



Call for Papers – Abstracts

Clusters working in partnership to create international critical mass for SMEs - *Creation of SME technology directories within life sciences*

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Abstract

More than 40 life science clusters from Europe and beyond, worked together in 2014 to create a Global Cluster Biomarker Programme which is now published and promoted as a critical mass of biomarker SMEs, with over 200 SMEs and research groups profiled. This demonstrates the potential and capability for clusters to work together with limited resources to achieve significant international visibility for their SMEs.

The topic of biomarkers was selected by the clusters that make up the membership of the Council of European BioRegions (CEBR), as it has well-defined scientific and commercial parameters, enabling clear entry criteria for all entries nominated. Cluster managers from CEBR and their global cluster partners, selected SMEs and research groups from within their clusters that met entry criteria and submitted profiles to a central platform. Profiles were assessed for matching entry thresholds and refined or declined as required.

Profiles were structured within an agreed template and an online tagged, searchable directory was created using a low cost blogging platform. This was published at www.global-cluster-biomarkers.net and, along with a printed version of the directory, the platform was launched at the BIO Convention in San Diego in June 2014.

The ambition of the platform will be repeated in 2015 with a target of medical device SMEs, with both platforms kept growing and high profile through the development of a 'Hot list' of SMEs at 6 monthly intervals, based on news releases from SMEs listed in the directory and the recognition of their progress. Programme such as these demonstrate how clusters acting together can create international critical mass for SMEs, particularly in narrower technology or industry bands where SMEs would struggle to achieve a high profile and access to international partners. These programmes can be delivered at low cost and thus are accessible to clusters of all sizes.