



## Latest News



### The growing world of ECCP matchmaking

In only three months ECCP organized four matchmaking events and the numbers are impressive: more than 160 European cluster organisations and 40 SMEs were engaged in more than 1.100 bilateral meetings with counterparts from [Brazil](#), [Mexico](#), [Iran](#) and [Europe](#). Through the cluster organisations, it is estimated that the business opportunities identified and/or developed during the facilitated meetings can reach out to more than 15.000 European SMEs in various industrial sectors and across different value-chains.

For 2017, 5 more matchmaking events will be organized by the ECCP and its international partners, so follow closely their promotion on ECCP to secure your (funded) participation in one of them!

### The Cluster Manager of the Year 2016 and EU Cluster Partnership 2016 elected at the European Cluster Conference

One of the highlights of the [2016 European Cluster Conference](#) (Brussels, 1-2/12/2016) was the Award Ceremony for the best **Cluster Manager of the Year** and for the excellence of a **EU Cluster Partnership** in promoting internationally the partnership's activities for the benefit of SMEs.



The winner of the audience vote was **Bianca Dragomir**, manager of [Valencian Region Renewable Energy Cluster \(AVAESEN\)](#) (Spain), who has become **the Cluster Manager of the Year 2016**. During her pitch, she explained how she had tried to "reinvent their cluster concept". The other shortlisted Cluster Manager candidates were **Marc Charlet**, from the French [Pôle de compétitivité MOVE'O](#), **Peter Simkens** from [DSP Valley](#) (Belgium) and **Georges Falessi**, from the French [Pôle de compétitivité Secured Communicating Solutions \(SCS\)](#). The **EU Cluster Partnership Award 2016** went to [Energy in Water \(EnW\)](#) represented by Pieter de Jong.

See [here](#) the interview with Pieter. The two other finalists were [NATUREEF](#) and [bioXclusters Plus](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### [Healthcare & Medical Technologies business mission to KOREA](#)

17/03/2017

### [Clean Technologies business mission to CHINA](#)

20/03/2017

### [ICT business mission to Singapore & Thailand](#)

22/05/2017

## OPEN CALLS

### [KATANA call for applications for SMEs and entrepreneurs](#)

Deadline: 28/02/2017

### [Neptune call for expression of interest for the establishment of a list of experts](#)

Deadline: 15/09/2017

### [CLUSTERS3 - Call for Peer Reviewers](#)

Deadline: 13/01/2017

## ECCP AT A GLANCE

Watch the [Testimonial on the EU-US Matchmaking Event at Hannover Messe \(April 2016\) organized by ECCP](#)



## European Strategic Cluster Partnerships – Go International



The progress of the ESCP-4i projects shows the importance of joint approaches in the support of SME internationalisation. Whether it is about participation in cluster missions in countries like US, Japan, Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, China, Taiwan, Iran, Philippines, United Arab Emirates or Canada, organizing incoming visits and conferences targeting markets beyond Europe or signing Memoranda of Understanding- the important aspect remains the clear focus on the needs of the clusters' SMEs and the enhanced opportunities created by the close collaboration between the European clusters across complementary value chains.

See more [here](#).

## Cluster Achievements

### The gift of imperfection or how AVAENSEN reinvented the cluster concept –the story behind Bianca Dragomir, the Cluster Manager of the Year 2016



The story behind the unusual approach of a cluster manager attempting to make a successful turnaround of a cluster surely caught the attention of the audience that voted for her as a worthy carrier of this prestigious title. So what is the story behind her cluster's achievement? Faced with the challenges of severe cutting in public subsidies for renewable energy projects due to the financial crisis, AVAENSEN needed to radically reinvent itself. In 2013 it transformed from a conventional public-private cluster organisation to a self-funded service-provider, raising the membership fee and widening offered services. By 2016, by working together with the Regional Government, AVAENSEN has liberated 15 huge "frozen" wind parks in the Region of Valencia, allocated more than 5 years ago through tenders to a small group of large multinationals but never actually built, blocking investments of more than 1 billion EUR. This wind capacity will be allocated to many small wind parks, acting as self-consumption hubs for small communities and predominantly built by SMEs.

Read the full success story [here](#)

## News for the cluster community

### A NEW tool offered by the ECCP to support the interaction with the members

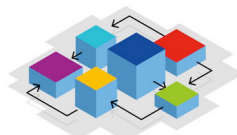
Discover our new ECCP polling tool on the main page, by which we want you to be part of an open exchange of information and see the results in real time. Answer the current the question in order to help us identify synergies in the organisation of matchmaking events relevant for a larger part of the cluster community.

**New:** Have a look at the recently [uploaded profiles of the projects approved](#) following the second call for proposals in the Cluster Excellence programme.

**Last minute info:** the deadline for the Call for Expression of Interest for the ESCP for Smart Specialisation Investments was extended until 31 March 2017!!

### European Cluster Panorama 2016 available

This [report](#) provides an updated perspective on clusters and emerging industries across Europe, documenting the role and benefits of strong clusters and showing how emerging industries continue to outperform the rest of the economy.



THE ECCP team wishes you a happy, successful and cooperative cluster-year 2017!

## Cluster Organisations

Our cluster organisations community is growing: 450 cluster organisations mapped in 9 months on the ECCP. Most of them come from Europe, but we are welcoming the first members from Canada, Mexico, Australia, Taiwan, Russia. We will make additional efforts in 2017 to bring on board cluster organisations from the countries of interest beyond Europe.

We congratulate all the cluster organisations that use their profile to upload news, events and achievements to increase their international visibility, making our [ECCP weekly digest](#) a most valued tool for dissemination of cluster information worldwide.

## ECCP Tools

Have you already seen the 13 opportunities to join a European consortium published in the PARTNER SEARCH section of the ECCP? Don't hesitate to publish there your own offers and demands for cluster cooperation – it takes only a minute to be part of the process: [www.clustercollaboration.eu/partner-search/](http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/partner-search/)!

### Dialogue with users

**Dr. Andrew Mair**, CEO Midlands Aerospace Alliance, UK, about the ECCP matchmaking event in Brussels:

*"We could hold intense meetings with 10 cluster bodies focused on advanced manufacturing techniques, new metal materials, surface engineering, composites, electronics, plastics, photonics and textiles! All cross-cutting disciplines that our companies in the aerospace industries need for the next generation of aircraft. We have built great foundations and created relationships for developing new inter-cluster projects in the future."*



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