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D5.5 Progress Report on the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships

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1 Introduction

The European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change (#EOCIC) is an initiative of the European Commission's Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Directorate-General. The Observatory provides a single access point for statistical information, analysis and mapping of clusters and cluster policy in Europe, aimed at European, national, regional and local policy-makers, as well as cluster managers and representatives of SME intermediaries.

In the context of this project, the current document, "**Progress Report on the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships**", represents the deliverable D5.5 of WP5 - Provision of advisory support service to European Strategic Cluster Partnerships and promotion of their networking.

1.1 Purpose of the document

The purpose of the deliverable D5.5 *Progress Report on the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships* is to provide an overview of the first results, good practices and lessons learnt achieved by the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for Going International (ESCP-4i) funded under the call COS-CLUSINT-2016-03-01, which is part of the EU Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) (COSME programme).

For the development of this deliverable, the European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change (EOCIC) conducted an online survey among the 23 partnerships in October-November 2018 to collect data on their first months of operation. The survey was developed and implemented in collaboration with the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) to benefit from the synergies between both initiatives.

This survey and the current report represent the first ESCP monitoring exercise implemented by the Observatory. Further ESCP monitoring activities will be conducted every six-months until the conclusion of the project. The next editions will also cover the progress of ESCP-4i dual use and ESCP-S3. This was not possible in this first report as these partnerships only started their operations in October 2018.

The survey included both quantitative and qualitative based questions, to allow for sufficient contextualisation of the analysis. It was structured into sections that explored the activities, barriers and difficulties and first achievements of the ESCP-4i, as well as the benefits obtained by the participating cluster organisations and their SME members. The majority of questions combined a quantitative indicator with a text box where the ESCP-4i was invited to provide additional information. The survey structure is presented in Annex A.

The survey was implemented online (Limesurvey) for a more user-friendly interface, and was estimated to take 50 minutes, considering the time to provide qualitative information. A first invitation to fill the survey was sent by email on 29th October 2018 to all 23 ESCP-4i. The

responses were then closely monitored and three follow-up emails were sent in the following weeks to those who did not answer. The survey was closed on 21st November 2018.

In total, 19 ESCP-4i responded in full (83% of the total partnerships). Of these, 13 were ESCP-4i strand-1 and six were ESCP-4i strand-2. It is also notable that for the first and second sections of the survey, related to the activities implemented and the barriers and difficulties faced by the ESCP-4i, a total of 21 and 20 partnerships responded, respectively.

Overall, the number of respondents is regarded as sufficient to conduct a critical analysis of the data. As previously mentioned, this is the first monitoring exercise conducted by the Observatory. The trends currently observed are likely to change over time.

It is important to note that ESCP-4i strand-1 and strand-2 have different objectives, as reflected in the assessment made for the questions included in the survey. This variation in their purpose and objectives means that the comparison between strands can be misleading. It is necessary to take into consideration this difference when reading through the report.

1.2 Structure of the document

After this Introduction, the document is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 Activities, barriers and achievements, which presents the activities implemented by the ESCP-4i and the results achieved so far, as well as the barriers and difficulties faced.
- Chapter 3 Benefits for the ESCP-4i members, which presents the perceived advantages for SMEs of belonging to an ESCP-4i.
- Chapter 4 Lessons learnt, which can help to polish the internationalisation strategy of the ESCP-4i, as well as to provide some orientation towards the future.
- Annex A, which provides the survey.

1.3 Context of the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships

In 2014, the European Commission (EC) launched the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships (ESCPs) under the COSME programme. The objective of this initiative is to boost economic growth and competitiveness in Europe by means of intensifying collaboration across regions and sectors.

Two ESCP categories have been established:

- European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for Smart Specialisation Investments (ESCP-S3): to foster the collaboration of enterprises, especially SMEs, as well as their interaction with technology centres both within clusters and across regional and sectoral silos towards generating joint actions and investment projects in common smart specialisation priority areas linked to industrial modernisation and to help improving their business environment.
- European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for Going International (ESCP-4i): to develop and implement joint cluster internationalisation strategies to support SME

internationalisation towards third countries; thus, strengthening European SMEs access to specific third markets and initiating a long-term cooperation agenda with strategic partners in third countries.

To date, the EC has launched the following calls targeting ESCPs:

- COS-CLUSTER-2014-3-03: Cluster Go International
- COS-CLUSINT-2016-03-01: Cluster Go International
- COS-CLUSTPARTNS-2017-3-02: European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for Smart Specialisation Investments
- COS-CLUSINT-2017-03-6: Clusters Go International in the defence and security sector

The outcomes within the framework of these calls are briefly described below:

• First generation of ESCP-4i (COS-CLUSTER-2014-3-03)

A total of 25 partnerships (15 co-funded and 10 voluntary) were selected under the call COS-CLUSTER-2014-3-03 and were operational in 2016-2017. These partnerships involved approximately 150 cluster organisations in 23 EU member states. The partnerships organised 370 cluster-to-cluster (C2C) events and more than 3,000 business-to-business (B2B) meetings that resulted in approximately 40 Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and 45 collaboration projects. Moreover, about 2,000 European SMEs benefited to some extent, achieving 85 business cooperation opportunities with international partners.

• Second generation of ESCP-4i (COS-CLUSINT-2016-03-01 and COS-CLUSINT-2017-03-6)

The call COS-CLUSINT-2016-03-01 resulted in 23 partnerships involving 123 cluster organisations in 25 EU member states, being implemented in 2018-2019. Two additional ESCP-4i for dual use (defence and security sector) were approved under the call COS-CLUSINT-2017-03-6 and started working in October 2019. The total number of SMEs that participate is not yet available, but it can be noted that the participating clusters account for over 17,000 EU SMEs. With regard to the 123 participating cluster organisations, the five most represented countries are, in decreasing order: France, Spain, Belgium, Germany and Italy.

Figure 1 illustrates the industrial focus of the 25 partnerships.

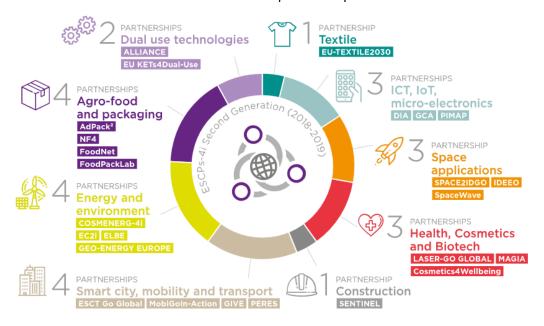


Figure 1 - Industrial focus of the ESCP-4i second generation

Source: European Cluster Collaboration Platform

• First generation of ESCP-S3 (COS-CLUSTPARTNS-2017-3-02)

Nine ESCP-S3 were selected under this call. The nine partnerships, operational since autumn 2018, involve 57 partners from 19 COSME countries active in various industrial sectors. Figure 2 shows the industrial focus of the nine ESCP-S3 selected.

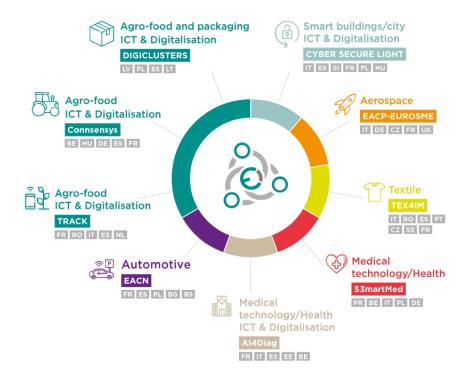


Figure 2 - Industrial focus of the ESCP-S3

Source: European Cluster Collaboration Platform

2 ESCP-4i activities, barriers and achievements

This chapter presents the activities implemented by the ESCP-4i and the outcomes achieved to date. It also describes the barriers and difficulties identified by the partnerships when implementing their activities.

2.1 Activities implemented by the ESCP-4i

This section presents the responses provided by the ESCP-4i to the question "Please indicate which kind of activities your ESCP-4i implemented so far". As can be seen in Figure 3, each ESCP-4i had the opportunity to indicate all the applicable activities (multiple-answer question) among the pre-defined answers, as well as to provide written feedback for each answer.

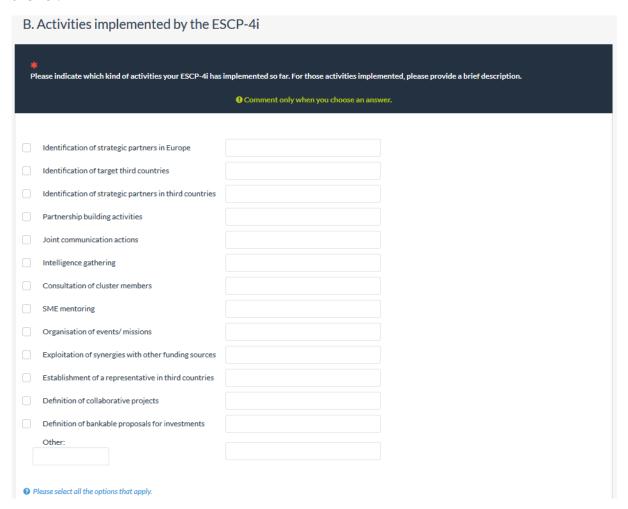


Figure 3 - Question on the activities implemented by ESCP-4i

Figure 4 presents the quantitative results of the different activities implemented by the ESCP-4i. This question was responded by 21 partnerships in total (14 strand-1 and 7 strand-2).

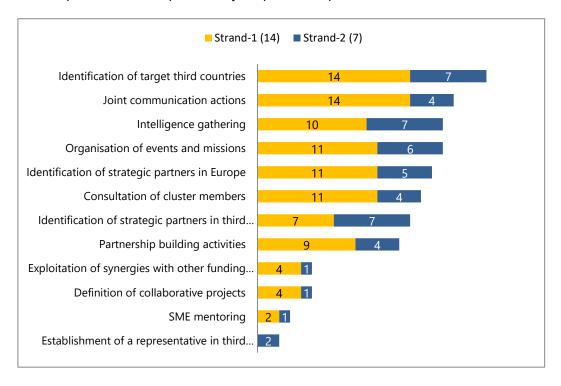


Figure 4 - Quantitative responses to question on the activities implemented by ESCP-4i

Overall, the most common activity is the identification of target third countries, which was reported as being implemented by all the 21 respondents. This was to be expected, since it is a principal requirement to participate in the ESCP-4i call. The implementation of joint communication actions follows, with all the 14 strand-1 and four out of seven strand-2 reporting some activity in this line. Likewise, intelligence gathering and organisation of events and missions are popular activities.

Less than 25% of the partnerships surveyed are implementing actions for SME mentoring, definition of collaborative projects and exploitation of synergies with other funding sources. None has defined bankable proposals for investments. Furthermore, only two partnerships strand-2 established a representative in third countries.

The quantitative responses above reflect variations between strands, from their different objectives. These differences become more evident when analysing the qualitative feedback provided by the partnerships. This information collected shows that there is a clear preference for Asian and North American markets. Nonetheless, partnerships in strand-2 have defined target markets for concrete activities, while strand-1 are working to make a decision on their final selection. Regarding the approach to strategic countries in Europe, strand-1 partnerships focus on finding partners for strengthening the consortium in preparation for the strand-2, and partnerships strand-2 are looking for collaborations in projects.

Good practice!

GIVE ESCP-4i has organised three out of four of their planned webinars for SME training on internationalisation. The webinars covered the following topics: communication skills, first steps in foreign markets and digital marketing.

2.2 Barriers and difficulties faced by the ESCP-4i

This section presents the responses provided by the ESCP-4i to the question "Please select which kind of barriers/ difficulties your ESCP-4i faced during the implementation of activities". As can be seen in Figure 5, this was a multiple-answer question with space to provide additional information for each answer selected.

	① Comment only when you choose an answer.	
Collaboration between the clusters in the ESCP		
Collaboration with other ESCPs		
Access to knowledge of relevant third markets		
Access to relevant potential partners in target third marke	ts	
Information and/or access to complementary funding sour	ces	
Engagement of regional policy makers		
Engagement of SMEs in project activities		
Other:		
Please select all the options that apply.		

Figure 5 - Question on the barriers and difficulties faced by ESCP-4i during the implementation of activities

Figure 6 presents the quantitative results for the barriers and difficulties faced by the ESCP-4i. This question was responded by 20 partnerships in total.

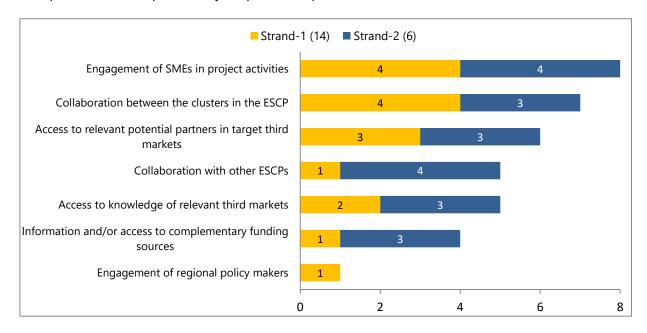


Figure 6 - Quantitative responses to question on the barriers and difficulties faced by ESCP-4i during the implementation of activities

Overall, the engagement of SMEs in project activities and the collaboration among clusters within the consortium represented the most relevant barriers or difficulties for ESCP-4. The engagement of regional policy makers is the least cited barrier.

The data must be analysed with caution, as the divergence between the ESCP-4i strands is significant. On average, 40% of the ESCP-4i strand-2 reported some barrier, in comparison with the 18% of the ESCP-4i strand-1.

It can be highlighted that all the potential barriers presented were identified as relevant by at least some of the ESCP-4i surveyed. Moreover, out of the 20 respondents, only three did not identify any barriers. These three respondents represented ESCP-4i strand 1 and, according to their additional comments, challenges had not been identified at the time of the survey but were expected to be identified through upcoming activities.

Continuing with the analysis of the qualitative feedback, partnerships cited shortage of staff and/or relevant changes in the key responsible people as main reasons hampering the development of a final team, capable of effectively starting to collaborate in order to implement the ESCP project. In the case of ESCP-4i strand-1, the cohesion among the partners in the consortium was identified as being hindered also as a result of a lack of previous collaboration experience and the challenges imposed by intercultural dimensions. The different business cultures often included within an ESCP-4i can clash in certain aspects without appropriate management, which could impact on overall progress of the partnership.

Concerning the effort to involve SMEs, some pointed to the competition with national and regional support entities, which have resources to organise fairs and trade missions with an

attractive agenda and can potentially offer the possibility to finance participation, and also issues in communicating the benefits of belonging to a partnership to SMEs.

Budget is identified as a common constraint, although a number of partnerships noted that the lack of experience in budget management was the main problem.

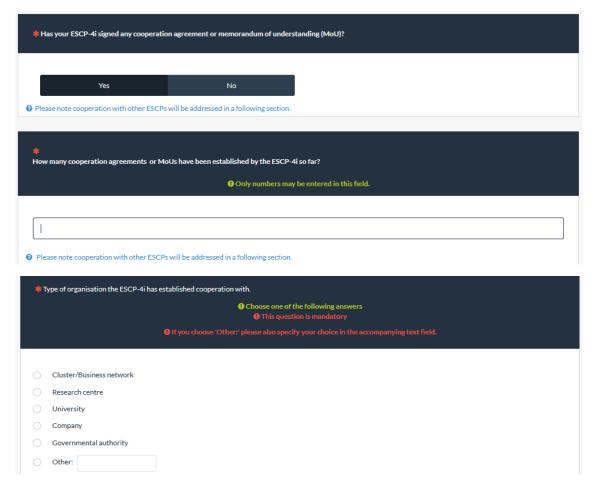
Four out of the six ESCP-4i strand-2 identified the broad spectrum of sectoral thematic as creating issues in the collaboration with other ESCPs.

2.3 Achievements accomplished by the ESCP-4i

The ESCP-4i have already provided a series of achievements, with a focus on cooperation agreements and collaborations. These are described below.

2.3.1 Cooperation Agreements established by ESCP-4i

This section presents the responses provided by the ESCP-4i regarding the cooperation agreements or memoranda of understanding (MoU) signed. As it can be seen in Figure 7, ESCP-4i were asked to indicate the number of cooperation agreements or MoUs signed and, for each of them, to provide the information regarding the counterpart: type of organisation, identification of the organisation and description of cooperation.



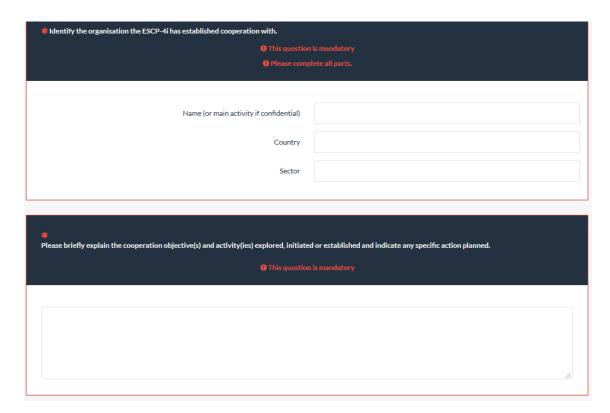


Figure 7 - Question on cooperation agreements or MoU signed by ESCP-4i

This question was responded by 19 ESCP-4i, 13 strand-1 and 6 strand 2. Responses are presented in Table 1 and show that a total of 21 cooperation agreements have been reported by seven ESCP-4i (thus, 12 ESCP-4i did not report any cooperation). Of these, five were ESCP-4i strand-2, with only one partnership strand-2 not identifying any cooperation agreements.

Almost 60% of the cooperation agreements were signed with clusters and business networks, mainly in the sectors of energy (clean, smart and renewable) and logistics. In addition to the six cooperation agreements established between EU Member States, the countries included in most agreements were, in decreasing order: Canada, China, Jordan and the United States (US). Joint participation in projects and events, as well as the reciprocal promotion in respective markets are the most common activities.

The information collected shows that some partnerships have been quite active, in particular leveraging the available opportunities across the EU; however, most of them still have not established any cooperation agreements.

Table 1 - Information on cooperation agreements reported by the ESCP-4i

ESCP-4i	Name (or main activity)	Country	Type of organisation	Sector	Cooperation objective(s) and activities
	Jordan National Research Centre	Jordan	Research centre	Research and Development	Information exchange, joint project application and international tenders
	High Council for Science and Technology	Jordan	Research centre	Research and Development	International and EU tenders, exchange of information and knowledge sharing
COSMENERG-4i Strand-2	Israel Smart Energy Association	Israel	Cluster/Business network	Smart Energy	Business support, representation, international and European projects, soft landing services
	Green Tech Malaysia	Malaysia	Governmental authority	Renewable Energy	European projects, international tenders, knowledge exchange, business support
	Indonesia Renewable Energy Society	Indonesia	Cluster/Business network	Renewable Energy	International and European projects, joint events, business support
	Cluster Smart City Tech	EU	Cluster/Business network	Smart Cities	Joint organisation of the third matchmaking mission
EC2i	Urban Future Lab	US	Other: non-profit	Clean energy hub	Market intelligence gathering, identification and engagement of relevant stakeholders, mobilisation of
Strand-2	Hodgson Ross	US	Company	Law firm	potential buyers to participate in matchmaking events, co-organisation and co-hosting of matchmaking events
	Umore Consulting Group	China	Company	Consultancy	Matching SMEs with Chinese counterparts
	Zwiazek Pracodawcow Lodzistics - Logistyczna Siec Biznesowa Polski Centralnej	Poland	Cluster/Business network	Logistics	Set-up of FoodNet – a meta-cluster created to support groups and organisations in the business network, their SMEs and other cluster members that collaborate in innovation, attracting and marketing competitive
FoodNet Strand-1	Logistics in Wallonia	Belgium	Cluster/Business network	Logistics	products, services and technologies in the field of SMEs of food and eco-logistics and support in the
Su una-1	Asociatia Clusterul Agro- Food-Ind Napoca	Romania	Cluster/Business network	Agro-food	global competition. To work on a joint cooperation agenda with the aim to support the internationalisation of SME members towards third
	Latvijas Logistikas Asociacija	Latvia	Cluster/Business network	Logistics	countries and thereby, to contribute to the FoodNet project objectives and goals.

ESCP-4i	Name (or main activity)	Country	Type of organisation	Sector	Cooperation objective(s) and activities
IDEEO	Frontiers-SI	Australia	Research centre	Geospatial	Cross promotion of member capabilities, organising B2B events
Strand-1	EuroChile	Chile	Cluster/Business network	Cross-cutting	Promotion of IDEEO members capabilities
LASER-GO	MEDTEQ	Canada	Cluster/Business network	Health technology	Close cooperation between the LASER-Go partners (in particular Opticsvalley and MEDICEN Paris Region) and
GLOBAL Strand-2	OPTONIQUE	Canada	Cluster/Business network	Photonics	MEDTEQ/OPTONIQUE in offering soft landing services, business support and product promotion in their respective markets.
MobiGoln- Action Strand-2	Tianjin Beichen Economic and Technological Development Zone General Corporation	China	Other: Economic and Technological Development Park	Information technology and big data, intelligent manufacturing, biomedicine, and e-commerce logistics industries	Tianjin Beichen and MobiGoln-Action signed a cooperation agreement in Turin, Italy on July, 2018. The two parties decided to carry out a strategic cooperation within the activities and goals of MobiGoln-Action, fostering mutual benefit and synergies through friendly consultations and consensus. MobiGoln-Action will support EU Smart Mobility SMEs interested in the Chinese market and Tianjin Beichen will provide advice to MobiGoln-Action on relevant policies in Beichen and will act as a communication platform for supporting the investment and development of the enterprises that are interested in approaching the Chinese market.
	IMPACT <connected Car></connected 	EU	Other: INNOSUP project	Connected cars	With this MoU, the consortia agreed to combine strengths to achieve their objectives by supporting the development of a Connected Car Open Space capable to support innovative business solutions that contribute to the foundation of new value chains linked to the Connected Car industry; and promoting internationalisation opportunities for European Smart Mobility SMEs.

ESCP-4i	Name (or main activity)	Country	Type of organisation	Sector	Cooperation objective(s) and activities
NF4	FIEP	Brazil	Cluster/Business network	Company federation	The cooperation involved in these MoUs aims to: 1. Strengthen relations between the FIEP/NPC and NF4 partners; 2. Perform activities faithfully under the MoU to promote mutual cooperation in the following areas:
Strand-2	NPC	Canada	Cluster/Business network	Agrofood	connected food, functional food and healthy ingredients, and processed food products; and, 3. Define a cooperation agenda (with actions in RDI, business development and training)

This table contains the results as expressed by the ESCP-4i surveyed.

2 3 2 Collaborations initiated between FSCP-4i

This section presents the responses provided by the ESCP-4i to the question "Has your ESCP initiated any dialogue/ collaboration with other ESCPs?" as well as to the question "With which other ESCP has your ESCP-4i initiated any dialogue/ collaboration? Which is the purpose of the dialogue/ collaboration", as shown in Figure 8.

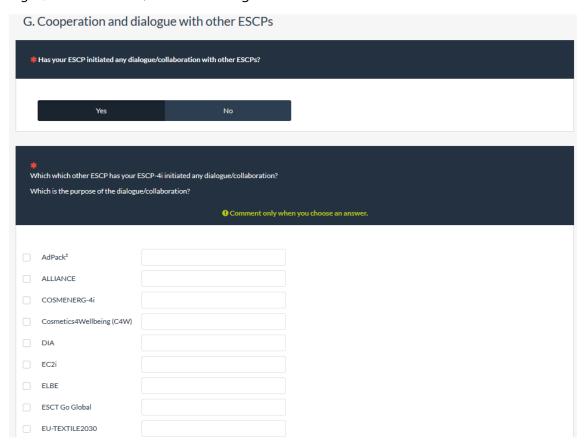


Figure 8 - Question on cooperation and dialogue with other ESCPs

This question was answered by 19 ESCP-4i, 13 strand-1 and 6 strand-2. Out of these, 11 noted that they have initiated some collaboration with other partnerships, being 7 of them strand-1 and 4 strand-2. Thus, the percentage of ESCP-4i strand-2 that reported collaborations with other ESCP is slightly higher than in the case of strand-1 (67% compared to 54%).

In order to provide as much detail as possible, Table 2 contains information on the reported collaborations:

- A total of five of the collaborations could be cross-checked as they were identified by both parties involved. The main activities included sharing of information, exchange of experiences, joint organisation of missions to target markets and attendance to events of mutual interest. These collaborations are highlighted in green in Table 2.
- There were 12 reported collaborations between ESCP-4i identified by only one of the two
 parties involved. These collaborations are highlighted in grey in Table 2, meaning that

only the ESCP-4i in the left column mentioned the cooperation. These are cases in which the counterpart did not respond the question or was not surveyed (being an ESCP-4i in the first generation).

In addition, C4W had a first contact with PIMAP, which is expected to be developed to reinforce the link between photonics and the cosmetic value chain. C4W also had talks with LASER-GO first generation on how to build the ESCP. C4W also reported to have shared experiences with AdPack² and have established a link with NANOPHARM, a Czech company working in Cosmetics. These three collaborations are not shown in Table 2 as they are believed to be less relevant currently.

A further six collaborations were reported by only one party with no clarification regarding the objectives and activities. FoodPackLab identified collaborations with C4W, COSMENERG-4i and FoodNet. Similarly, GCA cited two collaborations with EU4Sports and Mobi-Going, without adding more information. N4F also cited collaboration with AdPack². These collaborations are not shown in Table 2 as no details were provided.

Furthermore, seven collaborations between the second generation of ESCP-4i and the first have been identified. These were mainly built on the involvement of organisations in the first-generation partnerships also being included in the second-generation partnerships.

Table 2 - Collaborations reported between ESCP-4i second generation

ESCP-4i	AdPack ²	ALLIANCE	BioXclusters*	C4W	EC2i	ESCT Go Global	IDEEO	MAGIA	NF4	SmartCity Tech*	SPACE2IDGO
DIA	Pole SCS and BNPT are involved in Adpack ² and have been discussing overlapping possibilities	Pole SCS is involved in Alliance, which targets the Asian market i.e. Japan and Korea, that may be selected for DIA's internationalisation strategy									
EC2i	Collaboration China mission in 2019								Collaboration China mission 2019	Collaboration US mission in 2019	Collaboration China mission in 2019
LASER-GO GLOBAL			partner (Biocat)	Exchanged best practices on dissemination				Co-organising a cluster panel at EU Industry Days 2019. Joint workshop, info and experience exchange		Exchanged info, planned participation in project proposals	
MAGIA			Information and experience exchange								
MobiGoln- Action	Collaboration in China				collaboration	Explore collaboration Singapore and USA			Explore collaboration for China		Explore collaboration China mission

ESCP-4i	AdPack ²	ALLIANCE	BioXclusters*	C4W	EC2i	ESCT Go Global	IDEEO	MAGIA	NF4	SmartCity Tech*	SPACE2IDGO
SpaceWave							Discussed joint presentation at ESA event. Experiences shared between coordinators				

^{&#}x27;*' indicates that the ESCP-4i belongs to the first generation. Therefore, since the ESCP-4i first generation did not participate in the survey, all the collaborations were reported by 2nd generation ESCP-4i.

This table contains the results as expressed by the ESCP-4i surveyed.

3 Benefits for ESCP-4i members

One of the core objectives of the ESCP-4i is to bring benefits for their members, not only the cluster organisations that form the consortium but also their affiliates, especially SMEs. This chapter provides the perceived advantages of belonging to an ESCP-4i, both for the cluster organisations involved in the ESCP-4i and their SME members.

3.1 Results achieved by cluster organisations in ESCP-4i

This section presents the responses provided by the ESCP-4i to the question "Please indicate which results the cluster organisations in the ESCP-4i have accomplished due to their participation". As can be seen in Figure 9, this was a multiple-answer question with space to provide additional information for each answer.

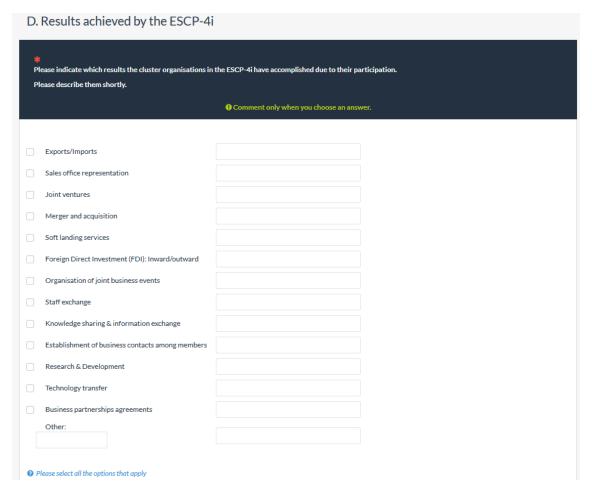


Figure 9 - Question on results accomplished by the cluster organisations in the ESCP-4i

Figure 10 presents the quantitative data collected for the results accomplished by the cluster organisations in the ESCP-4i. A total of 19 ESCP-4i responded to the relevant blocks of questions, including 13 ESCP-4i strand-1 and six ESCP-4i strand-2.

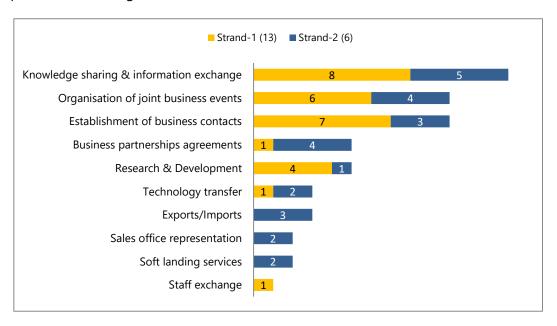


Figure 10 - Quantitative responses to question on results accomplished by the cluster organisations in the ESCP-4i

As suggested by Figure 10, participation in an ESCP-4i can provide strong advantages for cluster organisations. This is especially visible in aspects such as knowledge sharing and information exchange, the establishment of business contacts among members and the organisation of joint business events. Only one partnership reported having benefited from staff exchanges and none of the partnerships reported benefits related to joint ventures, merger and acquisition and Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs).

In spite of the common benefits, there are material differences between the strands. Four out of five partnerships reporting results in terms of research and development activities were strand-1. On the other hand, only clusters in ESCP-4i strand-2 reported having benefited from exports and imports, sales office representation and soft-landing services. Similarly, four out of five partnerships that reported business agreements were strand-2.

According to the written feedback provided by survey respondents, the establishment of contacts happens mainly through networking events, while the knowledge sharing and information exchange occurs regularly among the specific consortium and is further exploited with complementary activities such as webinars, workshops, visits, etc. Likewise, the joint organisation of events is principally concentrated in business missions beyond the EU and the attendance to relevant networking events within Europe.

On the way!

COSMENERG-4i and **LASER-GO GLOBAL**, both ESCP-4i strand-2, are good examples of dynamic partnerships. In a short time, they have engaged in multiple activities, which are now producing their first results.

COSMENERG-4i is discussing the possibility to have representation offices in Indonesia and Israel, and has established its central headquarters in Budapest (Hungary). The partnership is capable of providing soft-landing services in some of the target countries through its network of partners and the knowledge gathered. It is also evaluating the possibility of organising a business forum with relevant Indonesian partners and has established a good network of relevant stakeholders with whom it has started to share and exchange information regularly.

In the same line, LASER-GO GLOBAL has a representative in the target markets, and also has identified incubation and acceleration options for companies. Furthermore, the partnership is involved in exporting and R&D activities, as well as exploring the possibility of licensing technology from the target countries in Europe. In terms of joint business events and information exchange, LASER-GO GLOBAL is focused on organising joint business missions and exchanging information about companies' products.

Both ESCP-4i have signed memoranda of understanding and are negotiating further ones.

3.2 Results achieved by SMEs involved in ESCP-4i activities

This section presents the responses provided by the ESCP-4i to the question "Please indicate which results have been achieved by the ESCP-4i SME members due to their involvement in ESCP-4i activities". As shown by Figure 11, this was a multiple-answer question with space to provide additional information for each answer.

* Please indicate which results have been achieved by the ESCP-4i SME members due to their involvement in ESCP-4i activities.						
Please shortly describe them.						
	① Comment only when you choose an answer.					
Exports/Imports						
Sales office representation						
Joint ventures						
Merger and Acquisition						
Soft Landing services						
Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): Inward/outward						
Organisation of joint business events						
Staff exchange						
Knowledge sharing & information exchange						
Establishment of business contacts among members						
Research & Development						
Technology transfer						
Business partnerships agreements (indicate number)						
Other:						

Figure 11 - Question on results achieved by ESCP-4i SME members due to their involvement in ESCP-4i activities

Figure 12 presents the quantitative responses collected on results achieved by ESCP-4i SME members due to their involvement in the ESCP-4i activities. A total of 19 ESCP-4i responded to this question, including 13 ESCP-4i strand-1 and six ESCP-4i strand-2.

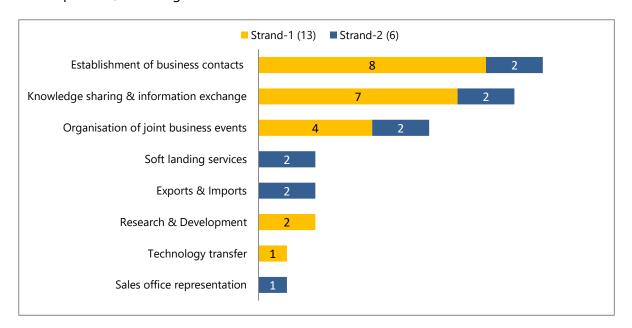


Figure 12 - Quantitative responses to question on results achieved by ESCP-4i SME members due to their involvement in ESCP-4i activities

As shown by Figure 12, and similarly to cluster organisations, knowledge sharing and information exchange, together with the establishment of business contacts among members and the organisation of joint business events, are the most common benefits obtained by SME members as identified by ESCP-4i.

Only SME members of ESCP-4i strand-1 profited from technology transfer and research and development activities, while those affiliated to ESCP-4i strand-2 benefited from export and import activities, soft landing services and sales office representation.

At the time of the survey, the impact of the ESCP-4i activities on SME members appears to have been rather limited. Several respondents noted that they were still occupied with the planning and consolidation of the partnership and, thus, the benefits for their members were likely limited at the stage of the survey implementation.

It is important to note that partnerships were in an initial phase, many of them working together for the first time; thus, outcomes concerning SMEs will likely improve over time. A number of partnerships provided examples that illustrate progress in this regard. However, it is recommended to continue monitoring the reported benefit for SMEs, in order to identify whether this could be a challenge for the ESCP-4i strategy.

On the way!

Two member companies of **Textiles 2030** will attend the Colombiatex 2019 (Colombia) exhibition due to the substantial interest showed towards the products they previously displayed in their stand during the 2018 edition.

SpaceWave highlighted that their SME members obtained information on selected third countries and specific sectors in which Earth Observation technologies can be applied to Blue Growth during a cycle of workshops organised by the partnership.

The four study visits and the working groups organised by **MAGIA** facilitated the consortium partners to exchange information and good practices, and several SMEs were able to initiate contacts with regional, national and international counterparts.

The SME members of **MobiGoing-Action** benefited from training sessions organised by the partnership to prepare members to access new markets. These acceleration activities, combining webinars and workshops with experts, focused on the US and Canada.

4 Preliminary lessons learnt

This chapter includes initial lessons learnt on the progress of the second generation of ESCP-4i, derived from the analysis in previous chapters. Considering this is the first monitoring exercise on the ESCP-4i progress and that they are still implementing their activities, the lessons learnt should be considered preliminary and to be developed in upcoming progress reports.

The objectives of the ESCP-4i initiative can be considered ambitious with a wide scope. The strategic definition of the partnerships and their effective implementation can thus be challenging at different levels. Highly interconnected, there are a series of specific factors that stand out as being very influential in the successful development of the partnerships. However, as often outlined in this report, partnerships are facing some difficulties in regards of such factors, which might jeopardise the achievement of their objectives. The following reflect on such difficulties in relation to critical success factors.

Involvement of the ESCP-4i members

According to the information collected, not all partnerships are yet implementing actions to actively engage their members, even though there is a common understanding on the importance of planning and implementing activities that create value for SMEs. This might cause a misalignment between ESCP-4i strategies and the reality and interests of SMEs. It is important that ESCP-4i have the capacity to effectively translate the benefits of participating in the activities organised by the partnership to SMEs. It is also vital that they can conduct efforts to obtain understanding of SME circumstances and needs, in order to design an evidence-based strategy that reflects accurately how ESCP-4i can better assist their members.

Long-term sustainability

Sustainability is directly related to the involvement of the ESCP-4i members. If SMEs and other organisations do not profit from the activities of the partnership and, therefore, do not perceive the value of belonging to it, the project is unlikely to be continued in the long-term. Another key factor in this regard is the struggle to exploit additional funding sources which is relevant to have continuation over time. Finally, accountability measures that compare the work of the partnership against the objectives are essential.

Important!

Strand-1 and strand-2 partnerships agree that metaclusters need to build momentum to create value for their SMEs. This is critical to ensure the sustainability of the partnerships in the long term. This should be one of the primary objectives to take into account when shaping the strategy, as it is a transversal factor to many aspects. Along the same line, it is essential to assess the commercialisation potential within partnerships at the beginning of the project in order to decide the best approach to exploit that potential, contributing to sustainability.

Cohesion of the consortium

In many cases, the cluster organisations within the consortium are working together for the first time, which can lead to difficulties related to the identification of synergies. Clusters usually target a broad range of sectors. Thus, it is not always easy to build a consistent and coherent value-chain for positioning the new partnership, which can limit the objectives to be pursued to a specific focus. Some of the partnerships seem to be having difficulties in developing the necessary internal cohesion to carry out the activities planned, resulting in members possibly acting according to their individual goals. The strategy should establish the role to be developed by each cluster organisation in the ESCP-4i and what it is expected to be accomplished. Moreover, the implementation of the roadmap requires a competent and stable team of people, who can work together towards the achievement of the partnership's vision.

Management competences

The survey highlighted some lack of competences in certain key areas, including budget management and communication, especially intercultural communication. As previously mentioned, the extent of the ESCP-4i projects requires that the project management teams are capable of effectively managing and implementing the activities. Nevertheless, the human resources available can be limited. Thus, it is important to carefully select a competent management team, ensuring a solid leadership and continuity during the ESCP-4i lifetime.

Synergies between ESCP-4i

There are good complementariness between the different ESCP-4i. There is also opportunity for ESCP-4i to further explore and exploit them. For instance, many partnerships share the same target countries or have similar objectives and matching activities. More coordination, for example in the organisation of business missions to third countries, could lead to more efficient use of resources.

European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change

The European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change (#EOCIC) is an initiative of the European Commission's Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Directorate-General. The Observatory provides a single access point for statistical information, analysis and mapping of clusters and cluster policy in Europe, aimed at European, national, regional and local policy-makers, as well as cluster managers and representatives of SME

intermediaries.

The aim of the Observatory is to help Europe's regions and countries design better and more evidence-based cluster policies and initiatives that help countries participating in the COSME programme to:

- develop world-class clusters with competitive industrial value chains that cut across sectors:
- support Industrial modernisation;
- foster Entrepreneurship in emerging industries with growth potential;
- improve SMEs' access to clusters and internationalisation activities; and
- enable more strategic inter-regional collaboration and investments in the implementation of smart specialisation strategies.

European
Observatory
for Clusters
and Industrial
Change

Mapping cluster strengths

Analysing industrial transformations

Identifying growth hotspots

Connecting regional ecosystems

Supporting modern cluster policy

In order to address these goals, the Observatory provides an Europe-wide comparative cluster mapping with sectoral and cross-sectoral statistical analysis of the geographical concentration of economic activities and performance, made available on the website of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP)¹. The Observatory provides the following services:

- **Bi-annual "European Panorama of Clusters and Industrial Change"** that analyses cluster strengths and development trends across 51 cluster sectors and 10 emerging industries, and investigates the linkages between clusters and industrial change, entrepreneurship, growth, innovation, internationalisation and economic development;
- "Cluster and Industrial Transformation Trends Report" which investigates the transformation of clusters, new specialisation patterns and emerging industries;
- **Cluster policy mapping** in European countries and regions as well as in selected non-European countries;

¹ https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/

- "Regional Eco-system Scoreboard for Clusters and Industrial Change" that identifies
 and captures favourable framework conditions for industrial change, innovation,
 entrepreneurship and cluster development;
- **Updated European Service Innovation Scoreboard**², that provides scorecards on service innovation for European regions;
- "European Stress Test for Cluster Policy", including a self-assessment tool targeted at cross-sectoral collaboration, innovation and entrepreneurships with a view to boosting industrial change;
- **Customised advisory support services** to twelve selected model demonstrator regions, including expert analysis, regional survey and benchmarking report, peer-review meeting, and policy briefings in support of industrial modernisation;
- Advisory support service to European Strategic Cluster Partnerships, in order to support networking between the partnerships and to support exchanges of successful practices for cross-regional collaborations and joint innovation investments;
- **Smart Guides** for cluster policy monitoring and evaluation, and for entrepreneurship support through clusters that provide guidance for policy-makers; and
- Brings together Europe's cluster policy-makers and stakeholders at four European Cluster Policy Forum events, European Cluster Days, and at the European Cluster Conference In order to facilitate high-level cluster policy dialogues, exchanges with experts and mutual cluster policy learning. Two European Cluster Policy Forums took place in February and April 2018, the third one will take place on 15 November in Brussels. The European Cluster Conference is scheduled for 14 to 16 May 2019 in Bucharest (Romania).
- Online presentations and publications, discussion papers, newsletters, videos and further promotional material accompany and support information exchanges and policy learning on cluster development, cluster policies and industrial change.

More information about the European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change is available at: www.clustercollaboration.eu/eu-initiatives/european-cluster-observatory

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² Previous versions for 2014 and 2015 were developed by the European Service Innovation Centre (ESIC), see http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/esic/index en.htm

Annex A - Progress Survey

ESCP-4i progress survey

Dear participant,

The European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change (#EOCIC) and the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) welcome your participation in the ESCP-4i progress survey.

This survey takes place in the scope of the EOCIC and ECCP services for ESCP-4i. It aims to gather information on the current progress and results of ESCPs-4i, in order to gain understanding on their development and performance, as well as to identify those aspects that are being more challenging. We appreciate that you provide as much details as possible.

This information will be highly useful for the EOCIC and the ECCP to ensure their services are aligned with the needs of ESCPs.

For any additional information or clarifications please send an email to eocic@spi.pt.

Thank you in advance for your response!

EOCIC & ECCP Team

The European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change (#EOCIC) is an initiative of the European Commission's Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Directorate-General (DG GROW). The Observatory provides a single access point for statistical information, analysis and mapping of clusters and cluster policy in Europe, aimed at European, national, regional and local policy-makers, as well as cluster managers and representatives of SME intermediaries. The EOCIC services include advisory support services to European Strategic Cluster Partnerships, in order to support networking between the partnerships and to support exchanges of successful practices for cross-regional collaborations and ioint innovation investments.

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) is an action of the Cluster Internationalisation Programme for SMEs funded under COSME launched by DG GROW. The ECCP provides networking and information support for clusters and their members aiming to improve their performance and increase their competitiveness through trans-national and international cooperation.





A. Identification of the ESCP-4i	
♣ Name of the ESCP-4i: ● Choose one of the following answers	
Please choose	
* Strand of the ESCP-4i: Choose one of the following answers	
Strand-1 Strand-2	
*Cluster organisation:	
* Contact person:	
≉ Email:	
* I accept that my personal data are added to the EOCIC contact database. The EOCIC project will only use your personal data for project activities linked to services for ESCPs. Your personal data will not be used for other purposes or shared with others. If you want to be eliminated from the EOCIC database, please send an email to eocic@spi.pt.	
Yes No	

B. Activities implemented by the ESCP-4i						
Please indicate which kind of activities your ESCP-4i has implemented so far. For those activities implemented, please provide a brief description.						
① Comment only when you choose an answer.						
Identification of strategic partners in Europe						
Identification of target third countries						
Identification of strategic partners in third countries						
Partnership building activities						
Joint communication actions						
Intelligence gathering						
Consultation of cluster members						
SME mentoring						
Organisation of events/ missions						
Exploitation of synergies with other funding sources						
Establishment of a representative in third countries						
Definition of collaborative projects						
Definition of bankable proposals for investments						
Other:						

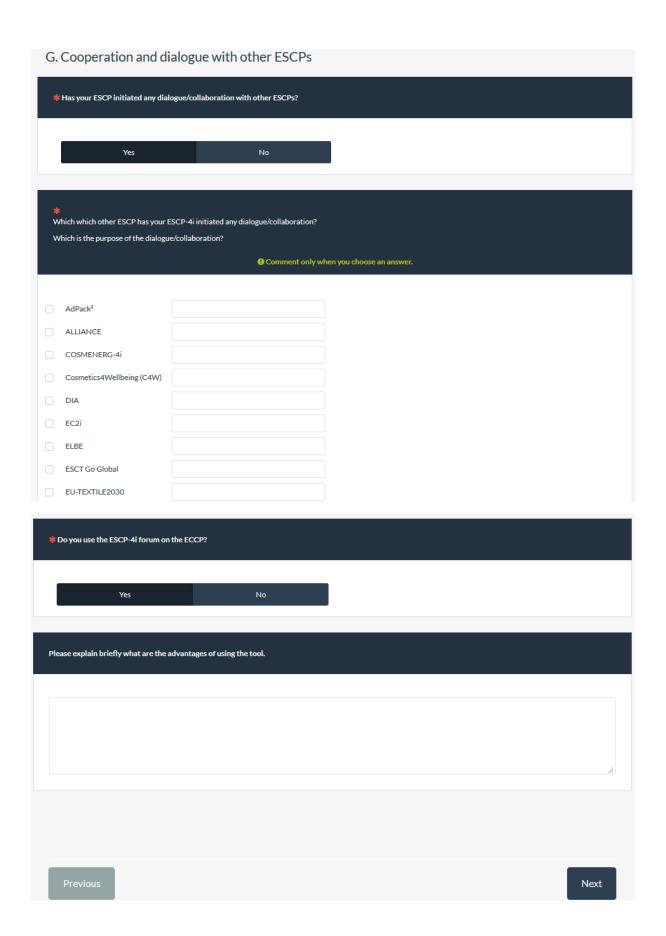
explanation and suggest how the EOCIC and the ECCP could help y	mment only when you choose an answer.	
Collaboration between the clusters in the ESCP		
Collaboration with other ESCPs		
Access to knowledge of relevant third markets		
Access to relevant potential partners in target third markets		
Information and/or access to complementary funding sources		
Engagement of regional policy makers		
Engagement of SMEs in project activities		
Other:		
Please select all the options that apply.		

D. Results achieved by the ESCP-4i								
*								
Please indicate which results the cluster organisations in the ESCP-4i have accomplished due to their participation. Please describe them shortly.								
© Comment only when you choose an answer.								
•								
Exports/Imports								
Sales office representation								
☐ Joint ventures								
Merger and acquisition								
Soft landing services								
Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): Inward/outward								
Organisation of joint business events								
☐ Staff exchange								
☐ Knowledge sharing & information exchange								
Establishment of business contacts among members								
Research & Development								
Technology transfer								
Business partnerships agreements								
Other:								
Please select all the options that apply								
# Has your ESCP-4i signed any cooperation agreement or memor	andum of understanding (MoU)?							
Yes No								
Please note cooperation with other ESCPs will be addressed in a following section.								
* How many cooperation agreements or MoUs have been establish	ed by the ESCP-4i so far?							
⊕ Only numbers may be entered in this field.								
I								
Please note cooperation with other ESCPs will be addressed in a following section.								
_								
Previous	Next							

Cooperation Case 1							
Please provide the following information for the cooperation case 1 (cooperation agreement or MoU).							
* Type of organisation the ESCP-4i has established cooperation with.							
◆ Choose one of the following answers◆ This question is mandatory							
• If you choose 'Other:' please also specify your choice in the accompanying text field.							
Cluster/Business network Research centre University Company Governmental authority							
Other:							
# Identify the organisation the ESCP-4i has established cooperation with.							
① This question is mandatory							
Name (or main activity if confidential)							
Country							
Sector							
Please briefly explain the cooperation objective(s) and activity(ies) explored, initiated or established and indicate any specific action planned.							
① This question is mandatory							
at at							
Previous Next							

E.	E. Results achieved by ESCP-4i SME members							
	Please provide information regarding the results achieved by SME members that participated in the ESCP-4i activities.							
*								
Please indicate which results have been achieved by the ESCP-4i SME members due to their involvement in ESCP-4i activities. Please shortly describe them.								
		① Comment only when you choose an answ	ver.					
	Exports/Imports							
	Sales office representation							
	Joint ventures							
	Merger and Acquisition							
	Soft Landing services							
	Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): Inward/outward							
	Organisation of joint business events							
	Staff exchange							
	Knowledge sharing & information exchange							
	Establishment of business contacts among members							
	Research & Development							
	Technology transfer							
	Business partnerships agreements (indicate number)							
	Other:							
*	Has any SME member signed a cooperation agreement/	memorandum of understanding?						
	Yes	No						
*								
	ow many cooperation agreements/MoUs have been sign	ed by SME members so far?						
		Only numbers may be entered in this field	ld.					
	Previous		Next					

F. Examples of SMEs benefited						
Please provide the following information for the cooperation case of SME members that benefited from their involvement in the ESCP-4i activities.						
Example 1 - SME Name						
Example 1 - Please select the SME benefits Ocheck all that apply						
Access to new clients or distributors						
☐ Increased exports						
Participation in exploratory visits						
Participation in collaborative RDI projects						
Staff exchanges						
Technology transfer						
Facilitation of soft landing						
Participation in B2B events						
Other:						
Example 1 - Please briefly describe how the SME benefited and specify any further action planned.						
.ii						
Previous						



H. Planned activities									
Please provide the following information regarding the events that your ESCP-4i plans to attend in the next 12 months.									
Which EUROPEAN trade fairs, cluster conferences, events, visits and missions is your ESCP-4i planning to attend or organise in the next 12 months?									
	Event name	Event location (city/ country)	Event date	Event topic(s)					
Event 1									
Event 2									
Event 3									
Event 4									
Event 5									
Please indicate only events and activities taking	g place in Europe.								
Which trade fairs, cluster conferences, events, visits and missions <u>BEYOND EUROPE</u> are you planning to attend or organise in the next 12 months? Event location (city/coun-									
Event 1	Event name	try)	Eventuates	Event topicity					
Event 2									
Event 3									
Event 4									
Event 5									

