corallia is specifically mentioned in the recent report of the European Committee for European Cohesion Policy in Greece. Full press release here: <http://www.corallia.org/en/news/news/1934-corallia-among-best-stories-in-the-eu-cohesion-policy.html>

13 innovative institutions support the Greek Start-Up Manifesto: Thirteen Greek innovative organisations presented at [Corallia](#) premises the [Greek Start-Up Manifesto](#), an action plan to policy makers in Greece and the EU, aiming to improve the environment for startup entrepreneurship in Greece. Full article here: <http://www.corallia.org/en/news/press-releases/2046-the-greek-start-up-manifesto-of-the-13-leading-institutions.html>

“J.C. Juncker meets startups and gazelles in Athens”: Official visit of Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker, nominee for the European Commission Presidency and former Prime Minister of Luxembourg and President of the Eurogroup, was held at [Corallia](#) headquarters. Full press release here: <http://www.corallia.org/en/news/press-releases/2045-j-c-juncker-meets-startups-and-gazelles-in-athens.html>

“Corallia in Leuven for the support of commercial exploitation of research results in the NMP technologies’ field”. Full press release here: <http://www.corallia.org/en/news/press-releases/2052-corallia-in-leuven-for-the-support-of-commercial-exploitation-of-research-results-in-the-nmp-technologies-field.html>

» Pannon Business Network joined to Danube Transfer Center Network«

In line with the development of a long-time cooperation, in accordance with the mutual interests of partners in developing the valuable idea of the Innovation and Technology Transfer Centres – Danube Transfer Centres (DTC) in the Danube Area, and to play actively in the strategy related to the development of a technology transfer competence network, Pannon Business Network Association joined to DTC Network.

For more information please visit: http://www.clusterpolisee.eu/en/news-detail/Pannon+Business+Network+joined+to+Danube+Transfer+Center+Network_182

» The third V4Clusters project matchmaking event took place in Gliwice organized by the Polish Upper Silesian Agency for Entrepreneurship Promotion Co.«

More than 40 people attended at the event. On behalf of the V4C project Visegrad Fund the following organizations participated: National Cluster Association; the Czech Knowledge Cluster; Pannon Business Network Association; Upper Silesian Agency for Entrepreneurship Promotion Co.; Slovak Union of Clusters.

More information: http://www.clusterpolisee.eu/en/news-detail/Cooperating+clusters_181

» International Clusters Conference in Romania, 22-23 September 2014«

North-East Regional Development Agency, as organizer, together with the Ministry of Economy, National Institute for Economic Forecast, Economy for Knowledge Association and the National Association of Clusters in Romania, as partners, organised the International Conference – Clusters and the management of knowledge towards Europe 2020.

More information: http://www.clusterpolisee.eu/en/news-detail/International+Clusters+Conference+in+Romania%2C+22-23+September+2014_184

» The world first tourism cluster dedicated to youth in Romania«

The world first tourism cluster dedicated to youth was launched on 11 of September 2014 at Bucharest, within the conference “Youngsters meet tourism, clusters and innovation” organized by the Department for Small and Medium Enterprises, Business and Tourism in Romania.

More information: http://www.clusterpolisee.eu/en/news-detail/The+world+first+tourism+cluster+dedicated+to+youth+was+launched+in+Romania_185

Conference “Clusters and Knowledge Management towards Europe 2020”

The conference, organized in partnership with the Ministry of Economy, Institute for Economic Forecasting, Association of Clusters in Romania and the Association for Promotion of Knowledge Economy, was held in Iasi and benefited of the contribution of 29 lecturers and attendance of over 180 participants.

More information: http://www.clusterpolisee.eu/en/news-detail/%E2%80%9CClusters+and+Knowledge+Management+towards+Europe+2020%E2%80%9D+Conference++Conclusions_186

Join ClusterPolisee S3 platform

The platform aims at improving EU/SEE cluster policies through cooperative learning; policy transfer and information interchange between EU/SEE policy makers and stakeholders by supporting learning mechanism systems. ClusterPolisee S3 platform is available at the address <http://www.clusterpolisees3.eu>.

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