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CLUSTER POLICY

PHASE 3 OF THE CLUSTERS POLICY

Launch of the third phase of the competitiveness clusters policy

During a meeting of the Council of Ministers, three ministers in charge of the competitiveness clusters policy announced the major outlines of the 3rd phase covering the 2013-2018 period.

During the Council of Ministers meeting held on 9 January 2013, Mr Arnaud Montebourg, Minister for Productive Recovery, Mrs Cécile Duflot, Minister for the Equality of Territories and Housing and Mrs Geneviève Fioraso, Minister for Higher Education and Research, announced the major outlines of the third phase for the competitiveness clusters during the 2013-2018 period.

Consistent with decision No. 10 of the *National pact for growth, competitiveness and employment*, this announcement states that **"the new ambition of the clusters is to focus more on economic outlets and employment"**. To reach this objective, the competitiveness clusters must become **"factories for the products of the future"** that transform their collaborative R&D efforts into innovative products, processes and services that can be marketed. The announcement adds that future investments will be mobilised in order to support the industrialisation of the projects promoted by the clusters.

The support for SMEs provided by the competitiveness clusters **"will be strengthened in four main areas, in collaboration with the regions: access to private financing, internationalisation, support for SMEs and anticipating the needs for skills"**. The collective and individual services offered to their members by the clusters will have to be aligned so as to complement the services available from other players within the territory.

The ministers also stated that the competitiveness clusters will strive for **greater involvement of training structures**. They will also contribute to strengthening the **relations between SMEs and large groups**, by notably devoting particular attention to the field of purchasing.

Finally, each cluster's objectives for the next six years will be stipulated in a **customised performance contract**. This contract will clarify the technological and innovation challenges as well as the associated markets that the cluster wishes to target.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AID

Aid for transforming the collaborative R&D projects of the clusters into industrialized goods or services

A new envelope targeting the industrialization of the R&D projects of the clusters in order to ensure that they do more to promote the growth of companies and employment.

As part of the reorientation of the funds available through the Investments for the future program, the Government has announced the set-up of an aid program for the industrialization of the projects of the competitiveness clusters.

With €110 million, this aid will help to support the industrialisation of the results of the R&D projects promoted by the clusters, in particular the ones accepted under the single interministerial fund (FUI). This aid is consistent with the



orientations of phase 3 of the policy of these clusters. The aim is to strengthen the productive results of the clusters policy, and to ensure that they do more to promote the growth of companies and employment.

EU NEWS

▪ PUBLICATION

The January 2013 edition of the monitoring bulletin for State aid available to competitiveness clusters

This month's current events:

- As part of the ongoing process to modernize the European Union's rules relative to State aid, the Commission has adopted a regulation proposal. Its aim is to modify the regulation pertaining to the procedures applicable to State aid, along with a proposed regulation to exempt new categories of aid from the prior notification requirement.
- The Commission adopted new guidelines regarding State aid for broadband networks, in order to help the Member States to reach the objectives of the EU's digital agenda. The Commission has published its annual scoreboard on State aid that provides an overview of the financial assistance provided by the Member States, in particular in the context of the economic and financial crisis.

CLUSTERS IN ACTION

FOCUS ON COMPLETED PROJECTS

▪ AGRICULTURE / AGRI-FOOD

Farine+ sketches out the breads of the future

Breads for seniors that limit the risk of malnutrition, thanks to greater knowledge about the types of wheat used and an innovative milling process.



The project was carried out under the label of the Vitagora cluster, and it received aid under the single interministerial fund (FUI).

The context

In France, at least 300,000 people, often elderly, are faced with malnutrition related to a decrease of their dietary intake. Bread is an everyday food, at the very heart of our diet. It is also the fruit of a long agricultural, technological and gastronomic process. Hence the idea of rebalancing the notion of how people eat, thanks to a new family of breads.



Farine+ is a project targeting the creation, development and preservation of the nutritional and sensory potential of bread-making products. Its aim was to develop a current consumption product for malnourished people that would help to correct their dietary deficiencies. Prepared using flour with a higher nutritional content, "senior" bread should soon see the light of day.

Farine+ targeted two concrete objectives:

- Increasing the nutritional quality of cereal products
- Developing new breads in response to the needs of specific groups, in terms of nutritional quality, but also the appearance, odor, taste, texture and even consistency.

The project's partners

- Cérélab (SME) is the project initiator
- Eurogerm
- Dijon Céréales
- The UMR Agroécologie (INRA, University of Burgundy, CNRS, AgroSup Dijon)
- The UMR Centre des Sciences du Goût et de l'Alimentation (INRA, University of Burgundy)
- The Gérontopôle (CHU Dijon)
- CREABio® (Resource Centre for Applied BIOmedical Studies)
- Welience (University of Burgundy)

Initial technological and economic fallout



Laboratory work for the development of Senior bread. Copyright Cérélab®



MOTEURS DE CROISSANCE ET D'EMPLOI

➤ Results, products, prototypes, demonstrators, services resulting from the R&D works

- **A database of 350 varieties of wheat** was set up in order to identify some of their genetic characteristics.
- **An innovative milling process**, "Mouture +", was developed. It produces flours that are similar to stone-ground flours from the viewpoint of their nutritional quality. These flours retain their richness in terms of iron, magnesium, vitamins and fibre.
- **A bread-making product intended for specific groups**: "Senior bread", a response to malnutrition amongst the elderly.

➤ Patent: 1

➤ Publications, including peer-reviewed scientific journals: 2

➤ Lectures and conferences, including international events: 3

➤ Theses: 3

➤ Jobs created: 20, including 3 open-ended contracts created, 1 fixed term position saved and 16 created

➤ Creation of companies: Artémis, a shared innovation platform in the area of agri-environment. The conversion of a former sugar refinery in Aiserey (21) into an "organic" flour mill could provide a base for the "Mouture +" process developed by the Farine+ cluster, thereby allowing the step from pilot stage to industrial process.

➤ In perspective "Senior bread" is in the marketing phase. A person has been recruited for this purpose. An extension of the "senior" bread to dietary products for large and medium-sized stores is being planned.

CLUSTER NEWS

▪ SUPPORT FOR SMES

The SCS cluster is helping to grow its SMEs and supporting their market access

In support of its SMEs, the cluster has undertaken a series of actions in order to access private financing, to transform SMEs into mid-sized companies, and to reach out to international customers. It is also encouraging the networking of SMEs and large groups, while actively preparing the shift from generating projects to generating products.



Since its creation in 2005, [the SCS competitiveness cluster](#) has promoted the development of innovative R&D programs. It has brought together an innovative ecosystem of 280 players in the fields of micro-electronics, software and telecommunications.

The cluster is contributing to the growth of VSEs and SMEs in their strategic domains by focusing on several levers of their development. As such, the cluster's support can be seen in all of the steps in the life of its SMEs, consisting

of several services and actions.



The cluster wishes to facilitate the access of innovative start-ups to the private financing that they need for their development and to launch new goods or services. It helps them to improve their business plan, and to establish contacts with private investors.

Since 2010, the cluster has promoted more than 25 companies under the “innovative companies in the clusters” label, which has led to 5 fundraising operations generating a total of €6.1 million. More generally, during this same period, the cluster’s SMEs managed to raise funds in excess of €70 million.

Transforming SME into mid-sized companies

When in the process of becoming larger companies, SMEs are faced with significant growth challenges and complex choices with regard to strategic orientation.

The SCS cluster is helping its SMEs as part of its 18-month “SME-Mid-caps Growth” programme. Its purpose is to implement a development plan over 5 years. It also targets a better understanding and follow-up of the financial, organisational and strategic levers needed for its implementation.

Helping SMEs to reach out to international markets

The markets of the cluster’s ICT members are international as a priority. To ensure their visibility and renown within these markets, the cluster helps them to attend international trade fairs.

Since 2007, it has helped more than 190 VSEs/SMEs to meet with 8,000 potential customers and 2,500 qualified contacts. A new approach was developed in 2012. It allows SMEs to directly access foreign customers in BtoB mode thanks to strong partnerships between the cluster and important large foreign groups such as, for example, Telecom Italia and Nokia.

Networking of SMEs and large groups

The most recent event, the SME Partners & Business Meetings were held on 13 December 2012, attracting 160 participants and 90 SMEs/VSEs. More than 200 appointments were organised with many large groups (Nokia, Docapost BPO, Orange, Schneider Electric, STMicroelectronics, Telecom Italia, Gemalto, SAP, etc.). Another key moment of this day filled with exchanges: the testimonials from SMEs.

- ▶ **The company Neotys**, SME with 50 people, experiencing strong growth of more than 900% in 6 years, based in Géménos (13). As part of the SME-Mid-caps Growth programme, this company talked about the added value in terms of deployed methodology, the strong expertise of the support personnel, and the unique 360° approach. This programme led to an even more ambitious development plan, for which extensive recruiting is currently in progress.
- ▶ Located in Sophia Antipolis (06), **the company Riverawaves** generates 100% of its turnover through international sales, through participation in international trade fairs such as the MWC in Barcelona and Electronica in Munich.
- ▶ **The company Neowave** spoke of the cluster’s remarkable efforts to open up export markets for it, notably with the Italian operator, Telecom Italia. It chose Neowave for the roll-out of contactless solutions within the Italian public transportation market.



Innovation and the networking of young innovative companies are advancing at a rapid pace. They were also recognised through the awarding of the prizes as part of the 5th PACA region ICT innovation prizes. In 5 years, this contest has served to bring to light talents and major innovations in the PACA region in the ICT domain.

Amongst the 41 prize-winning SMEs and mid-sized companies, a good number have experienced very strong growth:

- **Inside Secure**, a mid-cap company, successfully collected €79.3 million during the group's fundraising in 2012. Its IPO on the Paris stock exchange was also a success.

- **Wysips**, a young French company based in Lambesc (Bouches-du-Rhône), will present the first operational solar smartphone using its technology, during the "Mobile World Congress" that will be held in Barcelona from 25 to 28 February 2013.

The transformation of "project factories" into "product factories"

2013 will be a year of great efforts in order to perpetuate these actions. New services are being prepared. In order to transform project factories into true product factories, in complete alignment with the orientations of the 3rd phase of the cluster's policy, these services target marketing efforts.

▪ SME SUPPORT

With "Ambition PME", Systematic wants to transform the cluster's innovative SMEs into mid-sized companies

The Systematic cluster is coordinating the "Ambition PME" action plan intended to support its SMEs with a focus on five development levers. Within this program, the 4th edition of the "Ambition PME" day provided a list of the completed actions. On this occasion, the cluster presented the first concrete results of this ambitious program.



Beyond collaborative R&D, the mission of [the Systematic competitiveness cluster](#) is to develop a favourable ecosystem for the development of innovative SMEs that are growing, in order to transform them into mid-sized companies. This ecosystem includes 1,100 SMEs representing more than 35,000 jobs, and sectors including software, systems, optics and electronics.

Systematic is coordinating the "Ambition PME" action plan, which is co-piloted by the Opticsvalley cluster and the Paris-Ile-de-France Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It is supported by the European Union (ESF, ERDF), the State (Ile-de-France Regional Prefecture, DIRECCTE Ile-de-France) and the Ile-de-France Region.

Each year, this programme provides nearly 200 SMEs with individual support focusing on 5 development levers: human resources, exports, access to private financing, development strategy and business.

The "Ambition PME" day is a key moment in this program, as a venue for exchanges around issues shared by these innovative companies. 100% practical, it includes workshops and individual appointments. As such, it provides an opportunity to test all of the program's actions in one day.

In 2012, the 4th edition was held under the patronage of Fleur Pellerin, assistant minister to the Minister for Productive Recovery. Its theme was *The stakes for SMEs accessing "major" markets*.



More than 300 innovative players, VSEs, SMEs, mid-sized companies, researchers, investors and large groups were in attendance. They came to discuss the stakes of accessing major markets, and notably the co-contractor relations between SMEs and large public or private accounts.



Systematic's "Major principal" study, in partnership with the Comité Richelieu, was presented during the opening session that was entitled "*Small Business Act or alternative solutions?*" and coordinated by Jean-Noël de Galzain, Cluster deputy chairman.

One of the findings of this study was that 40% of the polled innovative SMEs, irrespective of their size (VSE, SME, mid-caps) generate more than 75% of their sales figure with large private groups.

Moreover, Jean-Luc Beylat, Systematic Chairman and Laurent Kott, Chairman of the Cluster's Promotion and marketing committee, handed out diplomas to the Cluster's 6 new champions, high-growth potential companies supported by the Cluster during their development projects through efforts targeting all development levers.

In addition to these plenary sessions, there were get-togethers with market experts from India, the United States, China and Brazil, from the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry and from Germany, through Ubifrance in order to promote the export development of SMEs. Other meetings between investors and other SMEs recognised as Cluster Innovative Companies (EIP) more specifically targeted the access of innovative SMEs to private financing.

This event was completed by 7 workshops that represented 5 action areas within the framework of the program.

The Ambition PME program & Systematic in a few figures

- **Financing:** 17 SMEs raised €20 million, 14 EIP labels awarded in 2012, more than 60 SMEs supported
- **Export:** 160 cluster members in the United States, 15 helped to set up shop in the United States, 5 in China
- **Human resources:** 700 positions created within SMEs, 8 training courses set up on Systems Engineering, kick-off of the Pass'Compétences, an all-new mobility system piloted by Systematic and developed with the ARD and the Gérés. Its objective is to propose long-term secondments for senior experts from major groups, within SMEs that are members of the cluster (10 Partner groups and already 5 secondments)
- **Strategy:** 11 cluster champions for 2011 and 6 champions for 2012 identified by the Promotion marketing committee and accompanied as part of the Ambition PME program

▪ SME SUPPORT

The Cap Digital cluster publishes a services guide for its SMEs

The practical guide "Services for SMEs" provides a brief and very practical overview of some 20 actions undertaken to help its member SMEs.

Like many competitiveness clusters, [the Cap Digital cluster](#) is setting up new actions intended to help the cluster's member SMEs. To better meet their expectations, these actions evolve on a regular basis.



The cluster therefore wished to publish a document summarising these actions, and to provide better knowledge about them over time. This document is entitled "Services for SMEs".

The 2012 edition includes 24 summary datasheets covering 6 major topics:

- Defining your development strategy
- Financing your innovations and your growth
- Developing and managing your human capital
- Accelerating your international growth
- Conquering new markets
- Oversight, long-term planning, networking



This very practical guide is intended to simplify the cluster's "operating instructions". It also provides contact points for each of the services.

With more than 700 members in early 2012, including 600 SMEs, the cluster hopes that this will help to better respond to the expectations of its members. It wishes to stay in sync with the companies and to adapt constantly, in order to help them develop their competitiveness.

■ INTER-CLUSTER PARTNERSHIP – INTERSECTION OF SUBJECTS

When clusters from the “plant” domain meet up with “ICT” clusters

The 9 partners represent complementary fields of national expertise in the areas of plant production and information and communication technologies. Objective: increasing the competitiveness of their member companies.



Information and communication technologies (ICT) are already essential tools for supporting the plant sector throughout its production chain.

From the selection of plant varieties through to their marketing, and including their seeding, harvesting, packaging and distribution, ICTs are well-represented. They are found in the form of sensors, RFID chips, robots and automatic systems, optical detectors, as well as geolocation and flow management tools.

They provide a competitive lever within an increasingly worldwide market. However, ICTs offer even more potential for innovation.

With this in mind, the three clusters [Vegepolys](#), [Pôle européen innovation fruits et légumes \(PEIFL\)](#) and [Céréales Vallée](#) contacted three ICT clusters: [Images & Réseaux](#), [Optitec](#), [ViaMéca](#) as well as other clusters: Auvergne TIC, Cap’Tronic and LEA Valley. They all wish to help their companies to increase their competitiveness. To this end, they launched a call for ideas for innovative projects on the topic "Plants and ICTs", **until 1st March 2013**.

The partners will provide the selected projects with the benefit of support from both communities in order to develop an innovative product, process or service.

ICTs could be used to gather knowledge about the processes, for the steering of operations, and for greater reliability, speed, performance and accuracy. This could include, for example, the usage of new vision techniques in order to see



better and more rapidly than the human eye, the preparation of steering models in order to use these tools for production or storage, or perhaps the automation of all or part of the tasks thanks to the integration of online or embedded sensors or information exchanges throughout the logistics chain, from the producer to the end consumer.

This call for ideas involves all steps in the plant production chain: variety selection, seeding, crops, harvest, conservation and storage, logistics and marketing. It targets:

- Companies, institutes, research laboratories,
- Players in the plant sector wishing to develop the integration of ICTs within their processes,
- Players in the ICT sector wishing to develop applications for the plant sector.

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

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

Legal mentions

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