

20.7.2018 ECCP News – 7 new clusters in Flanders!

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Home > News > 7 new clusters in Flanders!

7 new clusters in Flanders!



The Flemish Government launched a new spearhead cluster: the 'Blue Cluster'. In addition, 6 additional Innovative Business Networks (IBNs) were officially acknowledged by the Flemish Government. This means they will receive 3 years funding to help covering their basic operation costs.

The 'Blue Cluster' will develop and promote economic activities linked to the sea. This cluster will focus on research that tries to find solutions for environmental challenges like climate change, safety against floods and ocean pollution. They will do this by supporting innovative and sustainable

North Sea projects. Blue Cluster aims to create a collaboration dynamic between companies to create economic added value. In this case, in the domain of blue economy. Unlike IBNs, the Blue Cluster has a long-term vision of strategic importance to Flanders. Therefore, it will receive funding in the form of an earmarked budget for 10 years.

IBNs aim to create a collaboration dynamic between companies that are active in a certain sector to create economic added value. The Flemish government supports them with 50% financing during the first three years. The other 50% will be financed by member companies. Therefore IBNs are typically bottom-up initiatives, that are driven by the needs and opportunities that exist at participating companies.

In 2016, Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship (FI&E) launched the first call for IBNs. From this call, 14 IBNs were acknowledged to receive funding. In 2018, 6 more were acknowledged, along with the new spearhead cluster 'Blue Cluster'.

The 7 new cluster initiatives supplement the Flemish cluster landscape and fill the gaps in the innovation landscape. Together with the existing 14 IBN's and 5 spearhead clusters, they implement the cluster policy of the Flemish government.

The new cluster initiatives are related to:

- Marine and maritime economy ('Blue Cluster')
- Aerospace industry ('Space 4.0')
- Digitizing management & maintenance of buildings ('Smart buildings in use')
- Synergies between digital and life science (FlandersHealth.be)

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- Mobility as a service ('MAAS')
- Smart cities ('Smart-Cities-Vlaanderen IoT4Society' & 'IoTValuechain')

FI&E is also engaged in Interreg Europe project CLUSTERIX 2.0. This gives the regional government the opportunity to promote (international) cross-cluster collaborations for all 26 Flemish cluster initiatives, to exchange good-practices on cluster support programs and to network with other (government) agencies developing or managing cluster-programs.

For more information about the Flemish clusters, please visit [our webpage](#) (in Dutch) or the [ECCP website](#).

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spearhead cluster

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