



January 2011

CLUSTER POLICY

- *Survey results* > Half of the projects completed by competitiveness clusters have resulted in new products or new processes
- *Project factories* > Clusters and ministries are working together on ideas for the “project factory”, their core business
- *Innovation platforms* > 13 innovation platforms selected in the first FUI call for projects
- *Standardisation* > New standardisation correspondents for competitiveness clusters
- *Cluster projects* > Competitiveness cluster projects funded: what's new
- *Investing in the future: in close-up* > Call for IRT and IEED projects: new deadlines
- *Investing in the future: in close-up* > Call for anchor R&D projects: further details
- *Investing in the future: in close-up* > Anchor R&D projects for investing in the future and FUI R&D projects: what are the differences?
- *Investing in the future: close-up* > Pooled innovation platforms: 46 projects received in response to the call for expressions of interest

EU NEWS

- *Strategy* > European cluster policy

INTERNATIONAL

- *European partnerships* > 12 projects selected from the “European technology partnership” call for projects
- *International partnerships* > 2nd Franco-Quebec symposium: 26 partnership agreements signed
- *Intelligence* > The DGCIS publishes its survey of Canadian clusters
- *Intelligence* > Global eco-technology clusters: lessons learned, outlook and opportunities

CLUSTERS IN ACTION

FOCUS ON COMPLETED PROJECTS

- *Vehicle of the future* > Vetess: more reliable onboard systems for vehicles

CLUSTER NEWS

- *Review* > The French EIP (Entreprise Innovante des Pôles) label begins to bear fruit
- *Cluster partnerships* > CORP, the Capénergies, Optitec, Risques and Pégase cluster partnership launches a new nexus for technology and applications in the PACA region
- *Human resources* > The S2E2 competitiveness cluster supports managerial innovation
- *International expansion* > French mechanical engineering clusters continue their international expansion

CLUSTER POLICY

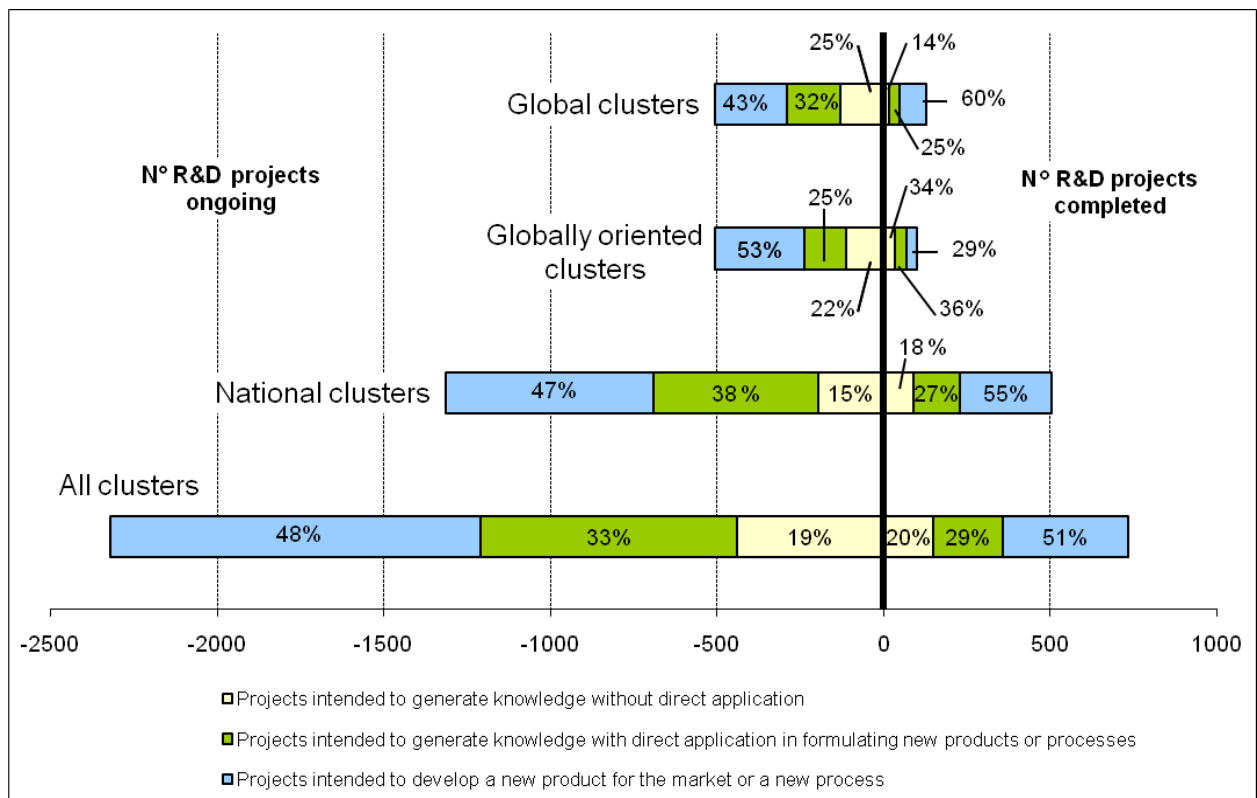
▪ SURVEY RESULTS

Half of the projects completed by competitiveness clusters have resulted in new products or new processes

This is one of the findings reached by the General Directorate for Competitiveness, Industry and Services (DGCIS) in its recently published "4 Pages" report on the 2010 survey of competitive clusters.

Cluster projects are primarily market-oriented

By end 2009, over 700 cluster R&D projects had been completed, all forms of joint financing included. Half of these projects resulted in the introduction of new products onto the market or the implementation of new manufacturing processes.



29% of the projects were intended to generate knowledge with a view to developing new products or processes, and 20% were pure research projects with no direct commercial application.

Furthermore, over 2,300 R&D projects were ongoing, covering a range of topics entirely comparable to that of the completed projects.

Other indicators monitored in previous years were also reported in the survey. Statistical performance indicators for competitiveness clusters will be published shortly on the competitiveness website.



▪ PROJECT FACTORIES

Clusters and ministries are working together on ideas for the “project factory”, their core business

Developing innovation through strategic collaborative R&D projects is one of the key objectives the government has set for competitiveness clusters

As a constant priority for cluster policy and the core driving force of competitiveness clusters, collaborative R&D, generally known as the “project factory”, is supported by substantial government measures. It is the biggest single “user” of human resources in cluster governance structures, accounting for an average of one third of total human resources in these structures.

A “project factory” workshop

In October 2010, the Directorate General for Competitiveness, Industry and Services (DGCIS) organised a workshop on the subject, on behalf of the interdepartmental working group (GTI) responsible for the national cluster policy.

Diverse practices reveal a need for pooling information

The presentations and fruitful exchanges during the workshop revealed that many clusters apply rigorous and effective procedures for managing their “project factories”. However, the developed practices are diverse and reveal a need for exchanging and sharing information, and even for pooling “best practices”: certain competitiveness clusters could thus take inspiration from methods implemented by others, in particular the more recently established clusters who have had less time to perfect processes ranging from project identification to exploitation.

Need to pursue joint reflection by clusters and ministries

Joint reflection engaged by clusters and ministries will be pursued via specific working groups with a number of volunteer clusters, with a particular emphasis on a better coordination of the different evaluation phases conducted in turn by the clusters themselves and by the government.



▪ INNOVATION PLATFORMS

13 innovation platforms selected at the first FUI call for projects

13 innovation platforms were judged eligible for public funding totalling €30.5 million, financed as a part of the first call for projects from the single interdepartmental fund (Fonds Unique Interministériel, FUI).

These decisions were implemented in the form of agreements. The first call for innovation platform projects was launched on 1st October 2008. Out of the total 86 applications submitted, 35 were shortlisted by the ministries responsible.

Examples of the innovation platform projects in receipt of funding will soon be available for consultation on the competitiveness website. The "Biorefinery Research Innovation" (Bioraffinerie Recherche Innovation, BRI), an innovation platform dedicated to processing and recycling agricultural produce for non-food purposes is already available for consultation in the database of the funded projects.

▪ STANDARDISATION

New standardisation correspondents for clusters

Standardisation is a powerful economic intelligence tool which can be used not only to carry out active intelligence monitoring, but also to promote dissemination of innovations and even protect the achieved progress.

What makes innovation and standardisation complementary?

Based on the reductive idea that innovation is intended to remain the property of its author, innovation and standardisation are often wrongly considered as conflicting terms. Yet standardisation facilitates the development of innovation as a key component for bringing new products to market and shortening the cycle between the pioneers and the mass market.

The DGCIS-AFNOR agreement raising cluster awareness of standardisation

In support of a closer collaboration between the French standardisation system (AFNOR) and competitiveness clusters, the DGCIS signed an agreement with AFNOR on October 30th 2007 with the objective to raise cluster awareness of standardisation as a valuable economic intelligence instrument, a vector for disseminating innovations and a tool for their better market placing. In May 2010, the programme covered by the agreement was extended by 18 months, to 31st October 2011.

Cluster specific services

The agreement provides clusters with specialized services, which include a designated point of contact, seminars setting out issues and challenges of standardisation, and a normative analysis by which to identify existing or pending standardisation work applicable to the projects in hand. New standardisation correspondents to assist the clusters AFNOR has just published a new list of standardisation correspondents to raise clusters' awareness of the strategic value of standardisation in promoting and protecting innovation.



▪ CLUSTER PROJECTS

Competitiveness cluster projects funded: what's new

The competitiveness clusters website includes a database containing recent examples of the R&D projects receiving funding through the FUI call for projects scheme.

The database will be gradually expanded to include examples of:

- Innovation platforms in receipt of funding through the first FUI call for projects
- Partnerships receiving funding as part of the "European Technology Partnership 2010" call for projects scheme

▪ INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: IN CLOSE-UP

Call for IRT and IEED projects: new deadlines

The annexes enabling technology research institutes (IRT) and institutes for excellence in carbon-free energies (IEED) to respond to calls for projects have now been published, along with the financial regulations.



The main document is to be returned by **31st January 2011** and the financial documents (annexes B, C, D) by **12th February 2011**. Letters of commitment are due in by **11th March 2011**. Since other modifications are likely to occur, we advise you to regularly consult the appropriate websites.

▪ INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: IN CLOSE-UP

Call for anchor R&D projects: further details

The first call for anchor R&D projects is under way.



A continuous project selection process will be organised through to **15th January 2012**, deadline for submissions on this first call for projects. Project sponsors should submit their projects online on the website of the scheme operator, Oséo, in the special section provided for the purpose. A preliminary shortlist of projects will be announced **at end February 2011** on the basis of projects assessed to date.



MOTEURS DE CROISSANCE ET D'EMPLOI

▪ INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: IN CLOSE-UP

Anchor R&D projects for investing in the future and FUI R&D projects: what are the differences?



Support for anchor R&D projects and for FUI R&D projects has been devised with the same aim of reinforcing collaboration between clusters.

However, anchor R&D projects differ from FUI R&D projects on three counts:

- **Objectives and ambition:** anchor R&D projects are collaborative projects designed to shape existing industrial sectors or encourage the emergence of new sectors. Their ambition is to strengthen firms' positions on buoyant markets by supporting or building lasting collaborative relationships between industries, services and research bodies.
- **Project size:** the spending envelope of anchor R&D projects will range between €8 million and €50 million. As a general rule, these will be larger projects than those financed by the FUI, in view of their structural role and the fact that they will generally involve more partners.
- **Funding tools:** anchor R&D projects will be government funded through subsidies and refundable advances. Financial engineering will be provided by the scheme operator, Oséo.

▪ INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: IN CLOSE-UP

Pooled innovation platforms: 46 projects received in response to the call for expressions of interest

The call for expressions of interest attracted 46 project submissions.



The number of projects received is indicative of the level of interest shown by clusters and their members in this initiative. The projects also show great diversity, in terms of both the themes addressed and the regions concerned.

Analysis of the projects should now make it possible to finalise the specifications of the call for projects and provide project sponsors and their partners with initial indications on how to frame their submissions.

Candidates will be invited to one-off hearings organised on an ad hoc basis from February 2011 onwards, on the initiative of the Steering Committee, at which they will be asked to provide further explanations of certain complex aspects of their projects and answer underlying questions. Members of the Steering Committee will also meet with any project sponsor, on request, over the months ahead. The call for projects will be issued in February 2011.

 LANDMARKS

1 million

The number of documents consulted on the www.competitivite.gouv.fr website in 2010.



EU NEWS

▪ STRATEGY

European cluster policy

The rationale behind European cluster policy

The need to gear European policies towards excellence in order to foster the emergence of world-class clusters was defined in:

- Communication from the European Commission: “*Towards world-class clusters in the European Union: implementing the broad-based innovation strategy*”
- The conclusions of the EU Competitiveness Council adopted under the French presidency in 2008.

In its communication entitled “*An integrated industrial policy for the globalisation era*” of 28th October 2010, the European Commission undertook to introduce a new European strategy for clusters. Following consultation, a communication on the subject is expected in the second half of 2011, paving the way for better management and greater harmonisation of European policy to promote clusters.

Implementing the policy through five initiatives

The European cluster policy implemented by the Directorate General Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission breaks down into five initiatives in the fields of expertise, cooperation, support for governance, a European observatory and themes such as innovative eco-industries and biotechnology.



INTERNATIONAL

▪ EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS

12 projects selected from the “European technology partnership” call for projects

Twelve projects were finally selected as a result of the “European technology partnership” call for projects.

Nine projects were presented by the Cap Digital, Lyonbiocluster, Mer PACA, Move’o, Optitec, Pégase, Systématique, Techtera and Vitagora competitiveness clusters and three by the Sophia Antipolis Foundation, the Technical Centre for the Mechanical Industries (CETIM) and Oséo Innovation.

Examples of projects receiving funding are published in the “cluster projects funded” database on the www.competitivite.gouv.fr website. The first two projects described are the **Euromatière** project presented by the Techtera, Axelera and Plastipolis clusters, and the Sophia Antipolis Foundation project in association with the Capénergies and Derbi clusters. The database will be expanded over time.

The “European technology partnership” call for projects launched by the DGCIS on 8th April 2010 met with a very favourable response, attracting 23 applications.

These projects were invited to focus on supporting SMEs applying for the first time to European R&D programmes such as the 7th Framework Programme for Research and technological Development (FP7) and similar programmes such as the ERA-NETs, the CIP, but also the Interreg IV programme. Its aim was twofold: to boost cluster SMEs’ participation in EU programmes and to encourage creation of networks between SMEs in France and other member States.



▪ INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

2nd Franco-Quebec symposium: 26 partnership agreements signed

No fewer than 26 technology, industrial and commercial partnerships were signed at the 2nd Franco-Quebec Symposium held in France from 24th to 26th November 2010.

The agreements covered sectors such as aeronautics and space, nutrition, biotechnology and technical textiles.

In addition, further 70 projects France – Quebec that emerged from the 2nd Symposium are currently under consideration.



Copyright: Ministry for the Economy, Finance and Industry. Christine Lagarde, Minister for the Economy, and Jean Charest, Prime Minister of Quebec, with the signatory partners.

▪ INTELLIGENCE

The DGCIS publishes its survey of Canadian clusters

The survey, commissioned by the DGCIS, identified over 70 “clusters” in Canada and highlighted the organisation of Canadian innovation systems, types of clusters in place, and the role of the states on federal and provincial level in regards to innovation policy.

For 24 of these clusters, the survey pinpointed their governance, strategies, terms of engagement, services offered, their integration into international networks and their openness to collaboration with French competitiveness clusters.

▪ INTELLIGENCE

Global eco-technology clusters: lessons learned, outlook and opportunities

The study was commissioned to provide France’s competitiveness clusters with information on the main eco-technology clusters or global clusters, describing types of clusters, nature of the funding they receive, and the ways of exploiting their research and the growth of their ecosystems.

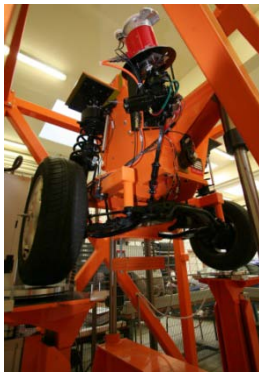
The survey was conducted on behalf of France’s Ministry for Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea (MEEDDM) in 2009.

CLUSTERS IN ACTION

FOCUS ON COMPLETED PROJECTS

▪ VEHICLE OF THE FUTURE

Vetess: more reliable onboard systems for vehicles



Copyright: Université de Haute Alsace

The Vetess project (verification of onboard systems by automatic test generation from specifications), labelled by the Vehicle of the Future cluster, has been awarded a grant as part of the 5th FUI call for projects.

Continuously monitored testing for more reliable onboard systems

The project consists of ultimately designing vehicle onboard systems with the tests required to verify system components built in and automatically generated at the vehicle design stage. At present, tests are manually generated by experts on the basis of written specifications, hence creating a lack of guaranteed continuity.

CLUSTER NEWS

▪ REVIEW

The French EIP (Entreprise Innovante des Pôles) label begins to bear fruit

Six months following its introduction, the initial response to this national campaign is distinctly positive:



- 44 signatory competitiveness clusters as of 27th January 2011
- 8 clusters active in labelling their SMEs
- 39 labels awarded in 2010 (22 by the Systematic cluster, 15 par SCS – Secured Communicating Solutions, 2 by Capénergies)
- 4 capital-raising operations completed (totaling €4 million)



Illustrating the results to date, 2 clusters comment on their experience of implementing the label:

Jean-Noël de Galzain, Systematic cluster, spokesperson for the *Entreprise Innovante des Pôles* (cluster innovative enterprise) label at Polinvest

Introducing the EIP label has enabled the Systematic cluster to strengthen its links with investors and our SME members, and to enhance the services provided via our “Ambition SME” programme. As a result, SMEs enjoy an even higher standing with the financial community, which is directly involved in the labelling process. We have held two labelling sessions this year and the 22 successful companies were offered an opportunity to meet some fifty investors in the course of our “Ambition SME” day held in November. The EIP label is a national initiative designed to demonstrate to investors that there are many innovative companies with great potential to be found in the competitiveness clusters, where they can benefit not only from our expertise, but also from a network that helps simplify their relations with major groups and smoothes their path towards international growth.

Support is key to the success of the label, with both investors and the heads of SMEs. It ensures that businesses are better equipped to convince potential investors to take a stake in their capital.


Valérie Beudet, E-Secure Transactions (TES) cluster

*The *Entreprise Innovante des Pôles* label is a solution to our cluster’s need to offer our SME members alternative means of financing their growth. To speed up the introduction of the labelling programme, in particular the support phase, to bring together more potential investors and to have a bigger pool of SMEs to present to them, we decided to join forces with other clusters active in the Normandy region: Filière Equine, Mov’eo and Nov@log. Together, we have already set up our labelling committee, and a call for applications went out to our respective SMEs in mid-December. We also issued a request for proposals to identify professionals we can call on to help provide support to our SMEs. We will be ready to start awarding our first EIP labels in March.*

The “*Entreprise Innovante des Pôles*” label was launched on 3rd June 2010 under the auspices of the Ministry for the Economy, Industry and Employment, with the aim of helping high-potential innovative companies actively involved in competitiveness cluster R&D projects to attract private investors to finance their growth at the pump-priming stage. The label boosts the profile and hence the potential audience for the cluster ecosystem’s most promising SMEs and VSEs seeking to raise private capital, providing leverage with business angels and investment funds.

Polinvest gives signatory clusters access to a secure Extranet that makes documentation available and pools best practices implemented by the pioneering clusters. To join the clusters that have signed up to the national charter for the *Entreprise Innovante des Pôles* label and launch the labelling process for your SMEs:

 **Contact**

 Aude Marty a.marty@polinvest.org or +33 (0)1 49 27 56 26
Jean-Noël de Galzain jn.degalzain@polinvest.org or +33 (0)1 53 42 12 90

▪ CLUSTER PARTNERSHIPS

CORP, the Capénergies, Optitec, Risques and Pégase cluster partnership, launches a new nexus for technology and applications in the PACA region

On 13th December 2010, four competitive clusters - Capénergies, Optitec, Risques and Pégase – met in Marseille to sign a partnership agreement that marks the first of a kind.



B. Besnainou (Capénergies), R. Biagioni (Risques), J.-Y. Longère (Pégase), K. Mirochnitchenko (Optitec)
Copyright MT

The aim of the agreement is to increase the impact these four clusters have on the region's technological, industrial and economic growth, primarily by bringing technology and applications together. Nowadays it is not just technology but also its applications and uses that generate new product and service development. These will be the two most powerful growth drivers for cluster members in the future. Each cluster makes its best tool(s) available to the partnership so that each of the four partners has access to a pooled resource of best-in-class solutions. This new overview must also go hand in hand with the deployment of an innovation and R&D ecosystem that nurtures the region's industrial and academic forces, and that is visible on both the national and the European stage.

The CORP cluster partnership is thus at the very heart of a collaborative system. The four competitiveness clusters are keen to pool various services on behalf of their members and project sponsors, and have defined six areas in which their administrative resources can usefully be shared: a project factory, support for businesses, raising their international profile, employment and training initiatives, corporate social responsibility and communication. They hope their combined approach will generate growth and R&D for all cluster members.

Also attending the meeting were Gilles Barsacq, Secretary General for Regional Affairs of the PACA region, and Dominique Chevereau, head of the Economic Development and Innovation Department of regional business and economic agency DIRECCTE PACA, underlining the commitment of government representatives in the region to supporting initiatives of this kind and helping to find solutions.

▪ HUMAN RESOURCES

The S2E2 competitiveness cluster supports managerial innovation

S2E2, the cluster of record for smart electricity solutions, recently turned its attention to the subject of human resources, conducting an audit of recruitment needs among cluster SMEs.



Copyright: © S2E2

The results, and recommended courses of action, were presented to members in Orleans on 16th December.

A properly devised and implemented human resources policy offers companies a certain competitive advantage and contributes directly to their capacity for innovation and their competitiveness. As part of its role of providing support to its member SMEs, the S2E2 competitiveness cluster accordingly turned its attention to their human resources issues.

Audit of recruitment needs

A Human Resources working group was set up within the cluster in November 2009, on the initiative of member companies who had identified a number of shared HR problems: conducting the recruitment process, and difficulties in recruiting and retaining highly qualified employees.

With the backing of the S2E2 cluster, the working group pursued a collective solution to these issues. The first step was to conduct an audit of recruitment needs and practices among some forty S2E2 members across the Centre region of France.

The audit findings were presented to members in December, and provided a concrete inventory of the main concerns SMEs have to deal with: evaluating candidates in areas other than technical competencies alone, motivating recently graduated engineers to join SMEs, etc.

The audit also recommended a concrete course of action for SMEs, collectively, to make the most of the advantages offered by the S2E2 network. The first actions will be put into effect at the start of 2011, once approved by S2E2's Board of Directors.

The audit was financed largely by the regional business, competition, consumption, labour and employment directorate (DIRECCTE) for the Centre region, and was carried out by the Centre d'Étude et de Recherche en Management de Touraine (CERMAT).

Contact

 Catherine Zuber, S2E2 network organiser, czuber@touraine.cci.fr

MOTEURS DE CROISSANCE ET D'EMPLOI

▪ INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

French mechanical engineering clusters continue their international expansion

In setting up the Mécafuture-fr platform in 2007, the aim of mechanical engineering clusters Arve-Industries, Materialia, Bourgogne Nuclear Cluster, EMC2, Microtechniques, Plastipolis, ViaMéca and Gospi was to establish a French platform to interface with the European technological platform, Manufacture.



21/04/2010: Signature of the cooperation agreement between the ViaMéca cluster and Kompetenznetz Inplas at the Hanover Fair. Copyright: ViaMéca

The intention was to contribute to developing synergies at the national level and to raise the international profile of the clusters concerned. Now the platform can point to concrete examples to illustrate the efforts already made towards meeting these objectives.

A Franco-German partnership initiated at the 2010 Hanover Fair...

At last year's Hanover Fair, held from 19th to 23rd April, the five Mécafuture-fr clusters organised a series of technology partnership meetings for their members (businesses, laboratories, technical centres). Launched as part of the DGCIS-Ubifrance agreement, the meetings were intended to develop Franco-German technological partnerships, in particular with Germany's own competitiveness clusters, the Kompetenznetze, and with the Fraunhofer institutes, major German research centres organised by theme, in much the same way as France's Carnot Institutes.

In the course of the meetings, four technology working groups addressed the topics of materials, advanced manufacturing practices, surface engineering, mechatronics, intelligent systems and robotics. Targeted individual meetings with German partners were also scheduled to help identify common projects with an eye to upcoming European calls for projects. The ViaMéca cluster also used the occasion to seal its partnership with Kompetenznetz Inplas, a German cluster dedicated to plasma surface treatment (see photo).

... to be confirmed in April 2011

The Mécafuture-fr clusters agreed to repeat the experience this year, between 4th and 7th April, when France features as official partner country of the Hanover Fair. The subjects for the new working groups have already been identified: robotised processes, new materials and transport-related processes.

In 2011, the Mécafuture-fr clusters will thus enjoy a more exposed profile at the world's leading industrial trade fair, which will be attended by the French President and marked by an even stronger partnership with the German clusters and research institutes first encountered in 2010.



MOTEURS DE CROISSANCE ET D'EMPLOI

A partnership forged as part of the DGCIS-Ubifrance agreement

This Franco-German partnership is a part of the 2011 agenda of international initiatives by competitiveness clusters set out by the DGCIS-Ubifrance agreement. France is the guest of honour at this world-class event. The 2011 Hanover Fair should also offer an opportunity for active involvement of clusters in sectors other than mechanical engineering, including energy, transport and textiles. Ubifrance will be responsible for providing support to the clusters and their member companies.

_ Consult the archives [<http://www.competitivite.gouv.fr/spip.php?article116&lang=fr>]

_ Sign up [<http://competitivite.gouv.fr/>]

Legal mentions

This newsletter is published by the DGCIS and DATAR
Address: 8, rue de Penthièvre, 75 008 PARIS

- ✦ Director of publication: M. Patrick Crézé
- ✦ Editor in chief and copy: Martine Maillard
- ✦ Design and production: **Stratis**
- ✦ Photos: **Stratis**, Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry, MT, S2E2, ViaMéca, X.

In accordance with the French Data Protection Act n° 78-17 of 6/01/1978, you have at all times the right of access and rectification of data concerning you. You may exercise your right of rectification by writing to us or by clicking on this link. In order to protect your privacy and your personal data, the DGCIS and DATAR undertake not to divulge your personal information to other companies for their use. Your e-mail address will not be used for any purposes other than distribution of this newsletter.

For any further information/requests: contact@competitivite.gouv.fr