

PRESS RELEASE

27 June 2017

Bio-Innovation growth mega-Cluster (BIG-Cluster) pushes cross-border collaboration in developing the Bioeconomy

The BIG-Cluster Stakeholders Meeting, held on 12 June in Eindhoven, illustrated the vivid knowledge exchange and cross-border collaborations under the umbrella of the BIG-Cluster. Diverse innovation projects bring together high-level experts from Flanders region of Belgium, The Netherlands and the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia in the value chains "Aromatics from woody biomass", "C1 gases to chemicals", "Aviation fuels from various feedstocks", and the horizontal topic "Circular economy education".

„The BIG-Cluster initiative has started in 2013. Today, we look back on a success story as the 10 project pitches have impressively demonstrated. They build a sustainable base to expand the close collaboration of the three BIG-Cluster regions.” said Willem Sederel (Biobased Delta), as the chair of the day.

100 experts from large companies, SMEs, academic institutes and universities as well as networks, attended the matchmaking event and developed roadmaps on the BIG-Cluster value chains "Aromatics from woody biomass", "C1 gases to chemicals", and "Aviation fuels from various feedstocks" in parallel workshops.

Manfred Kircher (CLIB²⁰²¹), moderator of the workshop "C1 gases to chemicals": "The innovative power of the trinational cooperation is unique."

According to Luuk van der Wielen (BE-Basic) "we do not have much time to develop the bio-based economy towards scale-up because of the rate of global warming and the scale of the transition.", the participants agreed that all stakeholders need to work together and build new value chains supported by the government(s) to facilitate large investments.

Ludo Diels (VITO) emphasizes the three regions will benefit from the bio-based economy. Developments will speed up if we manage to make the borders vanish and create new value chains in Europe.

The meeting revealed starting points for new collaboration topics and cross-border research & innovation projects. The cross-border activities under the umbrella of the BIG-Cluster will be intensified in the future.

The next Stakeholders Meeting in 2018 will further foster biobased economy in the BIG-Cluster region.

www.bigc-initiative.eu

About BIG-Cluster

The Bio Innovation Growth mega Cluster (BIG-Cluster) is a cross-border 'Smart Specialisation Initiative' aiming to transform Europe's industrial mega cluster in the Flanders region of Belgium, The Netherlands and the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia into the global leader of bio-based innovation growth. The overarching goal is a comprehensive feedstock change with a focus on regionally available and sustainable raw materials, climate protection and the safeguarding of jobs in the mega region. BIG-Cluster has been established by the three cluster organizations

BE-Basic (The Netherlands), CLIB²⁰²¹ (NRW, Germany), and Catalisti (Flanders, Belgium).

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