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Managing Company **BIODUSTRY PARK**



Interview

with Mr. José Freitas, EU Policy Officer, on Cluster Collaboration



Mr. José Freitas from the DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (EC).

Mr. José Freitas from the DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (EC) talks to us about clusters and cluster policy in Europe as well as giving some valuable tips for cluster partnerships. Moreover, he speaks to us about the progress of bioXclusters plus.

1. What are the key objectives of EU cluster policy?

The main objectives of the EU's cluster policy is to support regions and Member States in their efforts to develop world-class clusters by adding a European dimension to reinforce the competitiveness of European industry. Our aim is to strengthen clusters across Europe by adding value through cross-border and cross-sectoral collaboration. Fostering cross-border collaboration does not compete with regional and national clusters; it just makes them stronger.

The COSME and Horizon 2020 programs promote such cluster cooperation at EU level by facilitating value chain innovation, accelerating industrial transformation and supporting SME internationalisation through clusters. That's where growth and jobs come from. Cluster organisations are used as a bridge-builder and booster for their companies so that they can adapt their strategy and benefit from the financial support of the European cluster programs.

2. What are the objectives of the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships – Going international?

The "European Strategic Cluster Partnerships – Going International" are transnational, cluster partnerships supported at EU level that develop and implement a joint internationalisation strategy to support SME internationalisation in countries beyond Europe. They encourage cluster organisations across Europe to work closely together to exploit synergies and develop common actions as part of a long-term cooperation plan whose aim is to better support their SME members by helping them find international partners and giving them access to global value chains.

These Partnerships are supported through the "Clusters Go International" action under COSME and are labelled by DG Growth of the European Commission. In the last "Clusters Go International" call for proposals, 26 European

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Strategic Cluster Partnerships – [Going International have been established bringing together about 150 cluster organisation across 23 European countries](#). Together, they offer potential support to more than 17,000 European SMEs by helping them access global value chains to obtain a leading global position.

3. What are the main recommendations and tools that cluster partnerships should take into consideration to achieve these objectives?

The general recommendation comes from the careful reading of the Call for Proposals and its wording where typically rationale, objectives, main activities, planning, performance and impact indicators are key to proposals

and the fulfilment of the objectives. [An interesting research paper](#) provides specific guidelines and recommendations on cluster management internationalisation skills as well as the key success factors for managing and promoting such pan-European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for going international. This report underlines above all that when developing a joint internationalisation strategy with different clusters, it is essential to reach a clear consensus on the objectives, the countries to be targeted and the individual responsibilities to follow up on each of the specific actions. It also requires a sound understanding of the market conditions, technology priorities, barriers within the target countries and a good identification of complementary competences by the clusters in the foreign markets. To this end, the involvement of SME members in

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the definition and implementation of the strategy is crucial to ensure greater ownership and to address specific SME needs across the partnership. A well-defined branding strategy and communication tools are also important for creating a common identity to effectively promote the partnership to its members and partners in the targeted international markets. Liaising with regional and/or national authorities about the partnership's progress and achievements is another important aspect for the sustainability of the partnership to foster its continuation after the project end. Finally, constant sharing on the [European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#) (ECCP) of the the partnership's results, news, past and planned events, testimonials on successes, failures and/or the difficulties encountered facilitate learnings and improvements for all the cluster partnerships and notably help those facing similar challenges. A dedicated partnership forum on the ECCP has been designed for this very purpose.

4. How has bioXclusters plus progressed under this framework?

Although bioXclusters plus is only half-way through its partnership, it has already made substantial progress in promoting a continuous search for complementary competences between its four cluster members and in developing an integrated approach in personalised medicine for specific target markets, which include Japan, USA, China and Brazil. This is already a significant achievement that partner members will be able to capitalize on in the long-term. Consideration of an exit strategy and a sustainable business model for the partnership for longer term cooperation will certainly be interesting to elaborate on further. In the longer term, bioXclusters plus could be instrumental in consolidating a segment in the European value-chains with regards to personalised medicine through a self-reinforcing process to take better advantage of international business opportunities for the benefit of the European SMEs involved.

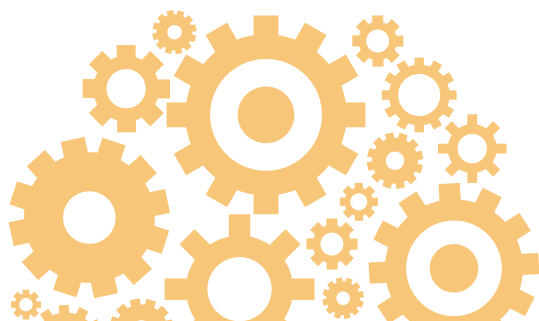
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SME tools

To support international development, **bioXclusters plus** offers its SMEs and cluster partners a range of tools including an **e-learning platform**, an **online language system** and a **handbook of recommendations**.

For a company in the early stages of its internationalisation strategy, the **eLSI platform** is invaluable. This e-learning platform provides companies with key information for successful market entry into eight strategic life science markets: **Australia, Brazil, China, India, Japan, South Korea, The Middle East** and **USA**. The platform contains market reports, interviews with experts, information on key country players, regulatory needs, tips on how to negotiate and much more.

EasySpeak is an online communication tool developed specifically for life science and healthcare companies who wish to expand internationally. Financed by the EU as part of the Erasmus+ programme, it allows users to read and listen to a broad selection of words and phrases needed for everyday communication in business abroad with life science specific glossaries.

SMEs can also access the **Handbook of recommendations for internationalisation and best practices**, a comprehensive

guide to help SMEs successfully expand into new geographical markets. Created by the 4 bioXclusters partners in conjunction with the ERAI agency between 2012 and 2013, this manual pools together key learnings from the 1st bioXclusters initiative. With a particular focus on Brazil, China and the United States, this essential manual contains advice and knowledge that are paramount to successful SME expansion.

In addition to the information published in the Handbook, bioXclusters plus is preparing a series of country reports on its strategically defined markets that can be found on the bioXclusters plus [website](#).

Launching of bioXclusters plus' Collaboration Platform

Bioclusters plus's Collaboration Platform is a internal new platform to facilitate our SME's collaboration with Gateways stakeholders and other partners on a global level.

More information [here](#).

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Matchmaking events and trade missions

EU-Japan Cluster Matchmaking Event at BIO-Europe 2016, Cologne, Germany

Under the framework of BIO-Europe 2016 in Cologne, on 8 November, bioXclusters plus organised a Cluster-to-Cluster workshop and a networking session that brought together more than 50 representatives from European and Japanese clusters. This session, put together in collaboration with the Council of European BioRegions (CEBR) and with the kind support of the EBD Group and the EU-Japan Centre, aimed to foster knowledge sharing through contact between regions in Europe and Japan and their initiatives in the healthcare and life sciences sector.

During the workshop, José Freitas – Policy Officer at the European Commission, DG for Internal Market, Industry,

Entrepreneurship and SMEs (EC) – introduced the European Commission's clusters policy to the representatives of Japanese clusters, and several Japanese associations and entities talked about the vibrant life science sector in Japan, in particular regarding regenerative medicine.

More information [here](#).

Trade Mission to Japan, Osaka and BioJapan 2016

Thanks to an exceptional and mutual collaboration between bioXclusters plus and the EU-Japan Centre, around **60 participants from nine different European countries** (Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and UK) participated in a joint mission to Osaka and Yokohama.

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On 10 & 11 October 2016, companies attended specific industry **conferences** in Japan to discuss business opportunities and regulatory issues. On 11 October, they joined the European Biotech & Pharma Partnering Conference in Osaka, co-organised by Osaka Bio Headquarters and bioXclusters plus. This conference took place at the Senri-Life Science Center in Osaka, once again with the support of the EU Japan Centre. A total of **288 B2B** meetings were held with **97** Japanese companies and organisations representatives from the Kansai region.

During the last three days of the mission, the joint delegation attended the 18th edition of **BioJapan**, the major fair for the sector in Asia. Finally, on 13 October, **the bioXclusters plus partners introduced their initiative to Japan** in the **Bio Cluster summit** organised by the Japan Bioindustry Association (JBA).

This major action realised by bioXclusters plus in 2016 builds a direct gateway to Japan for its European SMEs in order to help facilitate their market access and to foster business relationships.



Working together for partnerships and opportunities.

More information [here](#).

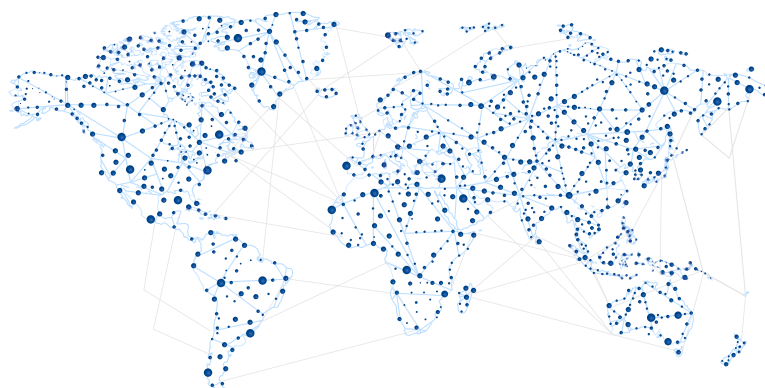
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SME success stories from the Japan Trade Mission

Mind The Byte

Thanks to the Japan trade mission, the Catalan biotech firm **Mind the Byte** was able to sign a distribution agreement with Japanese firm **Filgen** and expects a revenue of 1.2 million euros in 2020 from the Japanese market.

"This is our third time travelling to Japan, and the meetings we had this week show that perseverance and trust are key; it's a far cry from the first approach we made a year and a half ago", said the firm's founder and CEO, Alfons Nonell-Canals. He is celebrating this new milestone as he considers Japan to be a key country in the sector. "The global bioinformatics market in Japan is expected to grow 21% by 2020", he adds.

More information [here](#).



ACCIÓ Tokyo-Catalonia Trade & Investment Team. 2nd from left: Yuku Kijimoto (Director ACCIÓ Tokyo-Catalonia Trade & Investment). 3rd from left: Alfons Nonell-Canals CEO and Founder of Mind the Byte, Catalanian Bioinformatics company).

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SME's success stories from the Japan Trade Mission

LEUKOCARE AG

The biotech company **LEUKOCARE** – a biotech company headquartered in Martinsried, Munich, Germany – is exploring new collaborations with one of the biggest Japanese pharma players. They met at the trade mission to Japan organised by bioXclusters plus and, as a result, in November 2016 the Japanese pharma visited the LEUKOCARE facilities to discuss how LEUKOCARE's SPS® formulation technology platform could be used to stabilise the biologics of the Japanese pharma company.



Medigene AG

Medigene AG, a publicly listed biotechnology company headquartered in Martinsried, near Munich, Germany, wanted to meet regional Japanese experts interested in particular fields, so they joined the trade mission to Japan organised by bioXclusters plus.

In Osaka, the company representative Dr. Kalhammer reported on several successful meetings where he was able to speak to the regional representatives of Japanese pharma companies who had a particular interest in the vaccines Medigene develops. Dr. Kalhammer came back to Germany with valuable new contacts, which could become the basis for future long-term cooperation.



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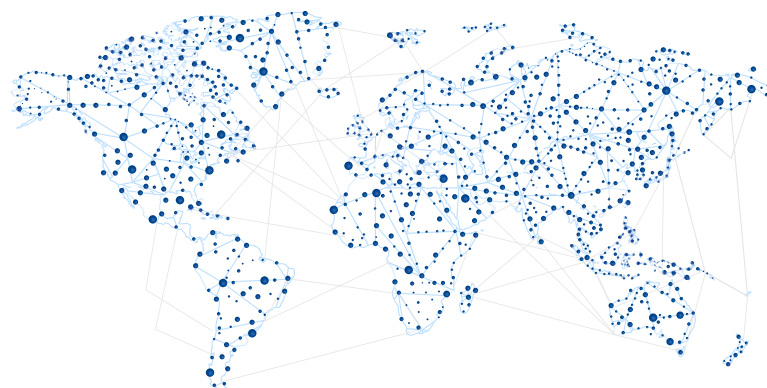
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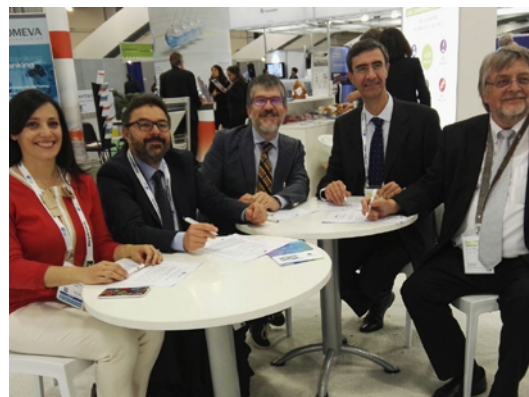
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New agreements with International Gateways

MoU signed with Adelaide (Australia)

In June 2016, bioXclusters plus signed a business development agreement with two Australian organisations in the healthcare and life sciences arena: [BioSA](#) and [Health Industries South Australia](#). The agreement – signed at the [BIO International Convention](#), the largest biotechnology fair in the world – will help forge alliances between companies, research centres and hospitals on the two continents. Moreover, it will also help accelerate companies' business results and resolve a common problem for SMEs: landing in new markets.

The two Australian organisations, represent more than 100 companies and research bodies in Adelaide, a city with a quickly growing healthcare and life sciences sector. In fact, the Adelaide healthcare and life sciences sector, [BioMed City](#), is one of the largest in the southern hemisphere and receives more than [AU\\$3.6 billions in investment](#).



From left to right: Florence Agostino (Lyonbiopole Managing Director), Fabrizio Conicella (Vice President bioPmed cluster), Dr. Albert Barberá (Director General - CEO at Biocat, BioRegion of Catalonia), Marco Baccanti (Health Industries South Australia Chief Executive), Prof. Dr. Horst Domdey (Managing Director, BioM).

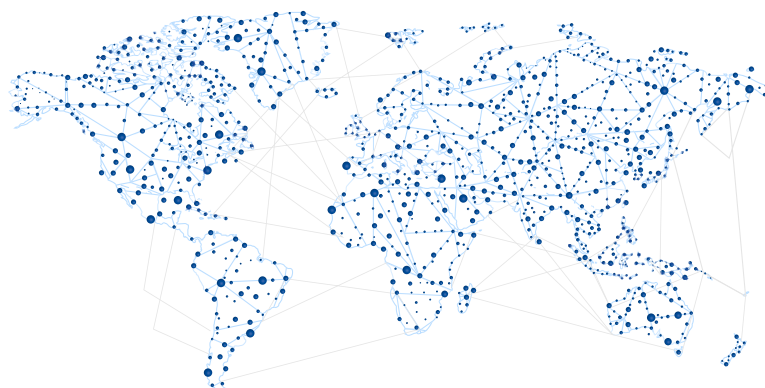
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New agreements with International Gateways

MoU signed with South Korea

A two-year cooperation agreement was signed in November 2016 with the [Chuncheon Bioindustry Foundation](#) (CBF), a South Korean government funded organisation, which contributes to the improvement of local and national bioindustries.

CBF provides systematic support for biotech businesses and represents member companies and research organisations located in the Gangwon Province of South Korea which work in the fields of biotechnology, pharmacy and medical science.

MoU with Osaka, Japan

During the EU-Japan Cluster Matchmaking Event at BIO-Europe 2016 in November 2016, the bioXclusters plus alliance signed a MoU with the [Osaka Bio Headquarters](#), the management organisation of the Osaka cluster. Both parties agreed to work closely together to support SMEs interested in their respective regions.



**Chuncheon Bioindustry
Foundation**

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LYONBIOPOLE





Upcoming activities

Canada cluster matchmaking event in BES 2017, Barcelona

Cluster representatives and SMEs are invited to join the upcoming Canada-Europe Cluster to Cluster workshop about regenerative medicine, that will take place during the [BIO-Europe Spring convention 2017](#), in Barcelona (3-6 April, 2016). in the fields of biotechnology, pharmacy and medical science.

New MoUs to be signed

In 2017, a new MoU will be signed with [TOHealth!](#) (Canada).

Further activities will also be proposed in the course of 2017 related to Brazilian, Chinese and US markets.



TOHEALTH.CA

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In relation to the agreements signed during 2016, bioXclusters plus wants to share some activities held by our gateways:

Toronto Health Innovation Week (Canada)

Building on the success of Redefining Early Stage Investment conference in 2016, which hosted over 200 investors and nearly 800 investor-company meetings, **TO Health!** organises **the first-ever Toronto Health Innovation Week**. Running from 3-7 April 2017, it will host hundreds of early-stage investors, global companies, innovative CEOs, ecosystem support players and policymakers, focused on doing business in the healthcare sector.

This will be an opportunity to discover investors, healthcare customers or industry partners at Toronto. TO Health! invite companies and clusters to join them at the Toronto Health Innovation Week, they will build a programme for the interested companies, including opportunities to showcase their

cluster, participate in conferences throughout the week, hold individual meetings and participate in networking receptions. If your cluster organisation would like to organise a delegation to attend the event 3-7 April 2017, please contact Ella Korets-Smith, Executive Director, TO Health! at ella.korets-smith@tohealth.ca.

Toronto region is the single largest Canadian healthcare market at the centre of the greatest concentration of research, commercialisation, innovation and healthcare delivery assets in Canada. To find out more about the incredible assets and opportunities available in the region, watch a video [here](#) or visit <http://www.tohealth.ca>.

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Our gateways' activities

Clinical Trials Webinar (South Australia)

On 24 January 2016, at 9am (GMT), [Health Industries South Australia](#) is organising a webinar on Clinical Trials. Marco Baccanti, Health Industries South Australia Chief Executive, will talk about financial incentives, ethics approval process and Adelaide's life sciences ecosystem. You can see more information and register [here](#).

Health Industries South Australia offers to reimburse 43.5% of R&D costs in cash to eligible companies with an aggregated annual turnover of less than A\$20 million (around US\$15 million). A 38.5% tax offset is offered to all other eligible entities.

Adelaide features one of Australia's largest and most experienced Phase 1 clinical trials units with a database of more than 13,000 active volunteers. Also available for research is a large, world-class animal research facility and a range of established facilities for Phase 2 and Phase 3 trials.



Marco Baccanti, Health Industries South Australia Chief Executive.

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The **bioXclusters plus** internationalisation project is the continuation of the bioXclusters alliance (2012 to 2013). The project is jointly promoted by four leading European life sciences and healthcare clusters: **Lyonbiopole** (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes), **Biocat** (Catalonia), **Bio^M** (Bavaria) and **bioPmed** (Piemonte).

The alliance aims to become the **most competitive meta-cluster in Europe**, capable of addressing health-related challenges and promoting the growth of SMEs in the sector, with particular emphasis on personalised medicine as a tool for responding to the future of global health over the next few years.

Improving the international position, strengthening relationships with already explored markets (USA, China and Brazil), **opening new markets** (Japan, Australia and others), providing

customised tools for promoting the internationalisation of companies, **identifying areas of technological exchange and collaboration** with other bioregions are the main areas of action that bioXclusters plus is involved in.

bioXclusters plus receives funds from the European Union programme's **Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME)**. The alliance represents **3,300 European SMEs** operating in the area of personalised healthcare. It also represents **200 large companies** in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical sectors. It brings together **23,000 researchers** in the public sector and more than **358,000 job positions** in both the private and public sectors.

More information [here](#).



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