

SCOTTISH INNOVATIVE ACTIONS PROGRAMME EU Networking Report

Name of Event	Patterns of cluster evolution	Type of Event – <i>seminar, conference, workshop, study visit etc.</i>	Conference
Date of Event	18-19 January 2007	Duration of Event	2 days
Venue	NH Laguna Palace Hotel, Mestre, Italy	Region / Country	Veneto/Italy
Description of Event	<p>The conference focussed on the future of clusters: how to structure the suitable organisational models, how to foster networking and transnational cooperation, which inputs can give technologies and policies for cluster development. The conference brought together policy makers, European Union experts, academics, and innovation practitioners from about 20 European regions.</p> <p>The conference examined different regional/national approaches to cluster development and exchanged experience and best practice on the role of regional/national authorities, provided a better understanding of how to successfully support cluster evolution, stimulate knowledge and innovation.</p>		

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Describe the benefits you and your organisation have gained by attending this event.

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The following benefits were gained from participation in the conference

- Opportunity to meet with other Innovation Practitioners from throughout Europe. Particularly interesting was the contact made with Yorkshire Forward; it is currently developing a new cluster policy.
- Gained a better understanding into the complexities and commonality of cluster policy across Europe. There tends to be similar clusters being identified as priority industries throughout Europe however the size and sophistication of the clusters differs greatly. However, it is clear that many of the projects have focussed on regional or supply chain clusters rather than sectoral clusters as the key economic driver within their region. Introduced to the concept of "industrial districts" that identifies two layers of the regional economy; the local system and the local society, and the changes to this historical perspective as a result of globalisation.
- Scotland appears to be a first adopter of cluster strategy and is therefore well placed to pass on their experiences in supporting cluster development among other European regions. As a result Targeting Innovation will continue to develop collaborative relationships with organisations seeking to learn from our experiences.
- Further confirmation that understanding and respecting the interaction between companies, the public sector and academia (the triple helix) and the community is currently regarded to be a central component to the success or failure of any cluster policy.

Describe the benefits the Innovative Actions Programme has gained by your attendance at this event.

A key aim of the Scottish Innovation Actions Programme is learn from and disseminate best practice in innovative ideas and new innovation support structures that have successfully piloted elsewhere in Europe. This was the primary focus of this conference in the area of cluster development. Attendance at the conference allowed for a direct comparison between the Scottish Innovation System and other alternative systems, in particular the Veneto region in Italy.

Targeting Innovation is a leading provider of innovation support in Scotland and therefore our organisation is involved in the shaping and implementation of support programmes at both a national and local level. Our knowledge of alternative innovation systems is therefore an important resource to ensure that public sector policy is implemented effectively on the ground.

Describe how you have disseminated the learning from the event within your own organisation and to other Programme partners.

An internal information event is planned to take place in March within Targeting Innovation to disseminate the information from the conference to its Executives. The information gathered will also be fed into research and programme development undertaken by Targeting Innovation on behalf of the public sector.

The conference papers and presentations can be downloaded at
http://www.ecluster.it/conference/index.html?_locale=en

Please record details of contacts made at the event.

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The following contacts were made at the conference

Julia Paddison, Yorkshire Forward, UK – equivalent of Scottish Enterprise in the Yorkshire area. This organisation is currently developing its cluster strategy. www.yorkshire-forward.com

Bernard De Potter, Flemish Agency for the Economy, Belgium – Government organisation responsible for delivering innovation support programmes such as the Innovation Relay Centres and the European Information Centres in the Flanders region.

Hans-Christian Jager, IDEUM, Germany – Business consultants who also deliver regional innovation support programmes. www.ideum.de

Esko Virtanen, Tekes, Finland – is the main public funding organisation for research and development in Finland www.tekes.fi/eng/

Veronica Gaffney, DG Regional Policy, Brussels – EC department responsible for encouraging integration and collaboration among the European regions to reduce disparities. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm

Julie Edgar, Scottish Enterprise – works for SEEL in the area of creative and digital media. www.scottish-enterprise.com

Zdenka Mesic, Ministry of Economy, Labour & Entrepreneurship, Croatia – Government department responsible for economic development. They are planning to organise a conference based on clusters later this year.

Ivan Bosse, Veneto Innovazione – government supported agency with the aim of Promoting, setting up and increasing study and research into processes and emerging technology in the Veneto region and organisers of the conference. www.venetoinnovazione.it

Please indicate in what areas these contacts could be of current / future use to the Innovative Actions Programme.

The contact at the DG Regional Policy is useful given the new funding programmes being introduced at the current time. Scotland should become more active in joining European projects in this area as the implementation of policy is considered to be more mature and sophisticated than many of our European partners, particularly the Accession countries. Therefore accessing European funding to develop the regional economy.

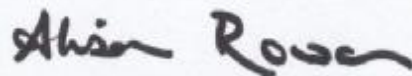
The other contacts made could be useful starting points to develop collaborative partnerships.

Please list any other relevant/useful information gathered at the event.

Croatia is planning to host a conference on clusters in their region later on this year.

Copies of the conference papers and presentations can be downloaded at http://www.ecluster.it/conference/index.html?_locale=en

Signature



Date

09/02/2007