

European Cluster Matchmaking Event

Brussels, Belgium

organised in the context of the European Cluster Conference 2014
set up by the European Commission's Enterprise and Industry
Directorate-General

October 20th, 2014

Call for Expression of Interest

Venue

Thon Hotel City Centre, Avenue du Boulevard 17,
1210 Brussels

(next to Rogier Metro Station)



Background

On October 20th 2014, the European Commission's Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General will organize a large-scale **European cluster matchmaking event** in Brussels in the framework of the European Cluster Conference 2014 set up by the European Commission's Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General, with the aim to foster cooperation between European clusters.

The European cluster matchmaking event will represent a unique opportunity for representatives of cluster organisations interested in European cluster collaboration to explore possible common areas of interest for cooperation and complementarities, in terms of sectoral, value chain, and market focus of their SMEs and companies with a large panel of European clusters.

This call for expression of interest is launched to identify a European delegation composed of up to a **hundred** representatives from cluster organisations from all sectors that are willing and committed to participate in a European cluster matchmaking event in Brussels.

This call is published on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) (www.clustercollaboration.eu) and expressions of interest to participate in this mission must be **submitted electronically by midnight on September 15th 2014** at the latest. Please, see below for more information on the mission and how to submit your expression of interest.

Context

As part of a new policy aimed at promoting international cluster cooperation for the benefit of SMEs, DG Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission launched in 2012 an initiative, renewed in late 2013, that contributes to the organisation of specific cluster matchmaking missions to support cluster organisations in their efforts to develop partnerships and business cooperation in European and global markets, for the benefit of their members.

The European cluster matchmaking event organised in Brussels will thus be in line with recent European cluster matchmaking events organized in La Louvière (Belgium), Naples (Italy) and Sevilla (Spain) respectively in February, March and April 2014, but at a greater scale.

These events seek to prepare the ground for practical cluster cooperation across borders and make a more strategic use of transnational cluster cooperation. The European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) is the cornerstone of the European strategy in support of SME internationalisation through clusters. The ECCP provides a wide range of information and services to facilitate the interaction between clusters not only within Europe but also with international partners.

The organisation of the matchmaking event is facilitated by a consortium led by the Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação (Portugal) supported by inno TSD (France) and Steinbeis-europa-Zentrum (Germany).



Cluster Matchmaking Event in Brussels, Belgium

The mission aims in the first instance to promote cluster and network cooperation between cluster organisations to explore common visions and seek partnerships at the cluster and network organisations level. Letters of Intent, Memoranda of Understanding, other types of partnership agreements are expected to be initiated and agreed upon with roadmaps on how to sustain the collaborations. Ultimately the goal for the cluster and network organisations is to act as a catalyst for their SMEs and companies to help them engage in collaborative projects.

The event will be held in Brussels (Belgium) on October 20th, 2014. The following is a tentative agenda for the event:

- Welcome tea and coffee – 8:30 – 9:00
- Cluster Matchmaking session – 9:00 – 10:30
- Tea and coffee break – 10:30 – 11:00
- Cluster Matchmaking session – 11:00 – 12:30
- Sandwich lunch – 12:30 – 14:00

This cluster mission is a large-scale one and **targets representatives of cluster organisations from all economic sectors.**

Participants will then be welcome to attend the **European Cluster Conference 2014** held at the same venue on October 20th and 21st, 2014 but please note that a separate registration procedure applies.

This Conference will start in the afternoon of Monday 20th, after the matchmaking session and will address the role of clusters in support of SME growth, industrial renewal and regional structural change and competitiveness and discuss latest trends and challenges for modern cluster policies, in presence of 300 stakeholders consisting of key policy-makers from the European, national and regional authorities, practitioners and high-level speakers from academia and industry. More information on the European Cluster Conference 2014 can be found [here](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cluster/observatory). (<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cluster/observatory>)

Who can participate?

The mission is open to cluster and business network organisations from countries participating in the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programmes (CIP)¹. This call is addressed to cluster and network organisations that are interested in engaging in European cluster collaboration.

¹ CIP participating countries include: (1) EU Member States, (2) non-EU-member countries participating in the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) of the CIP programme including Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia and Turkey.



Selection criteria

To be selected:

- The cluster or network organisation shall be registered in the ECCP (www.clustercollaboration.eu) with a complete profile and should comply with the definition given in the section 5.8 of the “Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation”².
- Each cluster or network organisation has to be involved in offering or channelling cluster or network support services to businesses and should be identified on the basis of a **legal entity** established in the CIP participating countries.

Applications will be selected according to the following qualitative criteria:

- On the potential to maximize matchmaking opportunities based on a clear description of the type of partnership the cluster organisations are looking for through the participation to this mission and on the potential for establishing cooperation agreements as an outcome of the event. This expression of interest for collaboration shall be clearly articulated in the questionnaire provided in annex and to be submitted with the application;
- On the willingness to engage in closer cooperation with other cluster and network organisations from CIP participating countries to better support SMEs and companies in global competition through joint efforts. In this context, the participation in a pilot European Strategic Cluster Partnership is considered as an asset. For further information visit the following link: <https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/escps>.

Participants are expected to attend the full programme of the European cluster matchmaking event and are welcome to attend the European Cluster Conference that follows. The participants’ selection will be made by the competent European Commission services.

Cost and expenses

The event is free of charge for participants. All the costs for travel and accomodation must be assumed by the participants.

Application

To apply for this event, clusters and network organisations should keep the following dates in mind:

Please submit your expression of interest **by September 15th, 2014** to:

- Soraya Bernard s.bernard@inno-group.com

The expression of interest should encompass:

- a completely filled out questionnaire on the cluster or network organisation profile with an evidence of the legal entity;

² See at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:323:0001:0026:EN:PDF>



- the full cluster profile registered in the ECCP;
- a short presentation of the cluster organisation in English language, using PowerPoint (3/4 slides only).

Please make sure to provide complete, accurate data and contact details.

Early applicants may receive timely acceptance to participate to this matchmaking event prior the above-mentioned call deadline.

For further information, please contact:

- Soraya Bernard s.bernard@inno-group.com or Marc Pattinson (m.pattinson@inno-group.com)

or visit ECCP (www.clustercollaboration.eu).

