



Project Deliverable

EPICENTRE PROJECT

October 2023



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Project Coordinator	Yeimy Ospina
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Contributing beneficiary/ies	LITMEA, CBIOS
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1 Executive Summary

Among the key missions of EPICENTRE is to carry out the cluster capacity building activities that enable EPICENTRE partners to offer better services to their networks. The training conducted under the scope of EPICENTRE project provided insights both on the aspects selected by an individual cluster (allowing them to deepen knowledge and competences about the most relevant topics, considering the needs and the existing gaps). In addition, all EPICENTRE partners had an opportunity to learn together from leading experts on the five topics (1) green and digital transformation, (2) adoption of innovation, (3) internationalisation, (4) circular economy, and (5) Sustainability & Certification. Finally, EPICENTRE partners organized three C2C online workshops on the different topics helpful for clusters beyond the consortium which allowed to peer-learn as well as network better with external clusters.

2 Introduction and activity link to EPICENTRE project

Among one of the key EPICENTRE project's objectives is to conduct cluster capacity building activities for EPICENTRE clusters with the aim of providing them with the necessary skills so that they offer better services to their networks and facilitating long-term collaboration with innovation ecosystems in third countries that lead to new business opportunities for SMEs in their networks. Specifically, the relevant goals of the GIP contribute: i) to enhance the clusters' employees' professional networks, experience, ability to listen, and flexibility after challenging usual practices and responses in different contexts at cross-sectoral and cross-border levels; ii) to enhance the interaction of the employees with different cultural approaches to the market by facing challenges and creating new links at European and international level; iii) to have access to a broader range of skills by exposing employees to a variety of facets of the business; iv) to internalize new ideas, perspectives and networks derived from role exchange when this element is encouraged, expected and welcomed; and v) to revitalize key employees with a 'home' role as a result of new and challenging experiences.

In addition, some complementary benefits are attained by the EPICENTRE participating clusters such as having access to a fresh perspective on established practices and sub-culture for improvement; generating new networks for improved and/or different collaboration opportunities for staff; acquiring new ideas and insights which have an impact on business performance while getting to know the innovation(s) within the scope of EPICENTRE; disseminate the EPICENTRE concept and to contribute to disseminate the Euroclusters call objectives through a real interaction with other SMEs or organisations such as other cluster organisations or research and technological centers.

The training conducted under EPICENTRE project covered different levels in terms of target audience: cluster internal training (T5.1.1); EPICENTRE partners' joint training (T5.1.2); and training reaching clusters beyond EPICENTRE partners (T5.1.3). The topic selection for the activities were either pre-defined during the proposal writing stage identifying the core areas where all EPICENTRE clusters identified the need to improve their skills (T5.1.2), or were identified by clusters individually, considering their individual strategic priorities (T5.1.1 and T5.1.3).

Report contains input from implemented activities summarized in the table below.

Relevant sub-task	Description	Corresponding activities
Sub-task 5.1.1. Co-learning interregional boot camp about the development of cluster management skills towards more European world-class clusters	The task started with the identification of areas for improvement made by the internal team of each cluster. After identification, the training, coaching and mentoring activities were held to meet each cluster's needs. This will be conducted by external specialists and coaches that were provided by proper training of the partnership team. Potential training also address topics related to industrial transformations, global value chain analysis, internationalisation, promoting SME's uptake of innovation, green and digital transformation, servitisation, new business models, resource efficient solutions, etc. Coaching will include activities for the clusters management team on: how to define the services to be provided by a Cluster to its members, how to boost internationalisation, how to foster the implementation of innovations, etc.	3 trainings in total (2 combined with 5.1.2 trainings to benefit all clusters + Skills Development and Collaborative Learning with the Scandinavian Region (Agri-Food Nordic group) (LITMEA)
Sub-task 5.1.2 Equipping activities for the clusters management team	This task aims to equip clusters management team with information to empower the development of initiatives that can help foster the progress on (1) green and digital transformation, on (2) adoption of innovation, on (3) internationalisation and on (4) circular economy, (5) Sustainability & Certification by giving them knowledge and capabilities to empower SMEs, Academia, RD&I system and Authorities to join and evolve their skills in these four areas. This was achieved by participation in trainings led by experienced external specialists that guided the training of the partnership team and workshops to other clusters, actors and relevant stakeholders to collect best practices.	6 trainings in total: Strategies for cluster internationalisation Green and digital transformation Innovation: Not Just a Buzzword Internationalization Circular Economy training Empowering sustainability in business: sharing best practices
Sub-task 5.1.3. Knowledge and expertise sharing online workshops about good practices of helping	The team organized knowledge and expertise sharing workshops about the best practices of format of support service that excel in quality, added-value and strategic fitness to enhance cluster SMEs	"Product and Service Launch: Making Things Happen" "The EPICENTRE project model: driving

clusters organisations to team up at the European level	competitiveness, innovation and growth. To this end, partners collaborated in C2C level.	innovation and internationalization through open innovation" "Cracking the Chinese Market: Your Guide to Successful Exporting"
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3 Trainings for cluster managers

3.1 Co-learning interregional boot camp about the development of cluster management skills towards more European world-class clusters (T5.1.1)

Under this sub-task, each EPICENTRE cluster was invited to identify key areas for its own improvement (internally) to later on strategically select the internal training on the most pressing topics. After the internal analysis in the cluster, EPICENTRE clusters selected the following key areas for improvement:

- CLDI: Knowledge on how to foster a culture of innovation within the cluster and its members. Learning how to identify innovative solutions to problems and promote the uptake of new technologies.
- CBIOS: Strategic thinking on how to improve the potential to become a "reference point" for cluster members for internationalisation.
- LITMEA: Searching for opportunities in internationalisation and networking with new target markets for cluster members (in particular – Scandinavian countries).

Following the identification of the main knowledge or competence gaps in the clusters internally, each cluster aimed to organise an internal training session corresponding to their area of improvement (**3 trainings** in total). Given the partner clusters interest in some shared topics, two of the three trainings (organized by CLDI and CBIOS) were combined to T5.1.2 trainings (where all EPICENTRE partners were present). More details on these trainings are provided in section 3.2.

One training, however, was delivered by LITMEA (internally) and focused on the internationalisation and networking with clusters in the Scandinavian region, which is among the clusters' key strategic priorities. The description below provide more details on the training conducted:

Title: Skills Development and Collaborative Learning with the Scandinavian Region (Agri-Food Nordic group) (LITMEA)

Expert: Bailey Lähdesmäki, Kaisa Kahkonen, Ardita Hoxha-Jahja, Patrik Lindgren, Emelie Olsson, Malin Komaiszko, Maria Kallming, Linn Dybdahl, Anders Skeem, Giedrius Bagusinskas, Laura Uturyte, Justė Vežikauskaitė

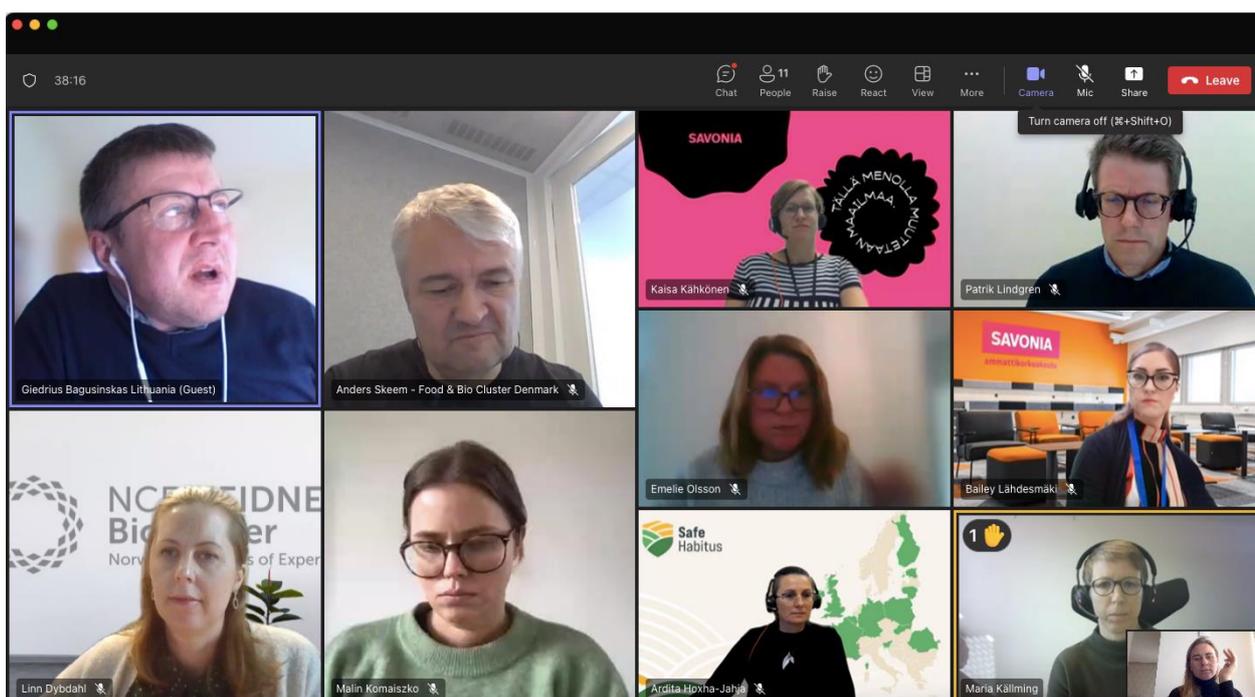
Time: 10 October 2023

Place: Online

Participants: 12 participants in total (3 from EPICENTRE - LITMEA)

Key Agenda Points:

- **Best Practice Sharing:** In-depth discussions and knowledge exchange on best practices and learning from successful strategies and approaches employed by different clusters.
- **Collaboration Possibilities:** Exploration of opportunities for collaboration, both within the Scandinavian region and beyond. Identifying synergies that can drive collective growth and success.
- **Industrial Transformations:** Insights into the changing industrial landscape and the adaptations needed for clusters to thrive. Strategies for embracing and leading industrial transformations.
- **Global Value Chain Analysis:** Understanding the intricacies of global value chains and how clusters can leverage them for competitive advantage. Analyzing the opportunities and challenges in the global market.
- **Conclusion:** The training event, organised in collaboration with clusters from the Scandinavian region, represents a significant step toward advancing cluster management skills, with the aim of establishing world-class clusters with a European perspective. The topics covered in the training, which included best practice sharing, opportunities for collaboration, and addressing crucial aspects like industrial transformations, global value chain analysis, internationalisation, and green and digital transformation, have paved the way for meaningful progress. The training has set the foundation for deeper collaboration, continuous learning, and a shared commitment to achieving success on a global stage.



3.2 Equipping activities for the clusters management team (T5.1.2)

This sub-task aims to equip clusters management team with information to empower the development of initiatives that can help foster the progress on (1) green and digital transformation, on (2) adoption of innovation, on (3) internationalisation and on (4) circular economy, (5) Sustainability & Certification by giving them knowledge and capabilities to empower SMEs, Academia, R&D&I system and Authorities to join and evolve their skills in these five areas. This was achieved by participation in trainings led by experienced external specialists that guided the training of the partnership team.

Each cluster has selected two topics each to assist in organization of these trainings.

- CLDI organized training themes: (2) adoption of innovation; (3) internationalisation
- CBIOS organized training themes: (1) green and digital transformation; (3) internationalisation
- LITMEA: (4) circular economy; (5) sustainability & certification

The descriptions below provide more details on each of the trainings conducted:

Training #1:

Title: Strategies for cluster internationalisation (CBIOS)

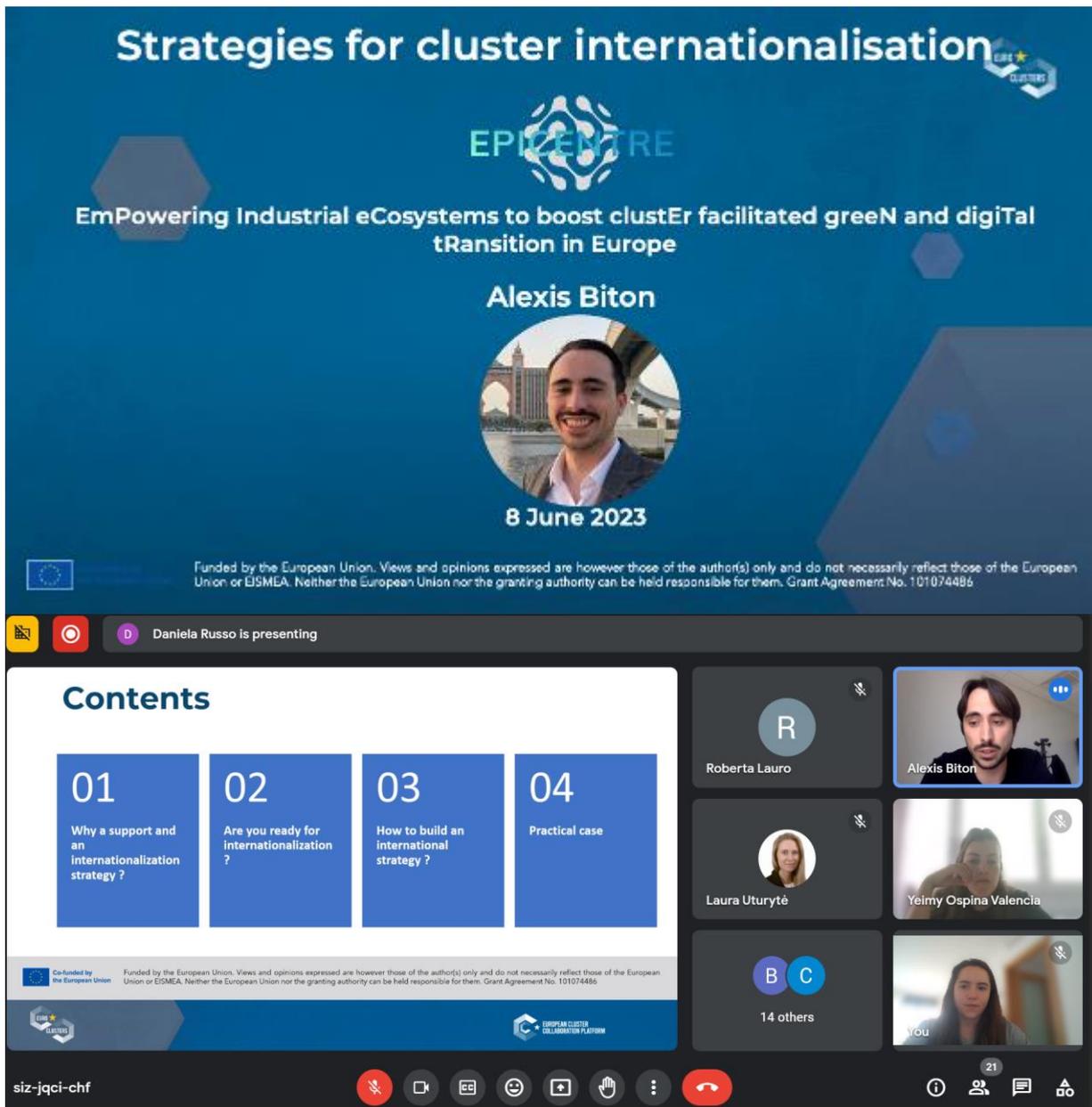
Expert: Alexis Biton, expert in international and European partnerships in Genopole, a board member of the Council of European Bioregions (CEBR)

Time: 08 June 2023

Place: Online

Participants: 21 participants 6 from EPICENTRE clusters

Lessons learnt: The training was focused on the internationalisation processes of clusters and the assessment of the maturity of clusters for the transition to such a path, in view of the potential benefits that can be derived from it. Case studies were also analysed during the training. Alexis has explained the benefit of internationalisation to Increase the economic and scientific attractiveness of the cluster ecosystem.



Training #2:

Title: Green and digital transformation (CBIOS)

Expert: Stefano Cantu, Global Head of Advisory expert in Healthware International Group

Time: 08 June 2023

Place: Online

Participants: 18 participants from EPICENTRE clusters

Lessons learnt: Green Transformation (GX) and Digital Transformation (DX) : what are they and what is needed to walk the path towards this transformation. Three pillars: Change Management, Technology Investment, Company Culture, are crucial to sustain the process and apply it to all the value chain. Stefano Cantu has explained how to adopt digital technologies and methods of transforming the way business happens.

Green and digital transformation



EmPowering Industrial eCosystems to boost clustEr facilitated green and digital tRansition in Europe

Stefano Cantù

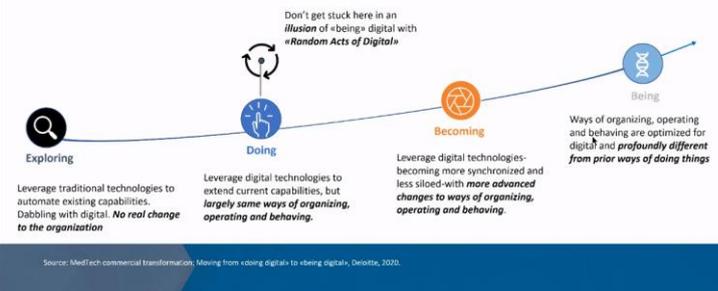


8 June 2023

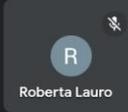
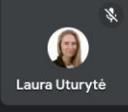
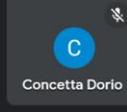
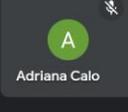
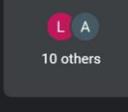
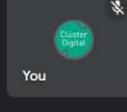
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Stefano Cantù is presenting

DX is a path towards «being digital»



Source: MedTech commercial transformation: Moving from eborn digital to ebeing digital», Deloitte, 2022.

 Stefano Cantù	 Roberta Lauro	 Giedrius Bagu...
 Laura Uturytė	 Yeimy Ospina ...	 Concetta Dorio
 Adriana Calo	 10 others	 You

Training #3:

Title: Innovation: Not Just a Buzzword (CLDI)

Expert: Iolanda Marchueta, independent consultant with over 25 years of International experience in the Biopharma Industry & Health Care sector covering R&D, product launches and business models

Time: 26 June 2023

Place: Online

Participants: 16 participants from EPICENTRE clusters

Lessons learnt: The 1.5 h workshop was designed to explore the key drivers and obstacles in fostering innovation. During the training webinar, participants examined the diverse aspects that spark innovation and the common barriers that hinder it. The online webinar/workshop was provided by an external expert Dr Iolanda Marchueta, who is an.

EPICENTRE Training - Innovation: Not Just a Buzzword

01:17:53

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Innovation matrix

Ansoff Matrix . The Product-Market Matrix

IOLANDA MARCHUETA
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT | INNOVATION

	Existing product	New product
Existing market	Market penetration (existing products in existing markets)	Product development (new products in existing markets)
New market	Market development (existing products in new markets)	Diversification (new products in new markets)

Cluster Digital

LU 10
Laura Uhury... Participantes

Cluster Digital

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Training #4:

Title: Internationalization (CLDI)

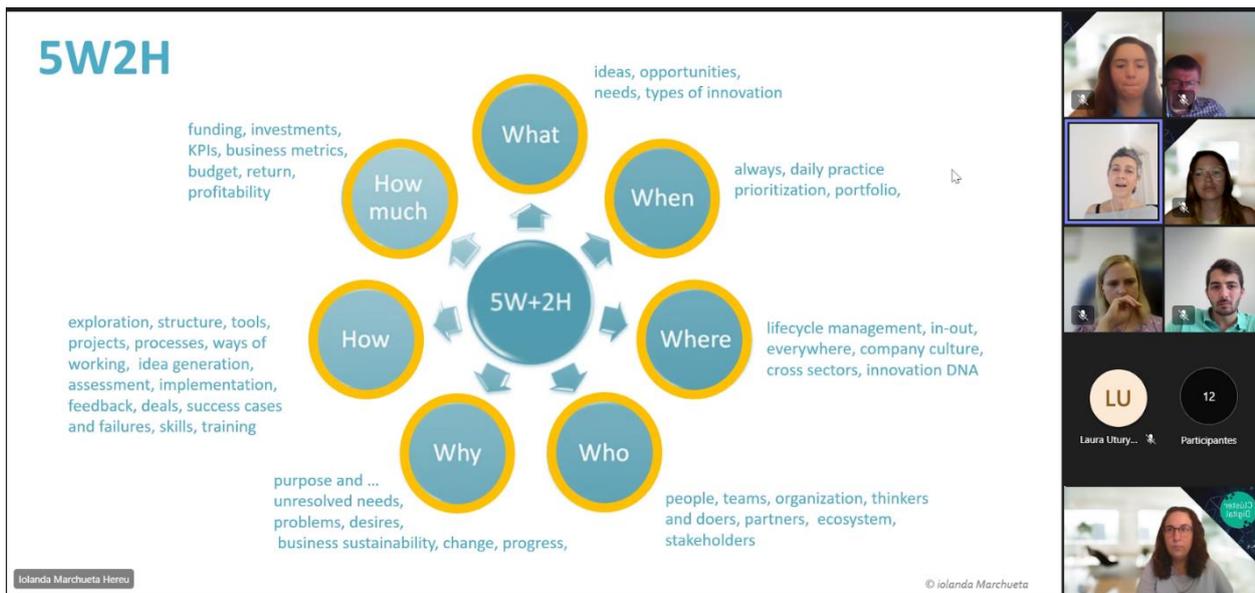
Expert: Iolanda Marchueta

Time: 26 June 2023

Place: Online

Participants: 19 participants from EPICENTRE clusters

Lessons learnt: This interactive training session focused on exploring the key drivers and obstacles in forging strategic alliances to boost internationalization, delving into the 5Ws and 2Hs that stimulate growth and success in any business venture: WHAT, WHY, WHERE, WHEN, WHO, and the essential HOWs. In the webinar insights to understand the significance of embracing internationalization and collaboration to stay competitive in the business landscape were discussed.



Training #5:

Title: Circular Economy training (LITMEA)

Expert: Domantas Tracevičius, Circularity Economist and a CEO of the Lithuanian NGO "Circular Economy"

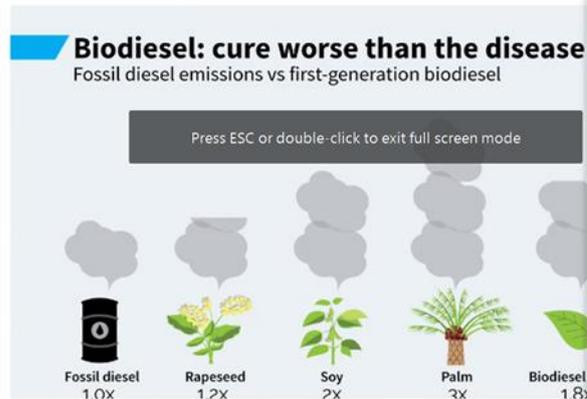
Time: 16 October 2023

Place: Online

Participants: 9 participants from EPICENTRE clusters

Lessons learnt: The training addressed three key questions: i) What is the significance of the circular economy across various sectors; ii) How can businesses reap the benefits of the circular economy; and iii) How can businesses make preparations for integrating the circular economy into their operations. The training included an up-to-date overview of the circular economy's impact on the food supply chain, featuring real-world examples of successful business practices. It also showcased the practical case studies and explored potential future developments across various industries.

Grown fuel



Training #6:

Title: Empowering sustainability in business: sharing best practices (LITMEA)

Expert: Karolina Kužmarskytė

Time: 16 October 2023

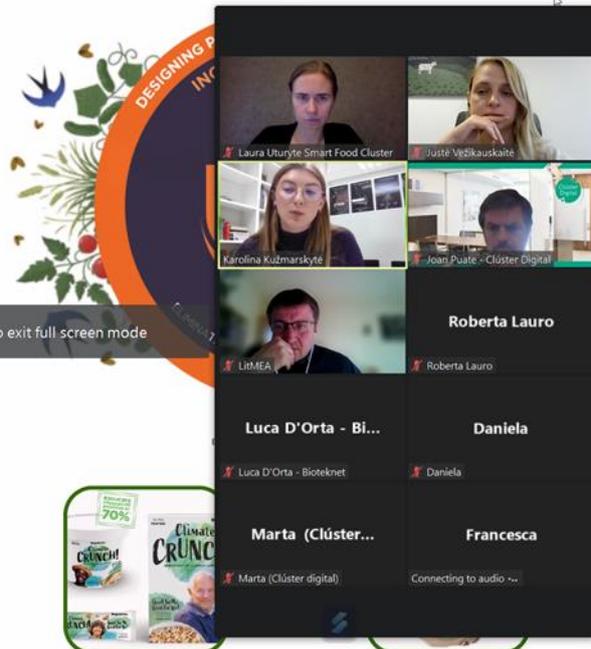
Place: Online

Participants: 9 participants from EPICENTRE clusters

Lessons learnt: The training equipped clusters with a deeper understanding of circular economy practices, enabling them to incorporate these practices into their operations and decision-making processes. By learning from real-world examples and best practices, clusters gained insights into how to innovate within their industry or sector. This included finding creative ways to upcycle materials or reconfigure processes. The training encouraged a holistic perspective on sustainability, emphasizing the importance of circular inputs, processes, and outputs. This broader view allowed clusters to reduce waste and optimize resources across the entire product life cycle. The training emphasized the importance of circular business models where circular practices were integral to value creation. Clusters could explore how to align these models with their industry's specific needs. Ultimately, the training equipped clusters with the knowledge and strategies to achieve sustainable growth, reduce environmental impact, and contribute positively to the circular economy.

Circular design for food

- Diverse**
Use of a greater diversity of animal and plant varieties and species as ingredients.
- Lower impact**
Use of ingredients that are conventionally produced but that have lower environmental impacts, such as on climate and biodiversity.
- Upcycled**
Transformation of inedible food by-products into new ingredients.
- Regeneratively produced**
Production of ingredients in ways that have positive outcomes for nature, like healthy soils and greater biodiversity.



3.3 Knowledge and expertise sharing online workshops about good practices of helping clusters organisations to team up at the European level (T5.1.3)

The EPICENTRE clusters organised knowledge and expertise sharing workshops about the best practices of format of support service that excel in quality, added-value and strategic fitness to enhance cluster SMEs competitiveness, innovation and growth. To this end, partners collaborated in C2C level and carried out three C2C online workshops:

- "Product and Service Launch: Making Things Happen" (CLDI)
- "Strategies for cluster internationalisation" (CBIOS)
- "Cracking the Chinese Market: Your Guide to Successful Exporting" (LITMEA)

The descriptions below provide more details on each of the online workshops conducted as well as the key lessons learnt:

Online workshop #1:

Title: "Product and Service Launch: Making Things Happen" (CLDI)

Expert: Iolanda Marchueta

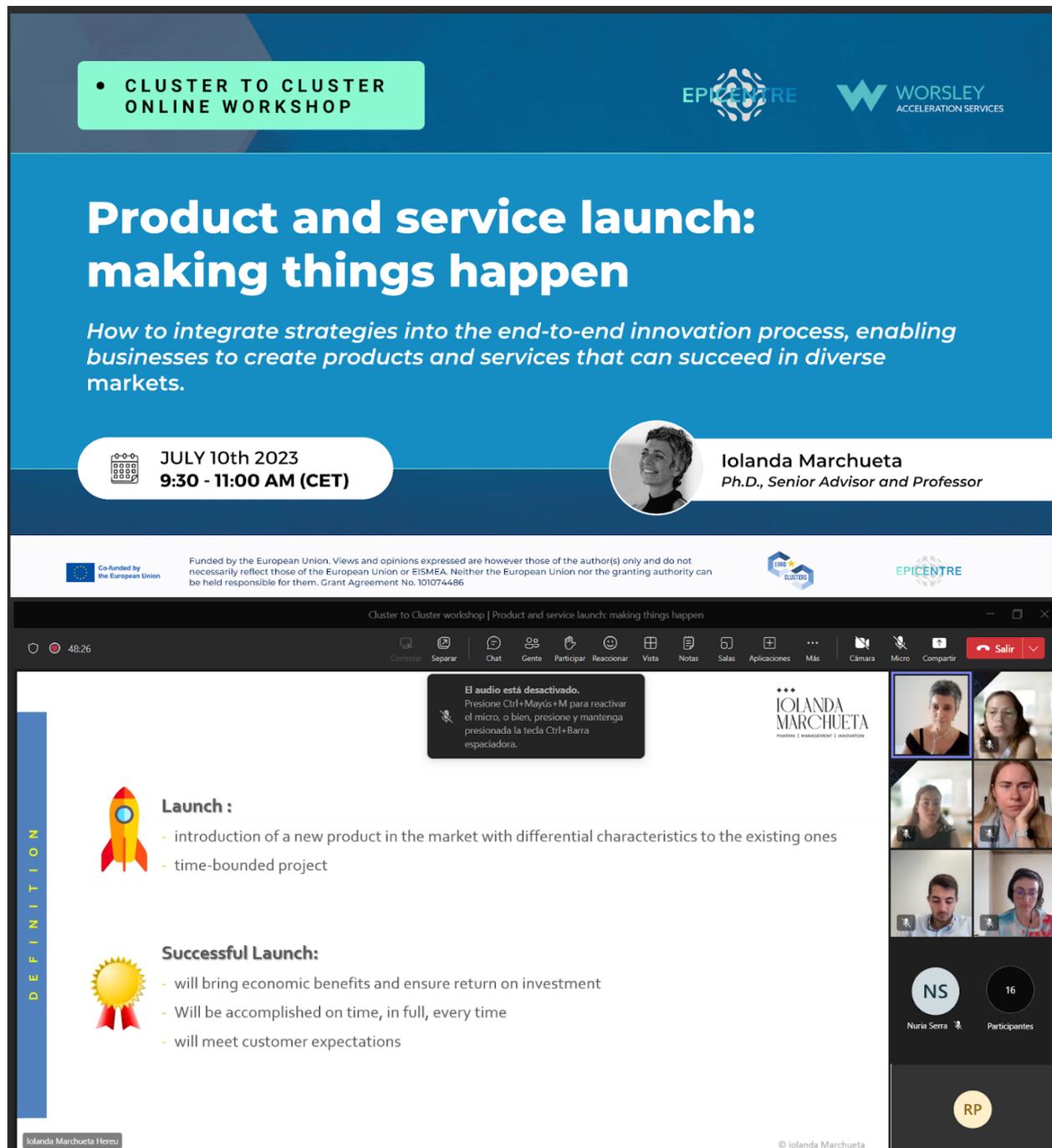
Time: 10 July 2023

Place: Online

Number of participants: 24 (8 from EPICENTRE clusters, 16 external participants)

Lessons learnt: This workshop was designed for European cluster management teams to integrate strategies into the end-to-end innovation process, enabling businesses to create successful products and services in diverse markets. International product or service launches are challenging and exciting, requiring businesses to adapt their innovation processes to consider internationalization. The

workshop covered the innovation life cycle, key steps, and tools and strategies for success at each stage. Key topics covered include new product introduction, successful launches, and business as usual.



CLUSTER TO CLUSTER ONLINE WORKSHOP

Product and service launch: making things happen

How to integrate strategies into the end-to-end innovation process, enabling businesses to create products and services that can succeed in diverse markets.

**JULY 10th 2023
9:30 - 11:00 AM (CET)**

Iolanda Marchueta
Ph.D., Senior Advisor and Professor

Co-funded by the European Union

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Cluster to Cluster workshop | Product and service launch: making things happen

48:26

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El audio está desactivado. Presione Ctrl+Mayús+M para reactivar el micro, o bien, presione y mantenga presionada la tecla Ctrl+Barra espaciadora.

DEFINITION

Launch :

- introduction of a new product in the market with differential characteristics to the existing ones
- time-bounded project

Successful Launch:

- will bring economic benefits and ensure return on investment
- Will be accomplished on time, in full, every time
- will meet customer expectations

IOLANDA MARCHUETA
PARTNER | MANAGEMENT | INNOVATION

Nuria Serra 16 Participantes

RP

Iolanda Marchueta Horcu

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Online workshop #2:

Title: “The EPICENTRE project model: driving innovation and internationalization through open innovation” (CBIOS)

Expert: Amleto D’Agostino, President, Chief Executive at Centro Regionale di Competenza in Biotecnologie Industriali BioTekNet SCpA; Roberta Lauro, Project Manager Campania Bioscience.

Time: 2 June 2023

Place: Online

Number of participants: (34 participants - 7 from EPICENTRE clusters)

Lessons learnt: The workshop, starting from the illustration of the financing model for innovative companies implemented by the EPICENTRE project, addresses the topic of open innovation and the value of creating synergies between Corporate, Startup and Cluster in the perspective of the internationalisation of innovative SMEs.



Online workshop #3:

Title: “Cracking the Chinese Market: Your Guide to Successful Exporting” (LITMEA)

Expert: Lina Bartuseviciute (Founder of LITAO)

Company: LITAO (A company helping European SMEs sell their F&B products in China market since 2015. They work to bring high-quality food products from Europe to the world’s hungriest market and make this premium lifestyle a daily choice for Chinese consumers. The services they provide: trademark registration, customs compliance, market entry research, product localization, competitive Chinese naming, company profile development, B2B lead generation, B2B sales management)

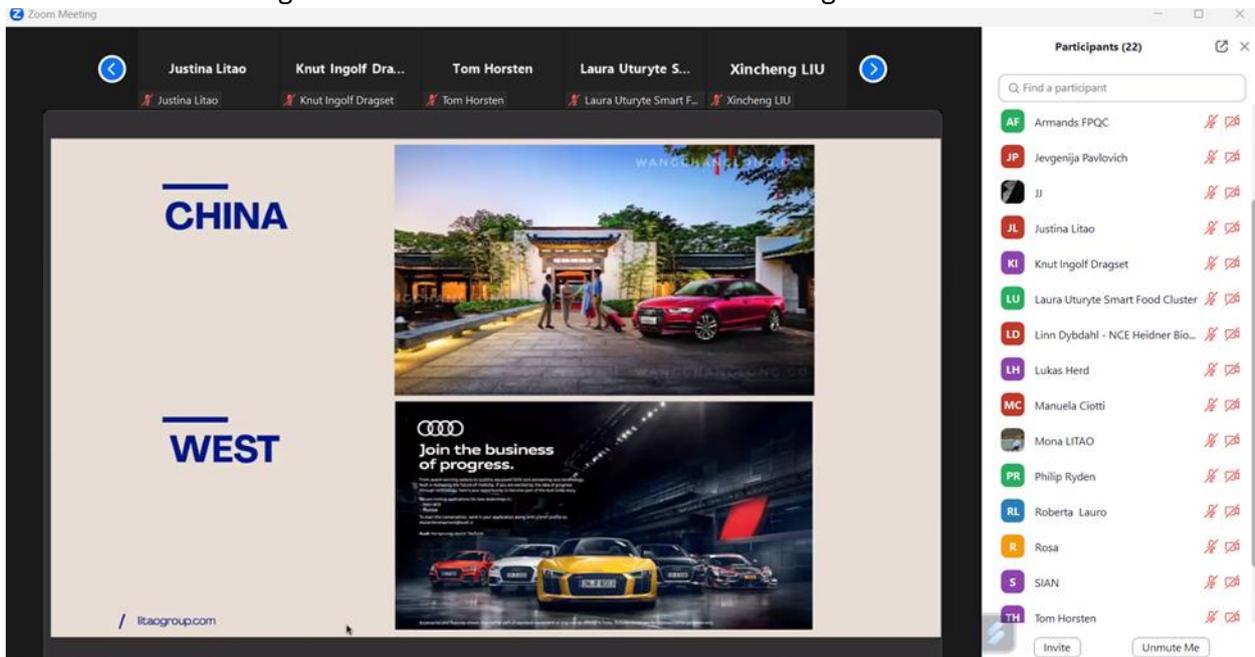
Time: 20 October 2023

Place: Online

Number of participants: 22 (6 from EPICENTRE clusters, 16 external participants)

Lessons learnt: The workshop explored the world of the EU exports to China, unveiling the reasons behind Chinese consumers' preference for high-end European food products. The workshop covered an overview of current market trends and popular categories, gaining an understanding of businesses target audience in China and effective engagement strategies. Participants were able to acquire

insights on collaborating with Chinese partners, distributors, and navigating various sales channels learning from real success stories and brand strategies.



4 Lessons learnt and concluding remarks

The trainings conducted under the scope of EPICENTRE project provided the possibility to significantly expand the capacity of EPICENTRE cluster partners. The trainings provided insights both on the aspects selected by an individual cluster (allowing them to deepen knowledge and competences about the most relevant topics, considering the needs and the existing gaps). In addition, all EPICENTRE partners had an opportunity to learn together from leading experts on the five topics (1) green and digital transformation, (2) adoption of innovation, (3) internationalisation, (4) circular economy, and (5) Sustainability & Certification. Finally, EPICENTRE partners organized three C2C online workshops on the different topics helpful for clusters beyond the consortium. These allowed to also learn through participation in the discussions, as well as network better with external clusters.

The trainings provided plenty of real-life examples and cases discussed through various trainings. Apart from building the knowledge base of the clusters' managers, the trainings are also important for transferring this knowledge to the daily functioning of the cluster, and in support and quality services provided for cluster members. Since EPICENTRE clusters provide consultations, support, training, and even funding opportunities to their members, the importance of the insights collected through training activities can go well beyond the clusters' management teams.