



EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Meet the Euroclusters: Initiatives for the green and digital transition

Summary



EU Clusters Talks
8 March 2023, 8:30 – 9:45 CET

An initiative of the European Union





Meet the Euroclusters: Initiatives for the green and digital transition

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform organised this EU Clusters Talk on 8 March 2023, 8:30 – 9:45 CET, to learn about the Euroclusters' activities, hear about upcoming opportunities for Europe's SMEs, and discuss suggestions for a second Eurocluster call.

Agenda of the meeting

Moderation: Chris Burns

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
2. Introduction from the European Commission
Marek Przeor, Team Leader - Cluster Policy, DG GROW, European Commission
3. Panel debate
Ewa Rekosz, Mazovia Cluster ICT, INGENIOUS Eurocluster
Josep Casamada, AEI TÈXTILS, X-BUILD EU Eurocluster
Loïc Marin, CIMES, GEMSTONE Eurocluster
Marta Krakowiak, European Lighting Cluster Alliance, SILEO Eurocluster
4. Funding opportunities
Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Key messages

- All Euroclusters have similar activities – such as networking, innovating and adopting technologies/processes, training, facilitating access to international markets, and outreach as activities which are adapted to the needs in the industrial ecosystems.
- There are many opportunities for SMEs to receive funding. The calls are communicated by the clusters and the European Cluster Collaboration Platform.
- Synergies with HORIZON Europe can happen at strategic and operational level.
- Euroclusters and the cascade funding approach are very useful tools for the clusters and companies, which is why a second call is viewed positively.
- Suggestions to modify a second Eurocluster call include increasing the number of consortium partners for wider outreach, a better balance between the budget for the companies and the cluster consortium, more freedom to design individual activities, a division into strands for the different activities, a common submission platform and templates for the call documents.



1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

After the introduction by moderator Chris Burns, the following news items were presented:

1. Single Market Programme has announced 2 new calls for proposals aimed at facilitating the [integration of Ukrainian small and medium-sized enterprises \(SMEs\) into the Single Market](#) and at [supporting young Ukrainian entrepreneurs](#)
2. Invitation to [“Clusters meet Regions” workshop](#) on EU-Ukraine Business Partnership in Kosice, Slovakia, on 29-30 March 2023
3. Save the Date for the [European Tourism Day](#) in Brussels on 5 May 2023

2. Introduction from the European Commission

Marek Przeor, Team Leader - Cluster Policy, DG GROW, European Commission

Marek Przeor explains that the Euroclusters are a flagship initiative in DG GROW for the development of the cluster policy in the EU. This initiative derived from the key lessons of the covid crisis that are reflected in the updated Industrial Strategy. The strategy aims at strengthening the Single Market, analysing and addressing strategic dependencies, accelerating the green and digital transition, and strengthening resilience.

Marek Przeor highlights that clusters can help in achieving these objectives and that they play a role in the implementation of the Industrial Strategy. The funding for the Euroclusters builds on the experience from different programmes that took place between 2014-2022. The Euroclusters integrate the different efforts of innovation, networking, and internationalisation. Altogether, there are 30 Euroclusters of interdisciplinary consortia in and across industrial ecosystems.

All Euroclusters share the objectives of building resilience and accelerating the transition to green and digital ecosystems through networking, innovating, adopting, training, go international, and outreach. Marek Przeor stresses that the Commission expects the clusters to collaborate and to build networks beyond their ecosystems. At this moment, the Euroclusters are in the process of implementation. The Commission plans a second Eurocluster call for 2024.

3. Panel debate

The discussion among the panellists focuses on the upcoming opportunities for SMEs, challenges for the Euroclusters, synergies with other programmes, and suggestions for the second Eurocluster call.

In the beginning, the panellists present their respective Euroclusters. Ewa Rekosz shares the activities of the INGENIOUS Eurocluster, which include an open call in May, grants for innovation, internationalisation and training, and workshops dedicated to the **challenges in the energy-intensive industries ecosystem**. Those challenges refer to efficient and sustainable decarbonisation processes, technology improvement, production innovation, safer and more efficient energy transition, energy



supply insurance, advanced materials, and new-to-firm solutions and business strategies to overcome external dependencies.

Josep Casamada explains that their cluster is working with a core group of textile clusters in Europe and integrate different technologies in the projects, as textiles are everywhere. In the X-BUILD EU Eurocluster, they add advanced manufacturing and construction technologies to **create new connections across different sectors**. The challenge for them is that their members are **very small** companies, which need a lot of support from the cluster.

Loïc Marin presents the GEMSTONE Eurocluster, which addresses the overall manufacturing sector in Europe. They are working on a strategic roadmap on green manufacturing, resilience diagnosis, capacity-building sessions, and open calls. The end goal is the creation of a **European Cluster Alliance for Green Manufacturing**, a new network to complement existing networks. Loïc Marin mentions that they have a **French working group** of all partners involved in Euroclusters. French clusters are involved in the Euroclusters METASTARS, SILICON, RESIST, SUAVE, DREAM, B-RESILIENT, PIMAP4SUSTAINABILITY, and e-boost.

Marta Krakowiak agrees that the biggest challenge in their Eurocluster SILEO is that the consortium represents mostly **micro and small** companies. While these companies might be very interested in the transition, they are looking for **immediate and simple solutions** on how to invest correctly to remain competitive. Therefore, SILEO provides customised plans and information. Another challenge is the identification of raw materials, e.g., wood and microchips.

Regarding leveraging synergies with HORIZON Europe, Marek Przeor explains that it is about the **ignition of processes**. HORIZON Europe and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) have the biggest budgets and allow for many connections for research and innovation, digitalisation, SMEs, and entrepreneurship. Synergies can happen **at strategic level and at operational level**. Euroclusters are already aligned with HORIZON Europe at a strategic level, but it is up to the Euroclusters to make the operational connections in their calls. In addition, networking activities can facilitate the creation of consortia that may apply for other calls. Marta Krakowiak adds that synergies with HORIZON Europe is one part of that they are providing for the companies, e.g., by searching for relevant calls.

Speaking about the participation of SMEs in the Eurocluster calls, the panellists confirm that, in general, **all SMEs can participate in the calls**. There might however be specifications in the individual calls. The panellists clarify that SMEs are funded with 100% in the Eurocluster grants. The consortia members in the Euroclusters themselves are funded with 90%.

Clusters are involved in the definition of transition pathways for the industrial ecosystems. Marek Przeor confirms that the European Clusters Alliance is part of the Industrial Forum, and clusters are contributing to the stakeholder consultations.

Looking at the participation of large firms, RTOs, and public administrations in the Euroclusters, the panellists explain that are indirectly involved as **facilitators** for the uptake of innovation and technologies or as **consultants**. They are engaged in strategic and communication activities.

Regarding a second Eurocluster call, the panellists confirm that the Euroclusters initiative is a **very useful tool** and that the SMEs benefit from the **cascade funding approach**. They have some suggestions for a second call. Josep Casamada suggests increasing the **size** of the Euroclusters for a better outreach. His experience from the INNOSUP projects is that a bigger consortium allows for a



wider outreach to more SMEs in different countries. Marta Krakowiak proposes to look at the balance between the budget for the SMEs and the consortium. She states that Euroclusters have very ambitious and challenging activities for which the consortium needs **more effort than was estimated**. The call could be **divided into strands** and not have all activities as mandatory. In addition, clusters should also have the **freedom to add activities** that they think are needed. Loïc Marin agrees that the initiative is very demanding and that they need more time and budget to implement all mandatory activities. Instead, he proposes to have **1-2 priorities**. Since all Euroclusters must manage financial support to third parties (FSTP), which is very time consuming, Loïc Marin remarks that it would be helpful to have a **common submission platform** by the European Commission, and an FSTP template to modify according to the needs. Ewa Rekosz agrees that all Euroclusters have the same objectives and tasks as the call documents were very detailed. She would like to see more freedom for the consortia to create their projects.

Closing the panel, Marek Przeor highlights that the Euroclusters should be the beginning of a new pan-European collaboration and **long-lasting networks**. The open and upcoming calls will be distributed through the communication activities of the clusters, published on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform, shared in the EU Clusters Talks, and in the ECCP Discussion Groups. Ewa Rekosz shares that the Euroclusters also organise meetings between themselves to exchange information and speak about upcoming opportunities so that they can inform their SMEs.

4. Funding opportunities

Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Closing the EU Clusters Talk, Nina Hoppmann shares the following examples of funding opportunities:

1. [SocialTech4EU Call for Social Enterprises in Europe – Financial support for training](#); Deadline: 14 April 2023
2. [IKAT Tourism Call for SMEs in Europe - Financial support for services](#); Deadline: 20 April 2023
3. [B-Resilient: Lump sums for travelling costs](#); Deadline: 24 April 2023
4. [PIMAP4Sustainability: Funding for innovation](#); Deadline: 3 May 2023
5. [METASTARS: Open call for innovation services](#); Deadline: 31 December 2023
6. [CREATHRIV-EU: Support for Creative and Cultural Industries](#); Deadline: 2 May 2023