

## European Circular Construction Alliance - adopting Circular Economy for internationalization and global competitiveness of European SMEs in Building and Construction

*EU programme COSME 2014, COSME-2014-3-03, Clusters Go International, Strand 1: Supporting preparatory actions for establishment and shaping of new European Strategic Cluster Partnerships (ESCPs).*



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The main objective of the proposed action is to establish **European Circular Construction Alliance (ECCA)**, an EU wide meta-cluster as a long term European Strategic Cluster Partnership (ESCP) supporting clusters and business network organisations, their SMEs and other cluster members collaborating for innovation, market-uptake, and marketing of competitive products, services and technologies in the field of circular construction and support SMEs in global competition. Activities planned will closely follow the foreseen activities of the Strand 1 of the call.

The construction sector plays an important role in the European economy. It generates almost 10% of GDP and provides 20 million jobs, mainly in micro and small enterprises. Construction is also a major consumer of intermediate products (raw materials, chemicals, electrical and electronic equipment, etc.) and related services. **The sector consumes large (enormous) quantities of raw materials, other materials and energy**, the operation is driven by the ownership of real estate and functionality, short time purpose, and at the end of building life, different construction waste requires treatment (recycling), e.g. energy and additional resources to become useful material, or it is even send to landfills. Resource efficiency opportunities in the building sector are still enormous<sup>1</sup> despite the regulation dealing with protection of the environment, space planning, energy efficiency, waste management etc.

**Circular construction adopts the principles of circular economy along the life-cycle of buildings**, from the extraction of building materials, design, and production, and construction, operation/maintenance, retrofitting, to the demolition and recycling of materials (end of life). Design for optimisation of resources, functionality and deconstruction, reduction of materials, water and other resources, and energy for production, use of recycled materials, reduction of environmental impacts and use of the land, improvements of durability, reduction of waste at retrofitting and demolishing, re-use, modular construction,

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2014) 445 final, COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON RESOURCE EFFICIENCY OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BUILDING SECTOR, Brussels, 1.7.2014,

off-site production, are some of the challenges of the circular construction. Compared to eco-innovations in construction which deals with individual issues, the circular construction approach sees these challenges as pieces of the puzzle of the circular economy. Circular construction builds upon intensive clustering of activities and industry actors in construction sector, and most importantly with other industries (eco-innovative, green technologies, waste management), stakeholders such as municipalities, and knowledge actors. It is the 21st Century's opportunity for European building and construction industry to take a worldwide lead and sustain its growth.

#### General project objectives




- To intensify cluster and business network collaboration across borders and sectoral boundaries we will **analyse the thematic areas of the circular construction and which sectors and industries (eco-innovative, ICT, waste management, energy sector, tourism...)** are needed to implement these principles. This will drive collaboration beyond the borders of the building and construction sector and initiate new cross-sectoral collaborative value proposition schemes, new business models, optionally leading to new industrial value chains.
- To promote the pan-European Strategic Cluster Partnerships to lead international cluster cooperation in new areas the project aims to **integrate already competitive and globally valuable solutions in the fields of energy efficiency, sustainable building, and eco-innovation with aim to reduce use of natural and other resources contributing to solving the global issue** – limited availability of natural resource and capability of the nature to fight will all kind of waste and pollutions. This needs collaborative approach beyond individual cluster and goes beyond the construction sector.
- To better support SMEs in global competition ECCA project will stimulate SMEs by offering **novel activities and services** such as ECCA branding, international brokerage events, promotion and marketing, IPR support, technology transfer, joint entering to foreign markets, and co-development with clusters and SMEs from third countries
- To help SMEs to contribute to the emergence of new value chains and take a leading position globally ECCA partnership will be **an open alliance for different SMEs to support their ideas, planned innovation projects or developed technologies in circular construction**. A special attention will be on planning of financing options such as funding provided by EU programmes (COSME, H2020 calls such as Cluster facilitated projects for new industries chains, INTERREG programme, and the European Structural and Investment Fund, e.g. in the context of smart specialisation strategies, crowd funding, business angels...) or , national funds. ECCA will plan services such as mentoring, coaching, promotion, marketing, branding) to advance the most progressive and complete innovations (products, services, solutions, technologies) to international market.

The specifics objectives of this ECCA project are to:

- Organize effective and devoted project management team with clear indicators of project success
- Prepare communication and promotion plan to support development of joint brand and international recognition. Two international ECCA conferences are planned in his frame, too
- Perform in-depth review of the circular construction and its contribution to circular economy and other EU goals,
- Identify thematic areas, potential collaborative industries, stakeholders in regard the complementarily, compatibility and interest for collaboration in EU and worldwide

- Intensify cluster and business network collaboration across borders and sectoral boundaries and to build a partnership among interested clusters and between members of the clusters
- Prepare partnership agreement respecting the characteristics of the “European Strategic Cluster Partnerships” and define. common vision, resources/interest available/needed, organisation, common actions, funding options)
- Officially set-up the ESCP partnership called European Circular Construction Alliance
- Analyse the options for legal body representing the ECCA worldwide and if agreed among partners, formally established it
- New value proposition designs and collaborative, cross-sectoral business models
- Develop a joint ‘European’ strategic vision and internationalisation plan, including the plan for exploitation of the synergies with the inter-regional activities, marketing and join branding plan
- Map international opportunities in third countries
- Prepare an implementation roadmap with overview of the joint activities foreseen to be developed with a detailed plan for implementation highlighting the different roles and steps.

Project partners:

	SLOVENSKI GRADBENI GROZD – GIZ (Construction Cluster of Slovenia, Slovenija, coordinator)
	Baltski grozd sEaNERGIA, Poland (Baltic Cluster sEaNERGIA)
	Cluster Construcción Sostenible / Sustainable Building Cluster of the Canary Islands, CCS-SBC,

Kontakt:

Vladimir Gumilar, project coordinator: [vladimir.gumilar@sgg.si](mailto:vladimir.gumilar@sgg.si),

Project web page: [www.circularconstruction.eu](http://www.circularconstruction.eu) (under development)

ECCP Platform: search for ECCA ESCP4i, at [www.clustercollaboration.eu](http://www.clustercollaboration.eu) .