

SME INTERNATIONALISATION THROUGH CLUSTERS

Cluster Matchmaking Event

La Louvière, Belgium

organized in the context of the Mission for Growth under the auspices of Mr Elio Di Rupo, Prime Minister of Belgium and Mr Antonio Tajani, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship

February 18th to 19th, 2014

Call for Expression of Interest

Focus Sectors:

- Aeronautics and Space;
- Mechanical industry: mechatronics, materials and surfaces of the future;
- Biotechnology, especially (Bio)-Pharma and Life-Sciences;
- Transport and logistics;
- Creative Industries;
- Photonics



Background

On 18 and 19 February 2014, Mr. Tajani Vice-President of the European Commission, responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship will lead the European “Mission for Growth” to La Louvière (Belgium, Wallonia) with the aim of promoting business partnerships between companies in Wallonia and European countries that are active in priority sectors. The event is organized with the Walloon Ministry for the Economy with the support of Walloon Clusters and the local EEN partner (please see attached the draft agenda). This mission represents a real opportunity to foster cooperation between European clusters, and if possible beyond, as a means of supporting their internationalisation even if the mission is not organised outside Europe. This would help the SMEs that are associated with the clusters.

This call for expression of interest is launched to identify a European delegation composed of up to 30 representatives from cluster organisations that are willing and committed to participate in a cluster matchmaking mission to Wallonia (Belgium) in the field of:

- Aeronautics and Space;
- Mechanical industry: mechatronics, materials and surfaces of the future;
- Biotechnology, especially (Bio)-Pharma and Life-Sciences;
- Transport and logistics;
- Creative Industries;
- Photonics

This call is published on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (www.clustercollaboration.eu) and Expressions of interest to participate in this mission must be **submitted electronically by 3rd of February 2014** at the latest. Please, see below for more information on the mission and 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 has launched in 2012 an initiative that contributes to organise specific cluster matchmaking missions to support cluster organisations and their Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) members in their efforts to develop partnerships and business cooperation on global markets.

These events shall contribute 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 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. In view of fostering closer cooperation worldwide, the ECCP has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with international partners and more such collaboration agreements are envisaged in the coming months. The organisation of the matchmaking events is facilitated by a consortium led by the Fondation Sophia Antipolis (France) in partnership with Clusterland (Austria), ERAI (France) and inno AG (Germany).



Cluster Matchmaking Event in Wallonia, Belgium

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

The event will be held in La Louvière (Belgium) on February 18th and 19th, 2014 (LOUVEXPO LA LOUVIERE - Rue du Hocquet 7 - 7100 La Louvière).

This mission targets the following industry sectors, corresponding to the main regional Walloon clusters:

- Aeronautics and Space,
- Mechanical industry: mechatronics, materials and surfaces of the future Biotechnology, especially (Bio)-Pharma and Life-Sciences,
- Transport and logistics
- Creative Industries
- Photonics

The following Walloon clusters have already confirmed their participation:

- **SKYWIN** : aeronautics & aerospace (www.skywin.be)
Looking for contacts with aeronautics clusters with a particular interest to those located in Germany.
- **LOGISTICS IN WALLONIA** : transport & logistics (www.logisticsinwallonia.be)
Looking for clusters especially from Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark) working on everything related to the "Supply Chain" and "Mobility".
- **MECATECH** : mechanical engineering (www.polemecatech.be.be)
- **BIOWIN** : life sciences (www.biowin.org)
- **INFOPOLE Cluster TIC** : IT (www.infopole.be)
Looking for European partners especially from Greece, Portugal, Spain, Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Germany to develop European collaborative projects.
- **TWIST** : multimedia : (www.twist-cluster.com)
Looking for European to develop European collaborative projects (Horizon 2020,...).
- **PHOTONICS** : light-related technologies (www.clusterphotonique.be)
Looking for partners to develop European collaborative projects (Horizon 2020,...) – sectors of interest : optics, laser and applications (including laser micromachining), solar cells (production and recycling), LED

The mission will be structured as follows:

- Participation to the conference (February 18, morning)
- Cluster to cluster meetings, and cluster to business meetings (February 18, afternoon)
- Debriefing session (February 18, end of afternoon)
- Dedicated thematic visits in the Wallonia region (February 19)



As cluster organizations, do not hesitate to mobilize your SME members. On February 18 afternoon, in parallel of the cluster to cluster matchmaking event, specific one-to-one business matchmaking meetings for SMEs will take place. Interested SME can register on **b2Match website for the match-making event**.

Who can participate?

The mission is opened to cluster and network organisations from countries participating in the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programmes (CIP)¹. This call is addressed to cluster and network organisations that present the highest potential for cooperation in the context of this event.

Selection criteria

To be selected:

- The cluster or network organisation shall be registered in the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (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.
- The core activity of the cluster or network organisation should correspond to the targeted thematic area of the mission mentioned above.
- 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 countries³.

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 in global competition

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.

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

³ 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.



through joint efforts. In this context, the participation in a pilot European Strategic Cluster Partnership is considered as an asset (for further details, see at: <http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/european-strategic-cluster-partnerships>).

Participants are expected to attend the full programme. The participants' selection will be made by the competent European Commission services.

Cost and expenses

This action covers for up to 75% of the travel* and two nights accommodation costs for one representative of the cluster or network organisation, with a maximum amount of Euro 800 per representative. The reimbursement will be based on actual expenses related to the travel.

* Air travel: economy class fares on the basis of the shortest and most economical fare available at the time of the grant notification.

Application

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

Please submit your expression of interest **until February 3rd, 2014 to:**

- Christoph Reiss-Schmidt (christoph.reiss-schmidt@clusterland.at)

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;
- the full cluster profile registered in the European Cluster Collaboration Platform;
- a short power point 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.

For further information, please contact:

- Nadège Bouget (bouget@sophia-antipolis.org)

or visit ECCP (www.clustercollaboration.eu)

