

INNO-FOOD SEE conference

Bari,

March 26, 2014

Experiences with the triple helix approach in the Food Cluster Initiative in South East Europe

Hans De Steur & Xavier Gellynck

Department of Agricultural Economics,
Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

CONTENTS

1. Background
2. The Food Cluster Initiative
 - a) What ?
 - b) How ?
 - c) Whom ?
 - d) Benefits
3. Conclusions

Background

Towards a more complete EU network of regions with ambitions in food

- * **A need for**
 - * strengthening EU Food **research area/clusters**
 - * Increasing the **competitive advantage**
- * **Ambitious food regions/clusters**



European Research Area



⇒ **Need for connecting** them under an EU network

- * **Learn** from each other's S and W
- * **Invest** in the strengths through integral use of national and regional funding (FP7/SF etc.)

Background

Towards a more complete EU network of regions with ambitions in food



- * **Regions of Knowledge (RoK)**

= strengthen the research potential of EU regions by encouraging and supporting the development of **regional RDCs** through Coordination & Support Actions

- * **Research Potential of Convergence Regions (REGPOT)**

= strengthen the research potential of the enlarged EU's **convergence and outermost regions** and help to **strengthen the capacities** of their researchers to successfully participate in EU research activities



Food Cluster Initiative: WHAT ?

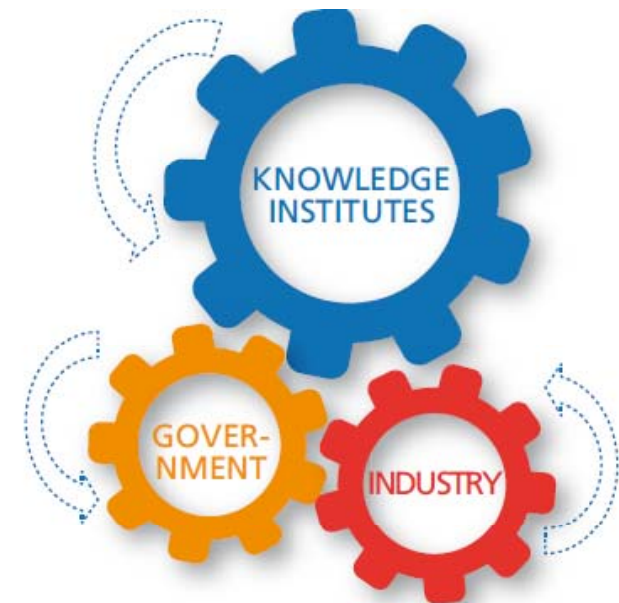


- * ° 2007; < FINE (FP6)
- * A cluster of clusters/regions/projects
- * *“A unique European ‘research-driven and capacity building cluster’ of cooperating regions with the ambition to build the ERA in food, using regional, national and community funding (FP7/SF) to invest in combined regional efforts”*
- * Funds are for **cooperation**, not research!
- * **Focus:**
 - * Connecting and inviting food regions, incl. S-E EU
 - * Information exchange between regions, projects, clusters
 - * Triple helix networking on European level
 - * Interregional project development on food research and innovation



Food Cluster Initiative: WHOM ?

- * Members: Open access , if:
 - * **EU food** related project funded under the RoK, INTERREG, regpot
 - * existing **regional food** cluster
- ⇒ **(inter)Regional + triple-helix** approach
- * **+30 regions**
 - * EU-27, Western Balkan Countries and Turkey

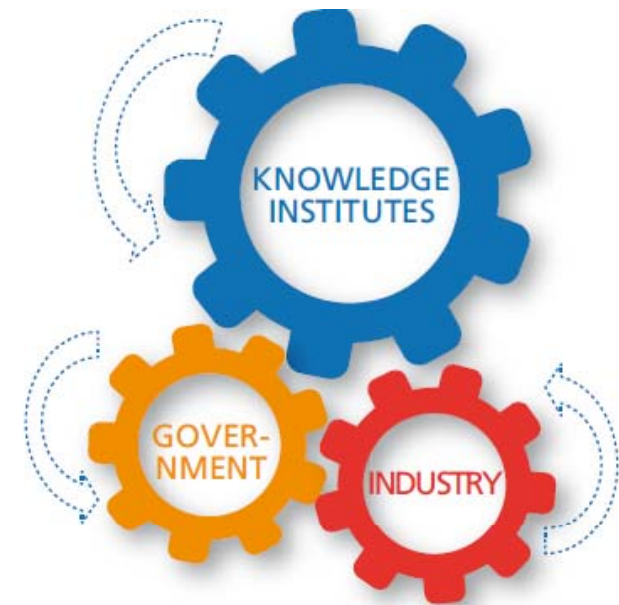


Triple-helix stakeholder involvement



Food Cluster Initiative: WHOM ?

- * Members: Open access , if:
 - * **EU food** related project funded under the RoK, INTERREG, regpot
 - * existing **regional food** cluster
- ⇒ **Regional + triple-helix** approach
- * **+30 regions**
- * EU-27, Western Balkan Countries and Turkey
- * **23 projects, > 50 partners**
 - * Quality of animal feed, contamination of food packaging, vegetable diversity, safety & risk assessment, antioxidants in fruit, ...



Triple-helix stakeholder involvement



CHROMLAB - ANTIOXIDANT



Bringing the Benefits of Research to AgroFood SMEs

SWOT-CHEMISTRY-FOOD



PROGRAMA
COOPERACION TRANSFRONTERIZA
ESPAÑA - PORTUGAL
COOPERACAO TRANSFRONTEIRICA
2007-2013



CEFSER



SUSTAINABLE EXPLOITATION OF BIOACTIVE COMPONENTS
FROM THE BLACK SEA AREA TRADITIONAL FOODS

BASEFOOD



Bioaktive
Pflanzliche
Lebensmittel



BaltFoodQual
7th Framework Programme



Safe technopack

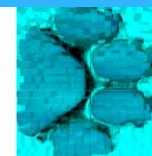
foodRegio



food4good

agforise

FCUB ERA



afresh

Activity and food for regional
economies supporting health



CAPINFOOD



Food Cluster Initiative: HOW ?

Trainings & Workshops & Meetings

- * Triple-helix meetings: e.g. FCI bi-yearly meetings at different locations (Belgium, Turkey, NL, Greece, ...), incl. excursions
 - ⇒ Project-specific versus FCI issues (triple helix, cluster development):
 - * “Challenges when building successful regional clusters”
 - * “Facilitating cooperation with industry – the case of Skane Food Innovation Network”
 - * “Essentials motivating industry to enter clusters – ETP Food for Life”
 - * “How to transfer the cluster message toward the scientific community”
 - * “Policy instruments for developing regional and interregional clusters”
 - * “Bottlenecks & success factors when building regional food clusters: a testimony from the recently created INNOVA agency in Hungary”



**FCI conferences:
Internal/external stakeholders
Triple-helix stakeholders**



Food Cluster Initiative: HOW ?

- * Workshops:

- * *“How to make industry the key driver of my cluster?”*
- * *“How to evaluate cluster performance?”*
- * *“Toolkit for practical handbook about co-operation options”*
- * *“Intergovernmental funding opportunities”*

- * Evaluation studies:

- * SWOT/SOR analysis:
 - * **Formulation of strategic objectives** at triple-helix/project level
 - * **Strategic objectives** for the European food industry
- * Evaluation study:
 - * Multi-level impact assessment of FCI



SWOT/SOR Central Macedonia (RAF regions)

- * E.g. SMEs face competition from foreign companies that already have introduced biotechnology methods and products
 - * Internal/external analysis
 - * Strategy formulation & prioritization (triple-helix)
- ⇒ To improve RDCs, to enable regions to attract more industries, funds, ...



Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Well equipped and high standard technical research infrastructure.	1. Poor functioning links between the industry, the RTD entities and the primary sector (agriculture)	1. Product & Process quality	1. Low capacity and/or willingness to invest in RTD activities
2. Highly skilled RTD personnel	2. Not enough start ups and spin-off companies due to a risk aversion	2. Strong agricultural and food manufacturing sector/ Market positioning	2. Inadequate penetration in well-developed markets
3. Experience and well developed network of partners from long-term participation in international projects	3. Low visibility of the regional RTD entities and their established projects	3. Management capacity at the executive level	3. Low commitment and focus on RTD and to take over of enterprises private funding of RTD
4. Developed structures and initiatives in support of innovation, i.e. Thessaloniki Innovation Zone, Regional Innovation Pole of Central Macedonia, private incubators, technology parks, etc.)	4. Different perspectives between the industry and the research community	4. Product diversification	4. Inadequate exploitation of opportunities and existing organisational structures
5. Capacity to act as main RTD actor in the Balkan region	5. Lack of the university to cover current research and needs	5. Internationalization of activities in the neighbouring countries through the utilisation of the geographical position and the road network and telecommunication infrastructure of the Region	
Opportunities	Threats	Opportunities	Threats
1. Existing and potential international and Regional research centres	1. Bureaucracy barriers and administrative burden associated with European and National RTD programmes	1. Capture of opportunities and to exploit the product identity	1. Competition coming from countries based either on product price or product quality/innovation
2. Increasing demand for new innovative food products and processing technologies	2. Lack of strategic vision in national and regional RTD initiatives	2. Existing and potential European, National and Regional RTD programmes	2. Bureaucracy and regulation barriers
3. Adequate supply of well educated researchers in the scientific area	3. Brain drain accompanied by failure to attract foreign and Greek highly competitive researchers	3. Increasing export trends and foreign direct investments in the broader SE Europe	3. Insufficient structural support to adapt to the new regulations, norms and priorities (including environmental ones)
4. Strong interest of society in the agro food sector as food price and demand increase worldwide	4. Limited national financing for R&D for joint research with the industry	4. Research, technology & innovation in many areas (food, biotechnology, energy, environment, ICT, health, marketing, logistics, etc.) that can bring efficient solutions	4. Insufficient financial and other incentives addressed to the sector
		5. Improvement of the regional and national road network and telecommunications infrastructure	5. Lack of political long-term commitment to the sector

FOOD RTDs

FOOD SMES

Food Cluster Initiative: IMPACTS

- * **Inclusion in the FCI network:**
 - * various triple helix partners all over Europe
- * **“Breaking the box”:**
 - * people from ≠ sectors/regions in EU
⇒ Innovative ideas => Successful proposals
- * **Mutual learning:**
 - * exchange of information between regions/projects
- * **Mentoring - Transfer** of good practices:
 - * e.g. exchanging experiences of successful cluster development
 - * e.g. between researchers on project development



Triple-helix Workshop (EU-Balkan Vegetables)

2nd meeting BALKAN LINKAGE
23 – 24 April 2012, Plovdiv – Bulgaria

How to collect successfully EU funds.
Lessons from 20 years running around.

Xavier Gellynck, Hans De Steur

Food Cluster Initiative: IMPACTS

- * **Increased visibility** of FCI/projects/members
 - * FCI-website, LinkedIn network, meetings, ...
 - * E.g. represented at large events

- ➔ Promoting diversity and excellence
- ➔ Interregional cooperation and learning
- ➔ Developing Interregional projects

Discover the participating projects

A Research-driven and capacity building CLUSTER



Participating projects

Find out who is participating the Food Cluster Initiative

[Discover the map](#)



The objective

Building projects on a european level based on ...

[Learn more ...](#)



Join the initiative

Connect with the projects and help the food cluster

[Join the initiative](#)



Need documentation

Download brochures and contact us for questions

[More information](#)

Latest news [View all news](#)

20-11-2012

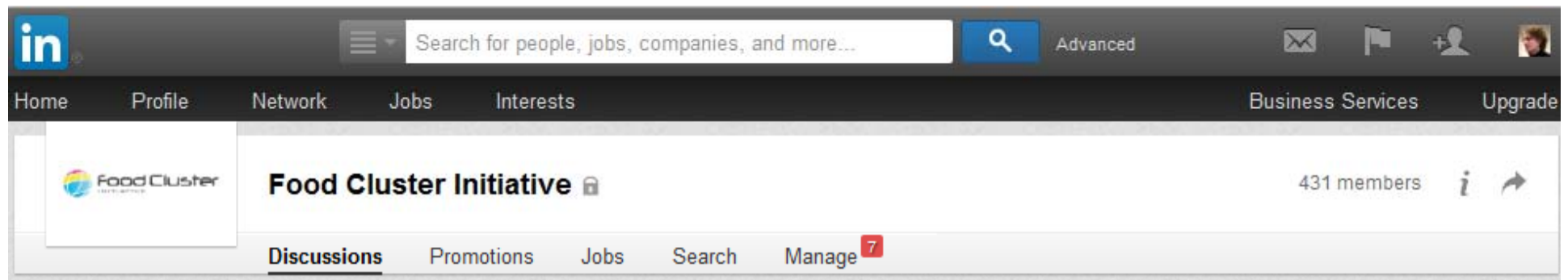
Interactive Technology Portal (ITP) - High Tech Europe

Next event [View all events](#)

30-09-2013

2nd Bioeconomy Forum - Global Challenges and the Bioeconomy –

- * LinkedIn Group
 - * **431 members**
 - * Events
 - * Discussions
 - * Funding opportunities, ...



Food Cluster Initiative: IMPACTS

- * **Increased visibility** of FCI/projects/members
 - * FCI-website, LinkedIn network, meetings, ...
 - * E.g. represented at large events
- * **Awareness**
 - * Funding opportunities (“triple helix” involvement)
 - * Sector, region, innovation process, European dimension
 - ⇒ Enhancing the impact and recognition of agro-food R&D activity
- * **SWOT/SOR training** as a self-analysis for research planning
- * **Creating opportunities**
 - * for interregional cooperation & project development
 - ⇒ Increased changes for **future applications**

Conclusions

- * **FCI is not a typical cluster**

- * no geographical dimension – it is more an EU network of regionally/ locally based food clusters

- * **Successful so far ...**

- * Increasing interest in applications for “membership”
- * New projects, e.g. Afresh, Capinfood

- * **... but risks**

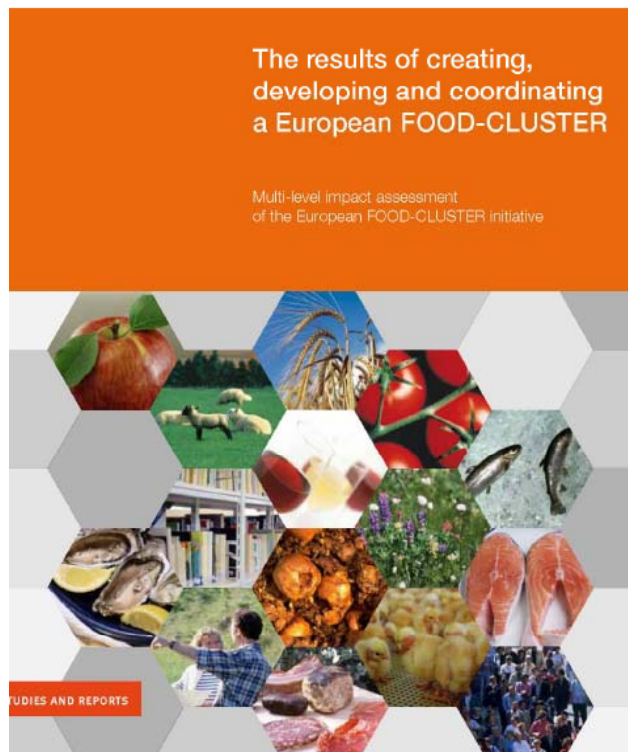
- * Scope ? Focus versus heterogeneity
- * Integration ?
 - * E.g. ETP FFL, other clusters? (EU Cl. Observatory/Alliance/Collab. Platform)
- * Funding ? Management ?



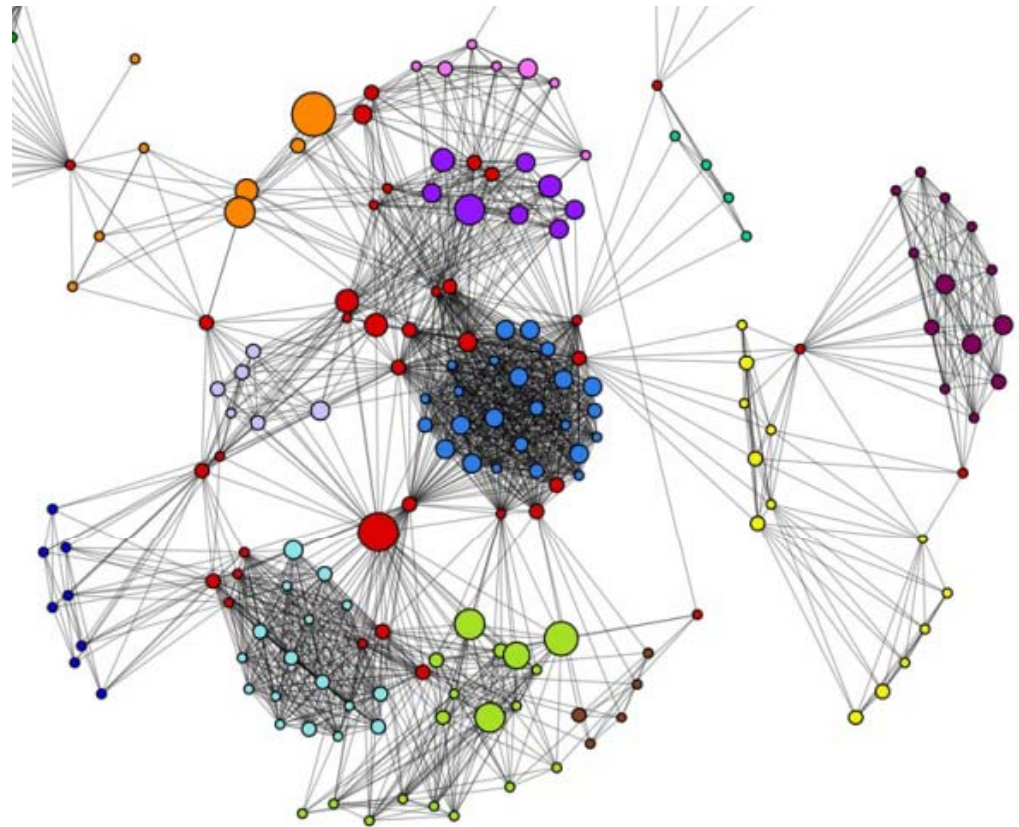
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION !!



FULL REPORT



www.foodclusterinitiative.eu



Join us on **LinkedIn**  
And stay updated