



## Call for Papers – Abstracts

### Looking back on a six-year cluster initiative in Western Switzerland

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### Abstract

The PST-FR (Pôle Scientifique et Technologique du Canton de Fribourg<sup>1</sup>) is a cluster initiative that started in 2009 with the objectives (1) to promote collaboration between the academic and economic sector, (2) to foster competitiveness and innovation and (3) to support the economic development policy of the region. PST-FR is a response to the “innovation support” component of the New Regional Policy (NPR), a national initiative whose objective is to stimulate economic and social development, and it focuses on technological innovation developed through public/private partnerships. Its aim is to implement a dynamic of technological innovation in companies working in high added-value sectors. This paper presents the development of the PST-FR from the perspective of an economic policy oriented toward support of clusters. The number of members of the PST-FR doubled in six years from about 100 in 2009 to more than 270 in 2014. The activation, context and growth of the supported clusters - Swiss Plastics Cluster - Cluster IT Valley – Cluster Energy & Construction are described. The evolution of the associated economic sectors during the 2009-2014 period is briefly addressed. The services proposed to the PST-FR cluster members are based on four pillars: funding of innovative collaborative projects, technology monitoring in the relevant sectors, organization of conferences and networking activities and, finally, international positioning. During the period 2009-2014, the PST-FR supported 29 collaborative projects for a total public investment of about 3.5 million Swiss francs. The paper presents the typical size, composition and objectives of these projects. Key success factors and lessons learned are presented as well as an assessment of the influence the development of clusters has had in terms of support to the economy of the canton. The complementary approach and objectives of the CDEP-SO sectorial platforms (Alp ICT, BioAlps, CleantechAlps and Micronarc) are also reported.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.pst-fr.ch](http://www.pst-fr.ch)