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## High-level EU Cluster Mission to the USA

including

**a U.S. – EU Cluster Cooperation and Matchmaking  
Event at the TechConnect World Innovation  
Conference, Washington DC**

and

**Cluster visits to Boston, Philadelphia and Washington,  
DC**

organised by

**the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and BILAT USA 4.0**  
*Financed under the COSME Programme<sup>1</sup> and the Horizon 2020 Programme*

**15-19 May 2017**

**Call for  
Expression of Interest**

<sup>1</sup> EU Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs 2014-2020

## Objectives

The High-Level EU Cluster Mission to the USA seeks to support transatlantic cluster cooperation for strategic business partnerships building upon the EU-US Cooperation Arrangement on Clusters signed between the U.S. Department of Commerce and the European Commission's DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROWTH) in April 2015.

As part of this mission, a U.S.-EU Cooperation Seminar and Matchmaking Event will be organised at TechConnect World Innovation in Washington, D.C. as a follow-up to the EU-U.S. matchmaking event organised at Hannover Messe in April 2016 (see further details at <http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/event-calendar/eu-us-matchmaking-event-hannover-messe-germany>) with the aim to facilitate transatlantic linkages between European and US clusters and help SMEs find strategic partners.

The objectives of the planned mission are:

- To enhance **EU-US cluster cooperation for the benefit of their members**: European and US cluster organisations will identify potential areas of common interest for cooperation and synergies, in terms of the sectoral, value chain, and market focus of their SMEs and other companies, and formalise cooperation (MoU) wherever relevant, on future actions of cooperation; this will be achieved through the cluster visits, the cluster matchmaking event, as well as the cooperation seminar and roundtable where cooperation on cluster activities could be discussed;
- To enhance EU-US industry and academia-industry collaboration in **Research, Development and Innovation through clusters**. The clusters will identify potential areas of RDI cooperation for their members (academia, research organisations, industries...), notably through the cluster visits as well as the cluster matchmaking event;
- To support **the excellence of cluster management and innovation support services** in Europe and the USA through the exchange of good practices, experience and knowledge between EU and US clusters. Specific emphasis on this will be given in the cluster visits and through the cluster roundtable with knowledge exchange;

*NOTE: given the current political transition in the US, the mobilisation of US clusters to the cluster mission/matchmaking event may be more limited than expected. However, the organising team will make all the necessary efforts to provide you with a satisfactory delegation visit.*

This call for expression of interest is launched to identify a European delegation composed of representatives from cluster organisations from different **industry sectors such as:**

- **Nanotechnologies,**
- **Advanced Materials,**
- **Biotechnology & Medical**
- **Advanced Manufacturing and Processing**
- **Energy and Sustainability**
- **Electronics & Microsystems**
- **Personal & Home Care, Cosmetics, Foods**
- **and other sectors / Key enabling technologies which present opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration involving NMBP sectors (Nanotechnologies, Advanced Materials, Biotechnology & Advanced Manufacturing and Processing)**

that are willing and committed to participate in the High-level EU cluster delegation visit to the US and Back-to-back with the Tech Connect World Innovation Conference.

This call is published on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) <http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/> and on the BILAT USA 4.0 website <http://www.euussciencetechnology.eu/> and promoted through the channels of both projects.

The expressions of interest to participate in this mission must be **submitted electronically by midnight (CET) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017** at the latest to [c.vidaud@inno-group.com](mailto:c.vidaud@inno-group.com) and [m.veilletlavallee@inno-group.com](mailto:m.veilletlavallee@inno-group.com)

More information on the mission and how to submit your expression of interest can be found further below. Applying clusters will be informed in the best delays on the results (approx. end of March 2017) of the selection and an official confirmation on the business trip and details will follow.

## Context and approach

This mission will take place in the context of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform ([ECCP](#)) activities and the [BILAT USA 4.0](#) project.

The present **series of activities** focuses on **opportunities for cluster cooperation** and benefits to their Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), their research actors, as well as innovation projects.

[The European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#) (ECCP): As part of the approach aimed at promoting international cluster cooperation for the benefit of SMEs, the Directorate-General

for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the European Commission (DG GROWTH) is continuing its support to international cluster cooperation through the European Cluster Collaboration Platform, notably by organising specific cluster matchmaking missions and policy development actions. This is carried out in support of cluster organisations in their efforts to develop partnerships and business cooperation in European and global markets, for the benefit of their members, and it is currently funded under the COSME Programme of the European Union.

The new European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP), launched in March 2016, provides a visible framework for this activity. The ECCP is the cornerstone of the European strategy in support of SME internationalisation through clusters. The new ECCP provides a wide range of information and services to facilitate the interaction between more than 500 clusters within and beyond Europe.

The [BILAT USA 4.0](#) project is funded by the European Union DG Research and Innovation, and started on 1 February 2016. BILAT USA 4.0 continues the activities started by the predecessor projects BILAT USA and BILAT USA 2.0 with the aim to enhance and develop science, technology, and innovation (STI) partnerships between the U.S. and Europe. A particular focus of the project activities concerns the intensification of interactions between EU and US researchers and innovators as well as the support to clusters, networks and companies going international. The BILAT USA 4.0 project plans to involve cluster organisations as **relevant intermediaries to facilitate international Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) cooperation**. The cluster visits and the cluster roundtable are organised in the context of BILAT USA 4.0. With the following activity, BILAT USA 4.0 aims to build on the existence of cluster organizations on both sides of the Atlantic, especially those which are supporting research and innovation activities, to enhance transatlantic RDI cooperation and business internationalisation.

**The High-level EU cluster mission to the USA is organised in conjunction with the “Tech Connect World Innovation Conference, including the NanoTech 2017 Conference & Expo” that takes place in Washington on 14-17 May 2017 (<http://www.techconnectworld.com/World2017/>).** Participants will have the opportunity to attend part of the Conference programme.

Tech Connect World Innovation Conference is an annual event designed to accelerate the commercialisation of innovations out of the lab and into industry. The Conference proposes various programmes: The Technical Programme of the Conference spotlights applications-focused innovations, materials and devices emerging from industrial, government and academic laboratories worldwide; and the Innovation Partnering Programme gathers market-ready, commercially-viable innovations into the largest global technology accelerator programme.

Draft agenda

Day	Timing	Event
<b>Sunday, 14 May</b>	<b>All day</b>	<b>Travel from Europe to the US</b> - Arrival in location 1 (Philadelphia tbc)
<b>Monday, 15 May</b>	<b>Morning</b>	Cluster visit in location 1
	<b>Afternoon</b>	Cluster visit in location 1 and <b>travel to Washington</b>
<b>Tuesday, 16 May</b>	<b>Morning</b>	Cooperation Seminar and roundtable on sharing of good practices: showcase of EU-US cluster collaboration and success stories, followed by a round table to discuss good practices in terms of cluster management, for the benefit of R&I activities, at TechConnect event, Washington, DC
	<b>Afternoon</b>	EU-US Cluster Matchmaking sessions (Cluster-to-Cluster meetings), at TechConnect event, Washington, DC
	<b>Early evening</b>	Networking Cocktail
<b>Wednesday, 17 May</b>	<b>Early morning</b>	Debriefing on the Cluster Matchmaking sessions
	<b>Morning</b>	TechConnect event participation
	<b>Afternoon</b>	TechConnect event participation
	<b>Evening</b>	<b>Travel to location 3 (Boston, tbc)</b>
<b>Thursday, 18 May</b>	<b>Morning</b>	Cluster visit location 3
	<b>Afternoon</b>	Cluster visit location 3
	<b>Evening</b>	<b>Potential travel to location 4 (within Massachusetts, tbc)</b>
<b>Friday, 19 May</b>	<b>Morning</b>	Cluster visit location 4
	<b>Afternoon</b>	Cluster visit in location 4 and debriefing on the visits
	<b>Evening</b>	<b>Flight back to Europe</b>

The agenda of the delegation visit will be elaborated in more details upon confirmation of relevant cluster organisations to host the visits in the US and the activities they propose; activities suggested for each of the visits are subject to changes.

## Who can participate?

This call is addressed to cluster and network organisations that are interested in engaging in cluster collaboration with the US in industry sectors such as:

- Nanotechnologies,
- Advanced Materials,
- Biotechnology & Medical
- Advanced Manufacturing and Processing
- Energy and Sustainability
- Electronics & Microsystems
- Personal & Home Care, Cosmetics, Foods
- other sectors / Key enabling technologies which present opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration.

**The event is open to minimum 18 participants with funding support. More participants can be accepted upon confirmation and at their own cost.**

**Clear priority will be given to applying clusters. If seats remain available, selected clusters can suggest an SME member to join.**

## Eligibility and selection criteria

To be selected:

- The cluster or business network organisation must be registered in the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) <http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/> **with a complete profile** (the complete cluster profile of each applicant registered on the ECCP shall be provided together with their application);
- The cluster or business network organisation should comply with the definition given in the section 1.3 (s) on 'innovation clusters' in Annex I of the new *“EU Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation”*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 2014/C 198/01. According to this definition:

(‘**innovation clusters**’ means structures or organised groups of independent parties (such as innovative start-ups, small, medium and large enterprises, as well as research and knowledge dissemination organisations, non-for-profit organisations and other related economic actors) designed to stimulate innovative activity by promoting sharing of facilities and exchange of knowledge and expertise and by contributing effectively to knowledge transfer, networking, information dissemination and collaboration among the undertakings and other organisations in the cluster;)

See at: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN) with further information available at [http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state\\_aid/modernisation/rdi\\_framework\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/modernisation/rdi_framework_en.pdf) and [http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state\\_aid/legislation/horizontal.html](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/horizontal.html), amending the Community Framework (2006/C 323/01 see at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:323:0001:0026:en:PDF> a reference of section 5.8 of which was included in the COSME Work Programme regarding the "innovation clusters" definition

**Each cluster or business network organisation** has to be involved in offering or channelling cluster or network support services to businesses and should be identified on the basis of a **legal entity** established in the EU, H2020 associated country in the COSME country, and from countries eligible for participating in the COSME programme.

**Cluster organisation:** (1) cluster from the EU, H2020 associated country in the COSME country or COSME participating countries, (2) with a will to engage in EU-US cluster cooperation, (3) in the sector of NMBP, or presenting opportunities for collaboration with this sector (4) with an important component dedicated to RDI activities / innovation support.

**Participant:** cluster manager, responsible for internationalisation or for RDI support – 1 participant per cluster. It can be proposed to travel with one SME member (optional, tbc according to total number of applicants).

**Applications will be selected according to the following qualitative criteria:**

- The potential to maximise matchmaking and collaboration opportunities through the participation to this mission, based on a clear description of the type of partnership the applicant cluster organisations are looking for and on the potential for establishing tangible cooperation as an outcome of the event. This expression of interest for collaboration shall be clearly articulated in the questionnaire provided in the annex, and is to be submitted with the application;
- The willingness and readiness to engage in closer cooperation with other cluster and network organisations from the USA to better support SMEs, larger companies and research actors in global competition through joint efforts, and to help them initiate new projects.
- Clusters operating outside the fields indicated should extensively motivate their application towards a reserve list to be decided in due time.
- In this context, the participation in a COSME funded or non-funded European Strategic Cluster Partnership is considered as an asset. For further information visit the following link: <http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/>

The decision on the selection of applicants will be based both on the requirements above and qualitative merit of each application; the balanced geographical coverage of the EU, H2020 associated countries the COSME country and COSME participating countries will, in case of equal merit, be taken into consideration.

Participants are expected to attend the full programme. The selection of the applicants based on the criteria above will be made by the EASME and the European Commission services.

## Cost and expenses

- **Travel EU-US, 2 nights of accommodation in Washington, DC, and registration fee to participation to TechConnect<sup>2</sup> on May 15<sup>th</sup>** will be funded as 100% of the real costs but up to the limit of 1500€ per participant.<sup>3</sup>
- **Travel costs between the different US locations of the delegation visit (Philadelphia – Washington DC, and Washington DC- Boston)3 nights of accommodation (indicatively, in Philadelphia and Boston) and subsistence costs during the cluster visits** will be funded up to 100% of real costs , up to the limit of 1300 € per participant.<sup>3</sup>

**NB: Information on the travels between the different US locations, as well as the accommodation in the different cities will be provided by the organisation team in order to ensure common travels and stay of the whole delegation. Each participant will take care of his or her own bookings according to these indications; expenses will be reimbursed under the conditions specified above.**

## Application

To apply for this event, clusters and network organisations should keep the following dates in mind:

Please submit your expression of interest **by 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017 midnight (CET)** to:

- Camille Vidaud, [c.vidaud@inno-group.com](mailto:c.vidaud@inno-group.com)
- and Morgane Veillet Lavallee, [m.veilletlavallee@inno-group.com](mailto:m.veilletlavallee@inno-group.com)

**The expression of interest should encompass:**

- a **filled in questionnaire (template annexed)** on the cluster or network organisation with **proof/ evidence of the legal entity;**
- the **print screen/link to the completed cluster profile** registered on the ECCP;
- a **short presentation of the cluster organisation** in English language, using PowerPoint (1 slides only, using the template provided).

Please make sure to provide complete, accurate data and contact details.

- ✚ **Visit ECCP** for further information on cluster collaboration and support: <http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/>
- ✚ **Visit BILAT USA 4.0** to learn more about EU-US research and innovation collaboration opportunities and support: <http://www.euussciencetechnology.eu/>

<sup>2</sup> For the registration fee to Tech Connect, there are 2 options: 495USD/participant for up to 3 days of conference or 100USD/participant for 1 day but in the latter case access to showcase and expo theater only.

<sup>3</sup> Please note: Real cost amounts of accommodation costs and subsistence are limited to the per diem rules currently applying for the US.