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Project “Enhancing capacity of universities to initiate and to participate in clusters development on innovation and sustainability principles” (UniClaD)

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At present time, 46 cluster initiatives are identified in Lithuania. Some of them are still at the embryonic stage or are presented only by groups of enterprises whose gathering was sparked by the desire to take advantage of the EU structural funds. Only a quarter of the identified clusters are being formed naturally, in developing new products or services through long-term co-operation and seeking to gain a bigger market share, thus enhancing the overall competitive ability of the cluster enterprises.

The following can be classified as naturally formed clusters: Vilnius Cinematography Cluster, Laser and Engineering Technologies Cluster, E-services Cluster, Photovoltaic Technology Cluster, MONAK2 Modern Home Creation Cluster, Odontology Innovations Cluster, ABBI Cluster, Plastics and New Materials Cluster, iVita Wellness Cluster, and ELIT Cluster. The foundation for these cluster formations – long-term mutual co-operation in the development of new products or services and the opportunity to seize a bigger market share owing to joint effort, thus increasing the overall competitive ability of the cluster enterprises.

Most clusters form in the service sector, where the number of cluster formations is remarkably higher than in the industry sector. Especially many cluster structures are initiated in the sector of services that change the physical or mental characteristics of the client (especially in the field of health promotion and cultural industry) and information services. In the processing industry sector, most cluster formations establish in the sectors of chemical industry and food and beverage industry. The lowest number of clusters is recorded in the sectors of the textile industry and wood and furniture industry.

In Lithuania, clusters form in economically strongest cities (Vilnius, Klaipėda, Kaunas, and Alytus), which have the most dense concentration of operating economic entities and highest employment rate. However, certain embryos of clusters can be found in the Lithuanian provinces and some regions have their own specifics (Biržai, Druskininkai, Kėdainiai, Mažeikiai, Ignalina, etc.).

As far as the international scope of Lithuanian clusters is concerned, it can be stated that most of the clusters participate in international projects (Baltic Sea Region 2007-2013, EUREKA Eurostars, projects funded by the 7th EU Common Programme, etc.) and other EU initiatives in creating the knowledge and innovation space and develop commercial co-operation with foreign partners.

The essential strengths of the activities of the Lithuanian clusters include favourable conditions for their operations (relatively affordable and qualified labour force, favourable location in terms of logistics, well-developed logistics infrastructures, and high level of the engineering capability of the enterprises).

Examples from Food and Agriculture sector:

National Food Cluster

The National Food Cluster is a network of cooperation between Lithuanian food sector businesses and research institutions which seeks to identify market niches on the basis of which Lithuanian food industry could replace low value-added chains with high value-added chains; concentrate human, financial, organisational, infrastructure and technological resources by occupying designated market niches for Lithuanian enterprises; organise a continuous process of acquisition of skills, knowledge and information by network participants, enabling them to become active and competitive market participants.

The Association "National Food Cluster" was established on 3 April 2006 in Babtai, Kaunas district.

The head of the cluster is Dr. Ceslovas Bobinas. (Institute for Gardening and Horticulture)

Focused on fruit and vegetables production, processing innovations, marketing.

Smart Food Cluster

A cluster consists of food industry companies representing individual industry sectors in domestic and foreign markets, not acting like direct competitors to one another, and creating possibilities for mutual trust and cooperation.

Mission – to help cluster members to enhance competitiveness in foreign markets, bringing together the capabilities of the companies, competencies and contacts.

The cluster members are interested in target partners:

Food and beverage wholesalers, who want to represent the members of the Association of export markets;
Food retailers, suppliers and manufacturers for their networks;
The Hotel, Restaurant and Catering (HoReCa) representatives;
Food producers are looking for cooperation opportunities with other manufacturers of similar products;
Association and other business structures, linking the activities of companies engaged in similar or linking traders.
Members are some biggest food industry players as well as smaller producers.

Others:
Alliance of Baltic Beverage Industry

Biopower Plants Development Cluster

Food Technologies Digitalization LT
Related to liquid (milk, soft drinks, juices, vegetable oils, chocolate, etc.) and bulk (cereal flakes, flour, pasta, dry milk proteins, whey proteins, promising sweeteners, xylitol, groats, etc.) food technology development.
Focus on digitization of new technologies, the development of the food industry on the principles of "Industry 4.0". Developing new solutions for the safe transportation of liquid foods by road while maintaining strict thermal regimes.

AgriFood Lithuania DIH
Digitalization of agriculture, food and related industries. AI, internet of things, smart sensors, place detection, aerodistance, blockchain, remote sensing, big data, cloud technologies.