



Project Short Title

Alps Bio Cluster



Priority 1
Competitiveness and
Attractiveness

Priority 2
Accessibility and
Connectivity

Priority 3
Environment and
Risk Prevention

Project Long Title

TransAlpine Bio Cluster

Lead Partner

ADEBAG (F)

Project Partners

BioIndustry Park Silvano Fumero S.p.a. (I)
Tiroler Zukunftsstiftung (A)
Lyonbiopole (F)
Camera di Commercio Industria Artigianato Agricoltura di Milano (I)
Helmholtz-Zentrum München (D)
Fachhochschule Weihenstephan, Fakultät Biotechnologie und Bioinformatik (D)
BioAlps (CH)

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10.2008 - 09.2011

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1,862,505.00€

ERDF in EUR

1,309,252.00 €

Abstract

Although the Alpine area is recognized as one of the most attractive in Europe in terms of quality of life, and enjoys a high level of economic drive, it still suffers from a problem of connectivity and accessibility. The development of competitiveness and attracting business to the Alpine area has become decisive. This is the challenge met by the European Alpine Space Programme within which the Alps Bio Cluster has been set up.

Alps Bio Cluster ambitions are to:

- Develop an opposite and effective method of cooperation to serve a highly competitive sector that nonetheless has great potential for economic development over the Alpine space;
- Create the requisite conditions to support the development of SMEs at European and international level by stimulating innovation by means of cooperation within the transnational Alpine area;
- Multiply development opportunities to bring new business in, promoting technology transfer between research centres and SMEs;
- Help to strengthen the appeal and competitiveness of the Alpine area.

Our credo: "A Healthy life at home in the Alps in a natural environment worth to be preserved"

Relevance

The five neighbouring countries around the Alps share and divide in many linguistic / cultural similarities and diversities: the German speaking part of Switzerland, the French speaking part, Romandie, the German speaking region of Munich as part of Oberbayern, the Italian part, Ticino, with Italy. The transnational Alpine vision will allow to overcome this traditional split and help to develop new partnerships. This is particularly important in the technology / knowledge transfer and in the support of small and medium sized enterprises, where trust and direct contact are known to be the keys to success. The competitive biotech and medtech sectors are particularly well suited for such a trans-national clustering approach since the individual regions have each strong points in the bio/medtech sectors, but fail to reach a critical mass in size to be competitive on a world-wide scale.

Due to the isolation of the region by the Alps, there is very small connectivity of the regions and visibility of the life sciences sector amongst themselves and outside. There is a high global competition of large territorial clusters in life sciences. Alpine Space need to define a strong identity based on its comparative advantages to obtain an international visibility and reputation.

Key Achievements

Alps Bio Cluster's partners have organized 11 European events: workshops, business partnering, seminar & conferences, summer schools. They mobilized more than 670 international attendees (clusters members, SMEs, big companies, laboratories, technology transfer organizations):

- Biotech and Medtech sectors mapping in the Alpine Space;
- 19 actions with regards to technology transfers and improvement of cooperation networks between SMEs, other businesses and public authorities, research centers or education establishments;
- 7 actions assisting SMEs for the promotion of environmentally-friendly products and production processes;
- 12 collaborative projects set up involving SMEs (AAL, FP7-ICT, Eurostars...);
- 206 SMEs and RTD centers involved in activities;
- 16 transnational economic clusters set up or strengthened;
- 2 Summer Schools were organized on Biotech in Munich (Germany) and on Medtech in Grenoble (France) for master degree and PhD students in order to make them create links between their theoretical educational background and industrial issues.

Two sustainable tools were developed to facilitate business partnerships and EU project setting-up in the Alpine Space: a transalpine search engine (www.alpslifesciencesearch.com) and a partnership tool named Mindbrowser.

Lessons Learnt

Alps Bio Cluster's Project Partners identified and created three expert groups on the key themes:

- 1/ "e-Care" to stimulate a transversal approach relating to «health and information and communication technologies», involving industrial and research players as well as end-user representatives and professionals from the medico-social sector;
- 2/ "ecosystem services for the benefit of human health" to foster the development of transnational projects on green biotechnologies in environment, economy, health and social fields;
- 3/ "bring red technology and personalized medicine together".

These groups both transnational and multidisciplinary worked to help building innovative solutions on an innovative market.

The setting-up, the animation and the outputs of such expert groups are fruitful for the territory if and only if the issues they address are highly connected to specific topics of the territory. For examples:

- 1/ "e-Care" experts group answered to a consultation of EC on eHealth Action Plan 2012-2020 and made a paper on the implementation of eHealth solutions on large scale in European mountain areas.
- 2/ "ecosystems services for human health" expert group proposed 10 recommendations for local authorities for the implementation of green biotech.

The 3rd expert group on "red technologies and personalized medicine" dealing with much more worldwide issues than the 2 previous one had more difficulties to mobilize, identify and address issues linked to the Alps.



Replication / Roll out

As explained in the previous part, every action undertaken under Alps Bio Cluster having a strong connection with specific topic of the territory is a key factor for success.

On top of that, issues addressed with such a methodology can be transferred to territories with the same specificities such as Islands which are facing isolated situations and fragiel ecosystems.

