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EU-Western Balkans Cluster Policy Learning and Matchmaking Event

Zagreb, Croatia

Organised by PwC in collaboration with the
European Cluster Collaboration Platform on behalf of the
European Commission and financed under the COSME Programme¹

November 22nd– 23rd, 2018

Venue: Zagreb Technology Park

Pavilion 12, Avenija Dubrovnik 15, 10000, Zagreb, Croatia, www.tehnopark.hr

Call for Expression of Interest

**Agro / Food, IT, Manufacturing / Automotive, Tourism / Maritime,
Textile / apparel / footwear, Pharma / chemicals, Energy**

¹ EU Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs 2014-2020

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Objectives

PwC in collaboration with the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) is organising the EU Cluster Policy and Matchmaking event with the Western Balkans on behalf of the European Commission, which will take place on November 22nd – 23rd, 2018 in Zagreb. The event represents a unique opportunity for European and Western Balkan clusters² to explore common areas of interest for cooperation and build complementarities in terms of sectoral, value chain and market focus.

This call is published on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP): <http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/>. Find below more information on the event, its eligibility criteria to participate and an instruction for registration.

Context

The EU-Western Balkans cluster policy and matchmaking event is set up to support clusters as networking support organisations especially for SMEs, in their mission to open up new markets, to collaborate on cross-sectorial level and provide first relevant contacts to their members.

As part of an approach aimed at promoting international cluster cooperation for the benefit of SMEs, the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the European Commission (DG GROW) is supporting international, cross-regional and cross-sectorial cluster cooperation through the European Cluster Collaboration Platform, including by organising specific cluster matchmaking events. These activities are carried out to support efforts of cluster organisations in developing partnerships and business cooperation in European and global markets, for the benefit of their members. The current activities are funded under the EU COSME Programme.

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform provides a visible framework for cluster collaboration and for subsequent events. The ECCP is the cornerstone of the European strategy in support of SME internationalisation through clusters. It provides a wide range of information and services to facilitate the interaction between clusters, not only within Europe but also with international partners.

² For this call, all clusters are eligible originating from European Union Member States and other COSME countries, See list here: <http://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/27019>

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The following sets out a **draft agenda** for the event:

November 22nd, 2018

- 09:00 – 09:30 Registration and welcome coffee
- 09:30 – 10:00 Opening session by DG GROW and Croatian Authorities
- 10:00 – 11:15 Cluster policy developments in the EU and in the Western Balkan Countries³ (panel discussion)
- 11:15 – 11:30 Q&A
- 11:30 – 12:00 Coffee break
- 12:00 – 12:15 Presentation of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (including new features)
- 12.15 – 13.15 Cluster pitch session
- 13.15 – 14.30 Lunch
- 14:30 – 16:00 Parallel sessions:
- Session on Clusters and Smart Specialisation by the Joint Research Centre
 - Seminar on Transnational Cluster Cooperation with the Western Balkan Countries
- 16.00 – 16.15 Coffee break
- 16.15 – 17.30 Parallel sessions:
- Cluster session – thematic cooperation networks in South Eastern - Europe (open space discussion) by the Joint Research Centre
 - Seminar on cluster management skills
- 17:30 – 18:30 Visit of the host organisation
- 18:30 – 21:00 Networking cocktail followed by a standing dinner

November 23rd, 2018

- 09:00 – 09:15 Opening of the Matchmaking session by EASME
- 09:15 – 12:45 Matchmaking session
- 12:45 – 13:15 Debriefing of the matchmaking session
- 13:15 – 14:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 18:00 Site visit

³ Western Balkan countries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. The designation of Kosovo is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Who can participate?

The EU-Western Balkans matchmaking event is open to up to 60 participating clusters and seeks to gather European and Western Balkan clusters willing to establish concrete cooperation together.

The matchmaking event is open to cluster and business network organisations from Western Balkan and other countries eligible for participating in the COSME programme. All participants must have a valid cluster profile on the ECCP. Potential areas of action are:

- **Agro / Food**
- **IT**
- **Manufacturing / Automotive**
- **Tourism / Maritime**
- **Textile / apparel / footwear**
- **Pharma / chemicals**
- **Energy**

Selection criteria

To be selected, the applying cluster and business network organisations:

- Shall be registered on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) <http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/> with a **complete profile** of a cluster organisation;
- Should comply with the definition given in the section 1.3 (s) on 'innovation clusters' in Annex I of the new "EU Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation"⁴;

⁴ 2014/C 198/01. According to this definition: 'innovation clusters' means structures or organised groups of independent parties (such as innovative start-ups, small, medium and large enterprises, as well as research and knowledge dissemination organisations, non-for-profit organisations and other related economic actors) designed to stimulate innovative activity by promoting sharing of facilities and exchange of knowledge and expertise and by contributing effectively to knowledge transfer, networking, information dissemination and collaboration among the undertakings and other organisations in the cluster. See at: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN) with further information available at: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/modernisation/rdi_framework_en.pdf and; http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/horizontal.html, amending the Community Framework (2006/C 323/01 see at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:323:0001:0026:en:PDF> a reference of section 5.8 of which was included in the COSME Work Programme regarding the "innovation clusters" definition)

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- Have 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 COSME participating countries;
- Should operate in one or more of the sectors covered by the present call for Expression of Interest.

Applications will be selected according to the following qualitative criteria:

- On the potential to maximise matchmaking opportunities, through the participation to this mission, based on a clear description of the type of partnership the applicant cluster organisations are looking for, and on the potential for establishing tangible cooperation as an outcome of the event. This expression of interest for collaboration shall be clearly articulated in the application form;
- On the willingness and preparedness to engage in closer cooperation with other cluster and network organisations from the EU, Western Balkans and other COSME participating countries.

The decision on the selection of applicants will be based both on the requirements above and qualitative merit of each application; the balanced geographical coverage of the COSME participating countries will, in case of equal merit, be taken into consideration. In particular a balanced representation of clusters from the Western Balkans will be sought.

Participants are encouraged to attend all sessions and to participate in follow up surveys.

Participants are expected to attend the full programme of the EU-Western Balkans Cluster Policy Learning and Matchmaking Event as well as providing a feedback on the event and collaboration opportunities discovered (through debriefing session and specific debriefing forms).

The selection of the applicants based on the criteria above will be made by the EASME and the European Commission services, with the support of PwC.

The application process will be open until the 21st of September 2018.

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Cost and expenses

Participation to the event is free of charge and catering is provided. Costs and expenses for travel to and accommodation in Croatia will be taken in charge by the organising authority according to the standard EU rules for experts invited to attend meetings.

- Travel expenses: all selected participants shall be entitled to reimbursement of their travel expenses to the place of the meeting, by the most appropriate means of transport given the distance involved. This shall be economy class air travel for participants from COSME countries and train/bus for participants from Croatia (outside Zagreb).
- Daily allowance: the daily allowance paid for each day of the meeting is a flat rate to cover all expenditure at the place where the meeting is held, including for example meals and local transport (bus, tram, metro, taxi, parking, motorway tolls, etc.), as well as travel and accident insurance. The daily allowance shall be EUR 92.00.
- Accommodation allowance: selected participants who have to spend two nights at the place where the meeting is held shall also be entitled to an accommodation allowance. This allowance shall be EUR 100.00 per night. The number of nights may not exceed two.

To be eligible for reimbursement, participants must attend the full event and provide the feedback questionnaire at the end of the event.

Application

To apply for this event, clusters and network organisations are asked to follow the following process:

- You will need to reply to the call for the matchmaking as a first step. In order to reply to this call, you should express your interest in the matchmaking event by filling out a very short online identification form, under this on-line form:
<http://survey.pwc.lu/efm/itw/answer/s/qbwa6sl7ka/k/LK07qqu> .
- Within this online form, you will be asked to provide the link to your ECCP profile.
- Upon approval of your application, the PwC will provide you with information giving an overview of the relevant key market trends in your specific business area in the host country, a mapping of relevant clusters in the host country, information on company members of these clusters and existing cooperation initiatives with international partners.
- A virtual webinar for selected participants will be organised prior the event to share profiles and to explain main organisational aspects.

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- All participants will be informed on the final programme, the venue and possible travel arrangements.

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

For further information, please contact:

WesternBalkans-Clusters@lu.pwc.com

Or visit ECCP: <http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/>

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