

Press Release

Blata I-Bajda, 03/12/2012

High quality services to SMEs through clusters

POOLING4CLUSTERS Final Conference

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After successfully completing 20 months of research and analysis of the services offered to European clusters, the project Pooling4Clusters - Best shared services for cluster initiatives - presented its final recommendations during a special session dedicated to the Project of the "8th Competitiveness Clusters Forum". This took place in Sophia Antipolis, France on 23rd November 2012. The Pooling4Clusters project is an [Interreg IVC](#) programme financed through the European Regional Development Fund ([ERDF](#)) of the European Commission.

The project was aimed at sharing best practices between the Project's seven partners (including Malta) and to analyse these with a view of developing policy recommendations to improve the effectiveness of local support to clusters. Project partners conducted a number of field tests on fifteen best practices with the scope of identifying value-added services to clusters including their transferability nature to other member states. This study translated into seven regional / local plans - one by each partner.

During the conference, each partner briefly presented their respective regional / local recommendation plans. MITA's representative to the project shared the experiences and knowledge garnered on the clustering concept through its study visits and discussions held with six diverse active sectors¹ in the local economy. The Maltese recommendation plan including the:

- Formulation of a cluster framework highlighting a set of financial instruments that will support cluster development and the establishment of a sound governance structure that combines the public and private sector;

¹ ICT sector, Plastics sector, Bio-Technology and Health sector, Pharmaceutical sector, Aviation sector and Waste Management sector



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- Execution of an action plan for the development of prioritised clusters whilst instigating a number of demand-side innovation policies, where the industry is actively contributing towards cluster development;
- Strengthening of education for innovation through the execution of the necessary reforms within science, technology, maths and related curricula at compulsory level, and the setting-up of cross-disciplinary programmes at a vocational and tertiary levels of education;
- Setting-out of a number of measures that strengthens entrepreneurship, business start-ups and the transfer of research;
- Creation of a clusters networking platform to help build a wider and stronger interest for clusters;
- Creation of public-private alliances to nurture pools of knowledgeable individuals locally in the area of cluster formation and management;
- Means to support local inter-cluster collaboration on a European and international scale.

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The eSkills Alliance and a number of other local industry players are supporting these recommendations, whilst additional industry consultations are taking place to further garner a stronger position on clusters.

For more information about the Pooling4Clusters Project or on the local recommendation plan, access www.mita.gov.mt/p4c

