

Project BioX4Clusters

BIO crossing borders of 4 European Clusters for a joint internationalisation strategy

Project objective

Life Sciences are a key sector in Europe which needs to remain competitive. In order to avoid the risk of falling behind Europe's main global competitors of Life Sciences and meet its citizens' social and environmental needs, the EU institutions have been investing considerable efforts in forging new policies and programmes aimed at stimulating Life Sciences.

BioX4Clusters aims to answer these constraints and match with EU objectives. The project consortium would like to approach the issue of international cluster cooperation by building up critical mass, putting together complementary competences, sharing international experiences and further developing structures and tools. The consortium ambition is to become "world-class" clusters and to better support their members (in particular the SMEs) to be competitive and successful on the global market.

The 4 clusters have already achieved a certain level of maturity in their international activities. The partners have been already involved in common EU-funded projects and have developed bilateral close cooperation amongst each other. Furthermore, they all have already implemented actions and tools to support the international development of their company members within their own strategic plan

Main objective:

To develop a common and joint internationalisation strategy for the 4 Life Sciences clusters with the aim to reinforce European SMEs competitiveness outside Europe.

In this sense, the consortium will pool and share their existing tools and programmes implemented by ERAI. Pilot actions will be the developed on 3 target markets with various levels of development: the United States, China and Brazil.

Activities

- Develop a joint and sustainable world-class internationalisation strategy,
- Invite foreign experts in the 4 European regions,
- Organise training sessions for jointly developing the international strategy for the target markets
- Share the network of the 4 regions and develop a European Life Sciences taskforce in China
- Organise an exploratory trip in Brazil, a business mission in the USA and a common BioX4Clusters event in China

Target countries

The project aims at strengthening the long-term competitiveness of cluster SMEs in the life sciences sector in the global market through cooperation and sharing of resources between 4 mature European clusters from France, Germany, Italy and Spain. The target countries are USA, China and Brazil

Concrete results expected

- BioX4Clusters will increase the visibility of the 4 clusters worldwide but also the competitiveness of their members. European regions will be more attractive towards foreign investors.
- Increase business and R&D opportunities worldwide for at least 16 SMEs
- Sign MoUs with clusters' partners on the 3 targeted markets.
- Our cluster managers will be trained and will better face the challenges of international development.

Consortium partners

Participant (website)	Type of organization	Region/Country	Overview	Number of companies / SMEs supported
ERAI Rhône-Alpes International	Regional development agency	Rhône-Alpes, France	ERAI (Entreprise Rhône-Alpes International) was founded and is mandated by the Region Rhône-Alpes to support SMEs and clusters in their internationalisation development, developing global networks and attracting foreign investment in the region. ERAI has a worldwide presence with 27 offices in 21 countries. The inter-clustering approach plays a key role. Tools like the “Cluster International Development Action Plan”, “Clusters Mobility” (Inviting foreign experts) and “Implantis®” (Business Incubators), were developed, implemented and will be shared with the clusters during the project.	
Lyonbiopole	Cluster organisation	Rhône-Alpes,	Lyonbiopole, located in Rhône-Alpes (France), is a competitive cluster worldwide focused on infectious diseases, immune disorders, and cancers gathering more than 100 members, from which 4 industrial founders as Becton Dickinson (BD), bioMérieux, Meril and Sanofi-Pasteur.	
<u>Biocat</u>	Cluster organisation	Catalonia, Spain	Biocat is the organisation that supports the biotechnology, biomedicine and medical technology in Catalonia (Spain). Up to 350 Life Sciences companies, mostly SMEs are supported in their internationalisation process.	
<u>BioM</u>	Cluster organisation	Bavaria, Germany	BioM, Munich/Bavaria (Germany) with over 320 Life Science companies – of which the most are SMEs – is the location of a well-established biotech network. It strengthens international visibility of the biotech sector in Bavaria by acting as a one-stop-shop for international partners and connecting regional SMEs on international level.	
<u>BioPmed</u>	Cluster organisation	Piedmont, Italy	BioPmed initiative, the Biotech–MedTech cluster in Piedmont (Italy) is managed by the Bioindustry Park Silvano Fumero and aims both at positioning the cluster at international level and developing common tools and initiatives for the benefit of SMEs.	

Project coordinator contact details

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Quotation

"Alone we are weak, together we are strong", this is the motto of our consortium during the next two years"

Isabelle Scarabin, Director of Economic & International Affairs of Lyonbiopole

- According to you, what is the added-value of collaborating between European competitiveness Life Sciences clusters on building up a common international strategy?

Thanks to the DG Enterprise call for proposal launched in 2011, the 4 partners have seen an opportunity to reinforce their collaboration and to go one step beyond their existing intercluster relation. The concept is to share the same vision and to implement common practical tools to support the internationalisation of small and innovative biotech companies. This is a unique initiative that will allow us to break European borders and to face up the global market as one single European alliance.

- Why did the consortium decided to target 3 main markets: the USA, Brazil and China?

The Life Sciences sector is fast growing and very competitive worldwide. Beyond the principal mature market as USA which is still the first "target market" for biotech companies, new emerging countries offer new opportunities for European SMEs growth. South America and in particular Brazil is willing to widen its market towards Europe and look for new collaboration. China is a vibrant country, it represents today one of the most important market worldwide and it faces with crucial challenges in particular regarding the Healthcare System. The statement is that these markets are too huge to be challenged alone both for a single European company or a cluster. This is the reason why, it seems obvious for the BioX4Clusters partners to get unified to strongly enter on these markets.

- What are your main expectations towards the BioX4Clusters project?

Thanks to the BioX4Clusters project, the partners will have the opportunities to share their experiences and tools, being able to analyse and improve them. Thanks to the project, the 4 clusters will work on getting more efficient regarding their support to SME members in particular on internationalisation issue. Learning from each other and building common framework will be a really challenge for the consortium. This 2 year cooperation will also help the partners to reinforce their intercluster links. Clusters' SME members will actively benefit from the project as it will offer them new opportunities for technological and commercial partnerships inside a European alliance but of course towards a global scene by entering very challenging markets. BioX4Clusters will be finally a great occasion to promote the European Life Sciences forces and their active players involved in.