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CLUSTER COLLABORATION
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EU-Thailand Cluster Matchmaking Event

6th – 8th September, 2017 | Bangkok, Thailand



Mission Follow-up Report

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1. Introduction

The EU-Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event took place in Bangkok (Thailand) from the 6th to the 8th of September 2017, in the context of the Medical Fair Thailand (8th International Exhibition on Hospital, Diagnostic, Pharmaceutical, Medical & Rehabilitation Equipment & Supplies).

Jointly organised by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) and the Innovation and Technology Assistance Program (ITAP) under the Thailand National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), the event featured a rich agenda destined to facilitate European clusters' access to the Thai medical and healthcare market through close cooperation with local-based organisations.

In order to measure the event's effectiveness and to better align future ECCP activities to clusters' needs and expectations, the project team conducted a debriefing session at the event. The short-term results were presented in detail in the D2.9 EU-Thailand: Mission Proceedings Report.

Due to the natural tendency of outcomes and perceptions to vary over time, a follow-up survey was conducted four months after the event to gain further knowledge on the event's effectiveness. The follow-up survey covered a wide range of topics with an emphasis on the cooperation activities and formal agreements established as a result of the EU-Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event. In addition, another focus of the survey was to identify the extent to which the event benefited the SME members.

Out of the nine clusters that attended the EU-Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event as part of the official delegation, eight completed the follow-up survey. The Estonian cluster was the only cluster that did not respond but had indicated three cooperation cases in the previous survey.



2. Overview of European Delegation



Figure 1 - Origin and composition of the European Cluster Delegation

The European cluster delegation was composed of nine cluster organisations related to the medical and healthcare field across five countries (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Table 1 - Overview of the European Cluster Delegation

#	Cluster	Field of activity(s)	Country
1	AgroFood Regional Cluster	Lifestyle, health, sports, nutrition	Romania
2	Future Position X (FPX)	Geo Health through four processes: R&D, incubation and acceleration. Medical devices, e-health	Sweden
3	Hellenic BioCluster (HBio)	Pharmaceutical products, diagnostics, biotechnology medical devices, bio-informatics	Greece
4	Information Technologies in Medicine (MedIT)	Medical visualization, research and programming	Lithuania
5	Laser & Engineering Technologies Cluster (LITEK)	Laser technologies and photonics	Lithuania
6	Lithuanian Medical Tourism Cluster (LITCARE)	Medical diagnostic and treatment, dentistry, rehabilitation, spa & wellness, medical travel	Lithuania
7	Medicine Estonia Cluster	Medicine service exports	Estonia
8	RoHealth	Health	Romania
9	Transylvania Regional Balneotourism Cluster	Health, health and medical tourism, balneology	Romania



3. Cooperation activities initiated at the matchmaking event

3.1 Type of organisation and cooperation

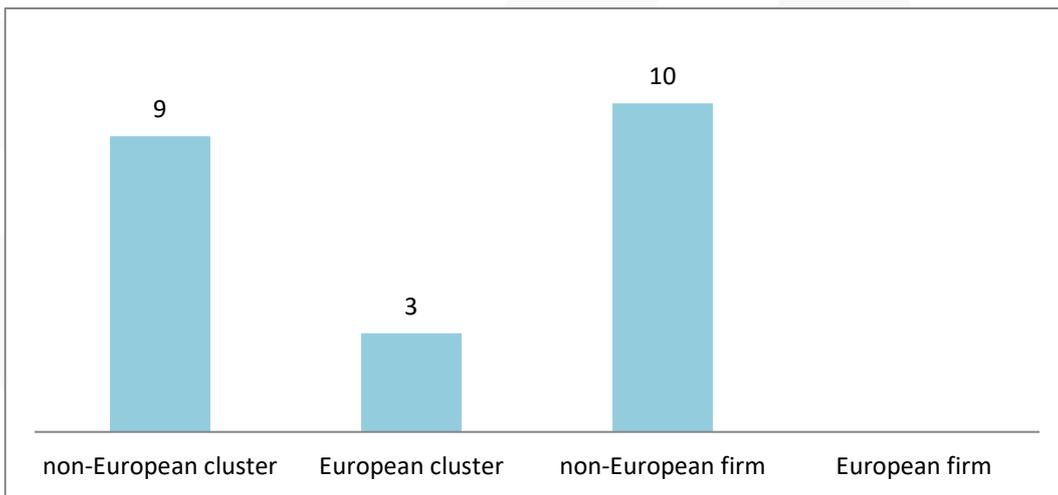


Figure 2 - Type of organisations with which EU clusters reported cooperation

For the sake of this report, Non-EU clusters are those cluster organisations whose origins are beyond the EU; while non-EU firms are companies or other types of organisations that do not fit the cluster category and whose origins are beyond the EU. Since this report focuses on an event in Thailand, most of the organisations are based in Thailand; nevertheless, there could be organisations from other parts of Asia involved in the informal networking done by the EU delegation.

A total of **22 cooperation cases** were reported through the EU-Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event follow-up survey, Figure 2. Given the high number of collaborations that did not continue after four months and other circumstances described in the following paragraph, this outcome is rated outstanding.

For many of the cluster organisations in the delegation, this was their first participation in an event of this kind as well as the first contact with the Thai market. As observed in previous events, this lack of experience tends to create unrealistic expectations among participants when surveyed shortly after the event. However, the figures portrayed seem to be rather accurate,



since the total number of cooperation activities reported in the D2.9 EU-Thailand: Mission Proceedings Report (referred as D2.9 in the remaining pages) was 55.

Concerning the type of organisation, the cooperation established with non-European clusters and firms barely varies and accounts for almost 90% of the total. The other 10% is represented by cooperation activities with EU clusters. These results follow the same trend reflected in the D2.9 report, with the only difference that cooperation with EU firms has not prospered.

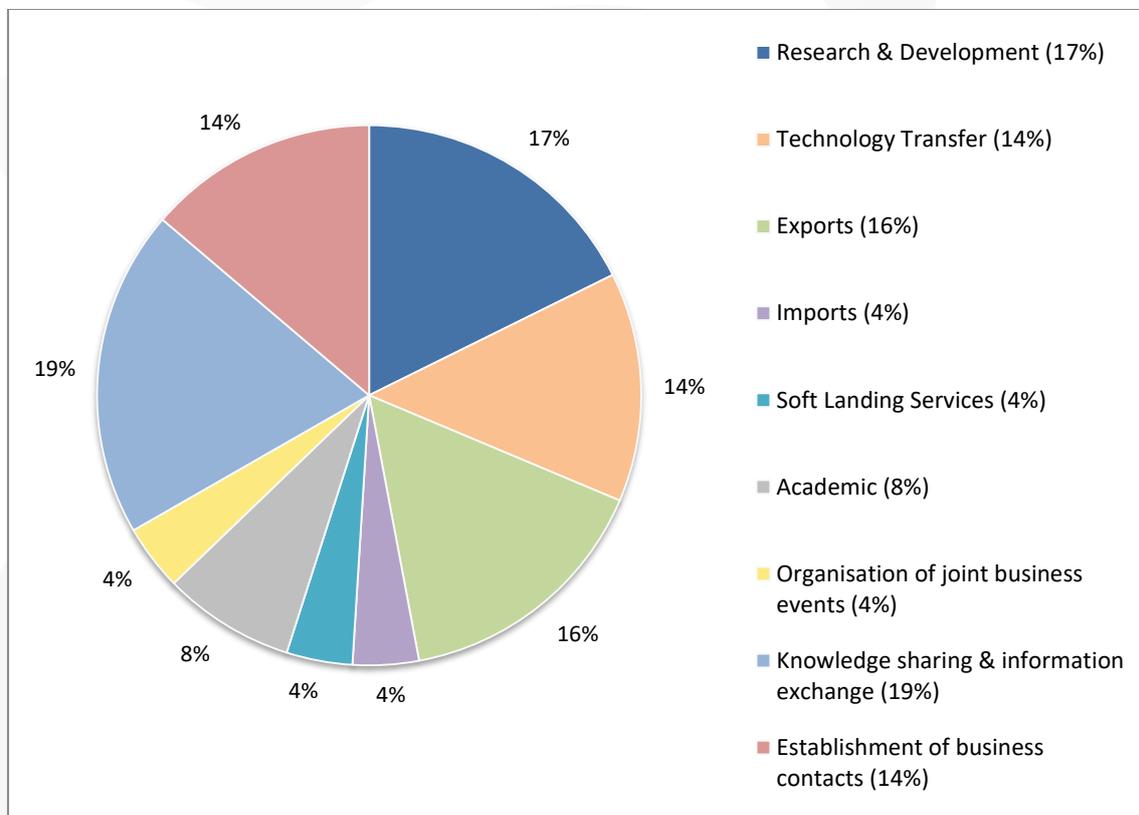


Figure 3 - Type of cooperation established during the event

Knowledge sharing and information exchange (19%) and research and development (17%) were the most frequent type of cooperation. After these types of cooperation, the second most important collaborations were exports (16%), technology transfer and establishment of business contacts (14%). As could be expected at this stage and being the first event with Thailand, the activities were very much related to research, development and innovation (RDI).



None of the clusters listed the following activities: sales office representation, joint venture, merger and acquisition, staff exchange, or Foreign Direct Investment - Inward/outward. In spite of this, Hellenic Biocluster cited commercial collaboration under the label “others” as one of the cooperation activities established.

No formal agreements have been signed so far.

3.2 Cooperation objectives achieved and next steps

Table 2 offers an overview of the present situation four months after the event concerning the specific cooperation established and the next steps envisaged through the EU-Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event. The table content is a direct quote from the EU cluster organisations.

Table 2 - Cooperation objectives achieved and next steps

Cluster organisation	Organisation	Cooperation objective & Next steps	SME(s) name	SME involvement & benefits
Agrofood Regional Cluster	NETOWN Corporation E-healthcare Total Solutions (Taiwan)	Currently, we are developing a proposal for healthcare technology hub in Romania. We will need expertise and technology. In the next weeks, by project development phase we will need information from the Taiwan company. We plan to participate in a funding program to travel to Taiwan and meet personally with the company representatives in this year. Next year, in the first months we plan to buy some technology from the company.	Agrofood Management SRL	Project development
Future Position X - FPX	Private Hospital (Thailand)	We connected to our members to explore possible cooperation. <i>Cooperation no longer pursued</i>	N/A	N/A
	Eastern European Cluster (Latvia)	Looking at potential common projects. Possibly apply for funding together.	N/A	N/A
Hellenic Biocluster -HBio	BDMS (Thailand)	Ongoing contacts with the other party to explore collaboration.	Biovista	Commercial collaboration
	Chulalongkorn University (Thailand)	Exploring research partnerships. We are awaiting responses to emails sent. Reaction from the other party is slow.	HBIO members can potentially benefit	Research Commercial opportunities

Cluster organisation	Organisation	Cooperation objective & Next steps	SME(s) name	SME involvement & benefits
Information Technologies in Medicine - MedIT	Medical Imaging and IT Technologies (Thailand)	<p>Potential capabilities and products of Lithuanian medical IT companies were introduced to the potential partners from Thailand, including the features of additive value and innovation aspects, through PPT presentations and the distribution of leaflets. The academic collaboration opportunities and RTD services with Kaunas University of Technology were introduced as well. The specific actions will depend on the response and interest of the potential Thai partners; MedIT companies are working on preparation of particularly orientated proposals, which will be sent to the contacts.</p> <p><i>Cooperation no longer pursued</i></p>	JSC "Softneta"	Working on preparation of commercial offer of medical IT products for Thailand market
Laser & Engineering Technologies Cluster - LITEK	Rutnin Eye Hospital (Thailand)	The meeting aimed to understand the needs for laser technologies in the private medical sector in Thailand; the need for a laser skin treatment for beauty applications has been identified, also for a more painless tattoo removal. We are currently checking the technology possibilities of the laser companies at home.	N/A	N/A
	Muangthai Insurance Public Company (Thailand)	The aim was to find a company that could support the soft landing of our cluster companies in Thailand through advisory services. The cluster companies have been informed about the possibility to entering the Thai market with support of a local intermediary with whom the contact was established.	N/A	N/A
	A manufacturer of medical equipment (Thailand)	<p>The aim was to find a manufacturer willing to take up the production of the OEM parts provided/licensed by the cluster members; one such manufacturer was identified and the agreement was reached to discuss potential cooperation.</p> <p>The cluster companies have been identified and approached with a proposition to provide OEM to a manufacturer.</p>	Altechna R&D	Potential licensing deal

Cluster organisation	Organisation	Cooperation objective & Next steps	SME(s) name	SME involvement & benefits
	Thailand National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA)	The aim was to establish a contact with the main innovation support organisation and gain access to the research infrastructure funded by Thailand's government. The representatives of NSTDA will be invited to participate in the major event Life Science Baltics (next year) where a special section will be dedicated to lasers for life sciences and medical applications; the cluster would help to liaison with the public-sector representatives and intermediaries.	Science and Technology Park of the Institute of Physics	The partner is involved in preparing the photonics part of the Life Science Baltics trade show
	Board of Trade of Thailand (Thailand)	The aim was to identify the organization that could support the entry of the cluster companies into the Thai market. This is ongoing.	N/A	N/A
Lithuanian Medical Tourism Cluster - LITCARE	Thai Subcontracting Promotion Association (Thailand)	Thai Subcontracting Promotion Association could be a supplier or manufacturer of hardware or its parts and our cluster could provide the R&D and software for the new common products. <i>Cooperation no longer pursued</i>	N/A	N/A
	Thailand National S&T Development Agency - NSTDA (Thailand)	We agreed on exchanging the ideas for common initiatives. NSTDA and our cluster companies could exchange technologies and solutions. NSTDA could provide their development, such as functional foods, dental implants, etc. <i>Cooperation no longer pursued</i>	N/A	N/A
	Advance Dental Technology Center – ADTEC (Thailand)	We agreed on exchanging the ideas for common initiatives, also exchange technologies. <i>Cooperation no longer pursued</i>	N/A	N/A
	Medicine Estonia (Estonia)	We agreed on developing further partnership, exchanging information, technologies and know-how, common participating in international trade shows and venues, joint actions due to establish Baltic Health Tourism Cluster. We are working on partnership options.	N/A	N/A
	Future Position X – FPX (Sweden)	We agreed on working together to search for collaboration options. We will collaborate particularly in aging and elderly care areas; create initiatives for new products and services. We are working on partnership options.	N/A	N/A

Cluster organisation	Organisation	Cooperation objective & Next steps	SME(s) name	SME involvement & benefits
RoHealth Association – The Health Cluster	Advanced Dental Technology Center-ADTEC (Thailand)	Services exports for one of our members. The two organizations have been put in contact so the collaboration is taking place at their level.	National R&D Institute for Non-Ferrous and Rare Metals - IMNR	The Institute is leading the effort and is expected to benefit from increase services abroad.
Transylvania Regional Balneotourism Cluster	Application Development in Health Industry (Thailand)	The objective of the cooperation is to develop a similar product for the Romanian ecosystem, improving the communication and interaction between clients (for treatment and prevention) and specialist. In the Romanian case it's important to mention that specialist or experts are balneologist and doctors working together. Online solutions are required to raise awareness about the importance of prevention, possibilities of treatments though natural resources (in Romania there are 3000+ mineral water springs). Nowadays this culture can be developed only through online solutions like a similar app which will be a digitalised facilitator between the actors of the ecosystem. We have to identify also Romanian experts in application development.	Benko Forras Ltd	The company is involved in this project by the bottled medical water they produce. Through this project they can promote their product and can become a part of a network which will catalyse researches.
	The Federation of Thai Industries (Thailand)	Products of the cluster were discussed to be exported to Thailand. <i>Cooperation no longer pursued</i>	N/A	N/A
	THBOT (Thailand)	The partner was interested in 3 products of cluster members: Aqua Telluris, Benko Forras, Apa Terapeutica Valcele <i>Cooperation no longer pursued</i>	N/A	N/A
	EU Business Avenues in South East Asia	Our cluster is involved in the management of Transylvania Cluster Consortium, which has 22 members and it is interested in South Asia. The activity of the partner organisation fits the vision and objectives of the consortium. <i>Cooperation no longer pursued</i>	N/A	N/A
	Biomedical Industry Innovation Program (Taiwan)	It was discussed a common research project concerning applied biotechnologies. We didn't find any financing opportunity to continue the collaboration.	N/A	N/A



4. SMEs benefited

According to the follow-up responses, at least 24 SME members benefited from the EU-Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event.¹ In particular, the Lithuanian Medical Tourism Cluster and the Transylvania Regional Balneotourism Cluster indicated each that more than five of their SMEs gained something from their participation in the event. All of the cluster organisations that answered the survey indicated that some of their SME members profited from the event; although, not all of them elaborated on that.

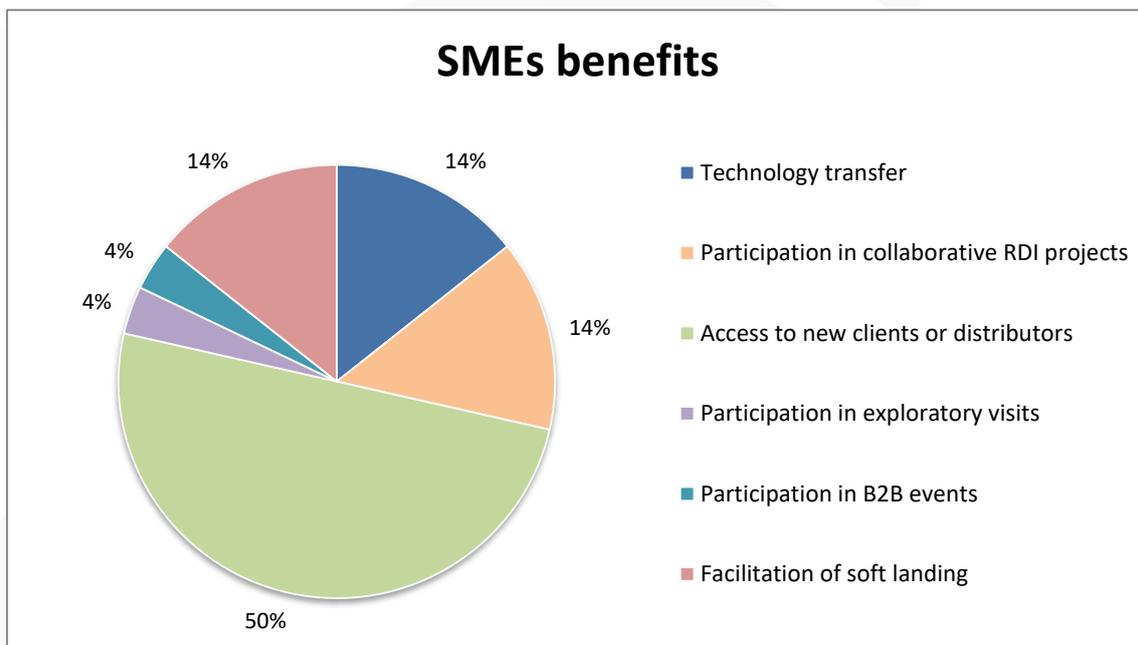


Figure 4 - Type of benefits obtained by SMEs

The access to new clients and/or distributors is the most cited benefit by far, accounting for half of the total. Excluding this type of benefit, technology transfer and the participation in collaborative RDI projects as well as the facilitation of soft landing were the most common benefits, with 14% per type, Figure 4. There were no staff exchanges.

¹ The 24 SME total is inconsistent with the Table 2 due to questionnaire response inconsistencies.



As mentioned above, not all of the cluster organisations elaborated on how their SMEs benefited from the Event. In this regard, Table 3 below presents the detailed information reported by the cluster organisations regarding how their SMEs benefited from this event.



Table 3 - SMEs and their benefits

Cluster organisation	SME name	Describe how the SME benefited
Agrofood Regional Cluster	Agrofood Management SRL	Access to new clients and new technology.
	SC ENIS SRL	Access to new clients or distributors and technology transfer, future R&D development.
	WEGA INVEST	Access to new clients or distributors and technology transfer, future R&D development.
Future Position X -FPX		Info to all members.
Hellenic Biocluster - HBio	Biovista	Participation in exploratory visits, b2b matchmaking.
Information Technologies in Medicine - MedIT	JSC "Softneta"	Access to new clients or distributors.
Laser & Engineering Technologies Cluster - LITEK	Altechna R&D	The products were presented at the Thai Medical Fair and during the matchmaking meetings.
	ELAS	
	Ekspla	Promotion
	3D Pro	The products were presented at the Thai Medical Fair and during the matchmaking meetings.
	Femtika	The products were presented at the Thai Medical Fair and during the matchmaking meetings; the contacts of the company CEO were provided for a follow-up.
Lithuanian Medical Tourism Cluster - LITCARE	General Medicine Practice Clinic	The SME received general and specific information regarding new markets and obtained new contacts from potential partners.
	Beauty World Clinic	
	International Denal Clinic "Pro-implant"	
	Flebology Clinic	
	Rehabilitation Centre "UPA"	
RoHealth Association - The Health Cluster	Research Centre	
Transylvania Regional Balneotourism Cluster	Benko Furras Ltd.	All the contacts and information were delivered.



Cluster organisation	SME name	Describe how the SME benefited
	Wega Invest Ltd.	List of possible clients and distributors was delivered to the company. Discussed research possibilities.
	Arbor Srl	At the Medical Fair the representative of the cluster collected several business cards from relevant stakeholders.
	Hotel Ozon	Information regarding preventive treatments.
	Exclusive About Spa	Information was delivered by the cluster representative who participated at the matchmaking about Thailand's health tourism. Possible strategic partners were proposed to the SME.



5. Feedback in the form of testimonials

This section presents the impressions, observations and comments of the cluster representatives regarding the EU-Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event.

- **AGROFOOD REGIONAL CLUSTER**

“We participated in many matchmaking events in the past organised by the ECCP, and we definitely wish to participate in all matching event in the future. These services helped us to step to the international market, collaborate with many international companies and learn and develop a lot. Our biggest achievement, stepping in the international level also was possible because of the matchmaking event organised by ECCP. We currently participate in two international consortium projects, having one new proposal and developing two other. So, we are very thankful for your help.”

- **FUTURE POSITION X (FPX)**

“It was a great way for us to start building our strategic internationalisation as a cluster. Transfer of knowledge on the implementation of cluster internationalisation and how to benefit the SME's were the biggest win for us. Increased awareness of possibilities in cooperation outside of EU, but also better understanding the challenges and our role as facilitators.”

- **HELLENIC BIOCLUSTER (HBIO)**

“The event was well organised. As it was the 1st of a kind, it needs to be repeated if some of the expected benefits are to materialise. Local hosts are not responding to continued discussion post the event.”

- **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES IN MEDICINE (MEDIT)**

“ECCP services helped the Medical IT cluster to meet new challenges and demand of Thailand market, to discover new opportunities for business. Quality support was perfect.”



- **LASER & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES CLUSTER (LITEK)**

“The visit was an exploratory one; it accomplished some of the goals; for a more effective event more preparations should have been undertaken, especially on the Thai side as concerning the selection of the business cases suitable for match-making with the European SMEs representatives by specific clusters. In future, a more detailed analysis of what is available in the target country should be carried out; perhaps as an additional marketing service activity provided by the consultants.”

- **LITHUANIAN MEDICAL TOURISM CLUSTER (LITCARE)**

“The matchmaking event was organized highly professional. The event, following discussions with ECCP crew and visiting the Thailand Medical Trade Show were very informative considering our clusters further plans and activities in the region. Information provided by ECCP was very useful for further decisions. The support of ECCP team was highly qualified and appreciated. We are thankful and looking forward for new opportunities for collaboration.”

- **ROHEALTH ASSOCIATION – THE HEALTH CLUSTER**

“ECCP services were good. The only remark is that before the event it will have been better if we have received information about the counterparts. Even if all the collaboration discussed during the meetings have not materialized, we had the opportunity to promote our cluster and its activity. Even if after the event we sent letters of intent to organizations we met, we received feedback only from one of them.”

- **TRANSYLVANIA REGIONAL BALNEOTOURISM CLUSTER**

“The opportunities and services provided by ECCP are highly professional. ECCP is a proper facilitator between EU Clusters and between EU Clusters and International Organizations. I would like to propose to insure this opportunity of internationalization to underdeveloped clusters as well.”



6. Conclusions

Eight out of the nine cluster organisations that attended the EU-Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event answered the follow-up survey, which represents an 89% response rate. The response rate can be considered an indicator of the representativeness and reliability of conclusions extracted from the event in the mid-term and which are presented in this document.

The number of cooperation cases reached 22 of which 86% correspond to collaborations with non-European clusters and firms, while the rest are intra-EU cluster cooperation. About 32% of the activities indicated continue to be actively pursued although none of them had turned into a formal agreement when the follow-up survey took place.

The main fields for cooperation were 'knowledge sharing' and 'information exchange' together with 'research and development'. This is commonly seen in matchmaking events with third countries due to the general unfamiliarity with the market and the business culture. Therefore, it is important for clusters to take advantage of the first meeting in the programme so as to gain much needed knowledge of the market and business culture as well as of the organisations they meet.

The SME members also benefited from the event. More than 24 SMEs were reported to have benefited to some extent, particularly obtaining information on potential new clients and/or distributors even though other advantages such as product promotion and technology transfer were mentioned too.

To summarise, a relevant number of cooperation activities described in the EU-Thailand - Mission Proceedings Report, which captured the event's benefits at the closing of the event, were still pursued in the mid-term by the cluster organisations. The impact on the participating cluster organisations has been primarily on market knowledge and gaining contacts for potential market opportunities for their SMEs. The cluster organisations' member SMEs have benefited to a certain degree from the established contacts and product exposure to Thailand's market. Nevertheless, further extensive engagement of the cluster organisations and their SMEs is necessary to establish stronger tangible results.

Furthermore, the observations of the cluster representatives overwhelming indicates the importance of the event and its usefulness for supporting their internationalisation strategies.



It can be concluded that the EU-Thailand Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking Event achieved its objectives of establishing a foundation for EU cluster organisations to build from in support of their SMEs.