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Boosting Interregional Innovation Investment and cooperation among Health Innovation EcoSystems



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Peer review Hungary

Strengthening clusters' visibility and innovation: Hungarian peer review brought together quadruple helix stakeholders

Budapest, 14th - 15th November 2024 - **Strengthening clusters by increasing the added value they generate for their members and building their capacity to participate in international value chains – this is the case of Hungary.** MediKlaszter and Lithuanian Innovation Centre, together with international partners and experts, organised the peer review “Improving the cooperation of clusters with the participants of the Hungarian Quadruple Helix”. The Peer Review provided an in-depth analysis of the RHIES (Regional Health Innovations Ecosystems) challenge, facilitated an exchange of experiences with relevant innovation actors (representatives from Hungarian clusters, government bodies, innovation authorities, universities, and research institutions) and presented possible solutions.

By 2030, Hungary envisions 10% of its gross domestic value added to be driven by cluster cooperation in key industries, becoming a global leader in innovation and visibility." By 2013, the country boasted 200 clusters, but a wave of consolidation reduced this number to 40 active clusters by 2022, highlighting the challenge of i) **fragmented landscape with parallel initiatives in the same sectors, ii) small critical mass with clusters averaging 30-40 members, iii) limited resources for management and international visibility.** To counter this, Hungary's strategy focuses on fostering innovation, strengthening cooperation, and creating a globally attractive business ecosystem. Planned actions include a renewed accreditation system, knowledge-sharing initiatives, and enhanced market visibility, setting the stage for Hungary to emerge as a cluster-driven economic force by the end of the decade. Despite these facts, the numbers tell a story of potential: in 2021, Hungarian clusters generated a turnover of 3,407 billion HUF, accounted for 2,091 billion HUF in exports, and provided jobs to 68,831 people, alongside 54 billion HUF in RDI investments.

The following challenges were raised to improve the functioning of Hungarian cluster in terms of increasing innovation potential toward international value chains:

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- i) **Building a sustainable co-creation platform for Hungary's innovation ecosystem** requires robust collaboration among government, academia, business, and community actors, exploiting shared expertise, with success based on continuous networking, strategic planning, and adapting proven international models to address ecosystem fragmentation and enhance competitiveness;
- ii) **Improving policy coherence and coordination mechanisms** between ministries, agencies and regional governance structures is crucial for strengthening the innovation capacity of clusters. Success in this area depends on building strong, professional relationships with government officials through direct communication, collaborative working groups and consistent engagement. Participants emphasized the importance of clusters increasing their visibility and relevance by showcasing their achievements and cultivating active participation at all levels of government. Governments, for their part, need to deepen their understanding of the sector-specific challenges faced by clusters and prioritize tailored support;
- iii) The success of (health) clusters is based on a collaborative ecosystem in which each actor of the four spirals contributes its **strengths by recognising the following roles and services**: Direct financial support for R&D projects and infrastructure through subsidies and grants supported by **the government; for academia**, it was highlighted that leadership in both basic and applied research and sharing results and expertise with industry and government would have the greatest impact; for the **business sector** the main benefit lies in the development of new treatments, devices and digital health tools that meet healthcare needs. On the other hand, **the community** can also contribute by providing real-world insights and feedback on healthcare services and needs and, as patient advocates, ensuring that community priorities are considered and shaped in the cluster's activities.

The conclusion of the event summed up the broader meaning of the discussions, as Lavinia Chis, innovation manager by CLUJ-IT emphasized: "Apart having a big dream to have all regional innovators under one umbrella" it is also important to have smaller dream "to empower life science innovators to advance the health and longevity of yours region's population."

[Insights into peer review](#) (video).

For further information, please contact:

Monika Cvetkov, monika.cvetkov@tp-lj.si, 10.12.2024, Ljubljana

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