



Report on Roadmap for implementation of joint services

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Publishable summary

The current document represents the plan of EXCITE partners for joint services within clusters and their members, following an approach focused on exploitation of synergies as a result of strategic analysis of partnership and upskilling and reskilling opportunities. The major objective of the current report is to set up a Roadmap for Joint Services, following the Joint Action plan for the development of new services to support the Digital Transformation of different regions at European level within the Excite partnership. The main idea is joint services to foster collaboration and cross-fertilization of different regions.

The concept and methodology for the implementation is built on smart specialization and cross-sectoral value chain opportunities. Within the European context, we would like to create joint services that foster more business creation, public-private partnership, and knowledge of public funding opportunities. The Conclusions of the Report on Cooperation opportunities serve as a basis for the roadmap and implementation of joint services.

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5. Introduction

EXCITE aims at strengthening cluster management and facilitate exchange and strategic partnership between cluster staff and cluster members by using the ClusterXchange mobility scheme. The project focuses on skills, processes and services related to digital transformation - both in terms of the cluster organisation itself and its members, to be able to support them in successfully accessing global markets. Better understanding of common services and the main action plan is a key to the development of a Roadmap for Joint Services.

Thus, the major objectives of the current report are to review the benefits for its cluster and respective members of the implementation of joint services.

6. Strategic Analysis of Value Added of Joint Services within Clusters

Within the project, the Consortium has already identified cross-cluster matches and cross services in the Joint Action Plan for the development (Deliverable D2.2) of new services which we will use in the Roadmap for Implementation of joint services. These can be found in the next figure:

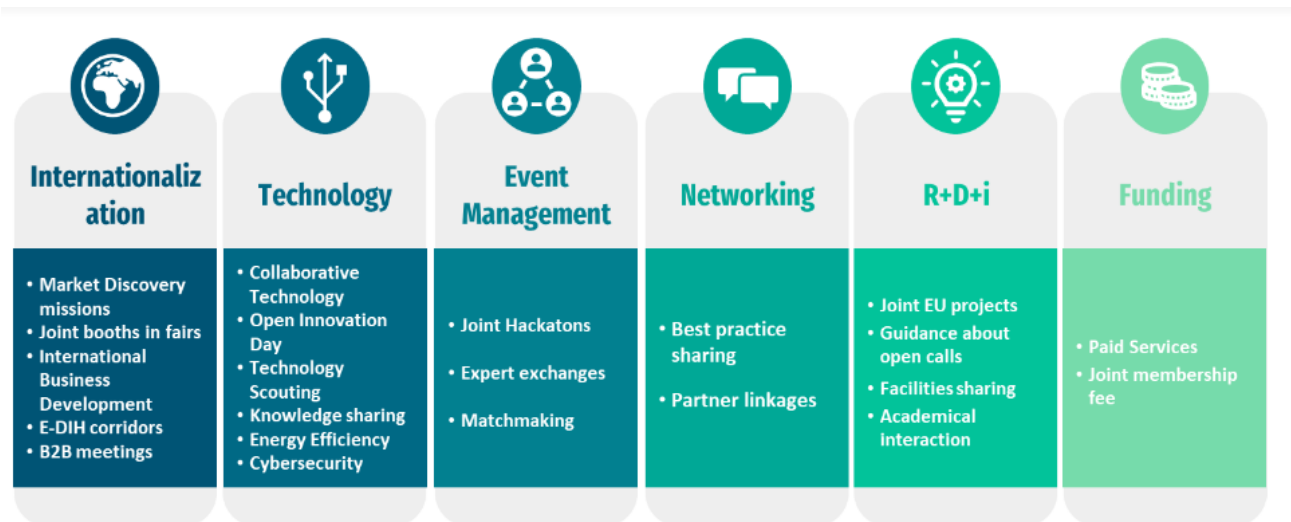


Figure 1. Joint Services

After the analysis of the experience and capabilities of the cluster partners, we prioritized two services that have been shown to be of interest within the Joint Action Plan to be developed by the clusters of the EXCITE project and are indicated in this roadmap.

The services that we selected and have been carried out are located within the:

- Internationalisation:
 - **International Business**
 - **B2B meeting**

- Technology
 - **Open Innovation Day**

The selection of specific services within the Internationalization and Technology domains for inclusion in the Joint Action Plan stems from a careful consideration of the clusters' capabilities, market dynamics, and the overarching goals of the EXCITE project. The motivation behind choosing these services is outlined below:

International Business:

The clusters recognized the immense potential for collective growth through international business expansion. By collaborating on market research and joint ventures, the clusters aim to amplify their global reach and capitalize on shared resources, thus enhancing the competitiveness of each member on the international stage. Organizing joint activities related to internationalization will support the implementation and will benefit from economies of scale, improving the interaction among different regions.

B2B Meetings:

Direct business-to-business meetings were identified as a crucial component for fostering collaboration and partnerships. The clusters foresee these meetings as opportunities to initiate collaborative projects, exchange expertise, and strengthen relationships. The goal is to leverage these interactions for mutual benefit and to create a robust network of business connections.

Open Innovation Day:

The decision to include Open Innovation Day in the Joint Action Plan arises from a shared belief in the power of collaborative problem-solving. By organizing and supporting such events, the clusters aim to create an environment conducive to innovation, bringing together large companies and SME-suppliers to collectively address challenges and drive technological advancements.

In essence, the motivation behind the selection of these services is rooted in the belief that collaborative efforts in international business, B2B meetings, and open innovation will not only enhance the clusters' global competitiveness but also foster a culture of innovation and knowledge exchange. The chosen services align strategically with the clusters' collective vision for growth and excellence in the dynamic landscape of technology and international markets.

7. Goals to Improve EXCITE Smart Specialization

The comprehensive objectives articulated in this section are strategically crafted to enhance the smart specialization strategies within the EXCITE partnership. These aims are centered on leveraging the combined strengths of both regional and joint initiatives, nurturing research and innovation, facilitating collaboration across diverse sectors, and heightening awareness in both public and private spheres. The attainment of these objectives is pivotal for crafting a shared regional vision that seamlessly aligns with broader regional strategies.

This aligns with our overarching goals, which seek to elevate Excite smart specialization by capitalizing on regional and joint strengths, fostering research endeavours, cultivating collaboration across sectors, and enhancing public and private awareness. The ultimate objective is to forge a unified regional vision that resonates with and contributes to the broader regional strategies.

7.1 Maximizing Regional and Joint Strengths:

Objective: Acknowledge and capitalize on the distinctive strengths inherent in each cluster, amplifying synergies through collaborative endeavours.

Leveraging both regional and joint strengths lays the groundwork for robust collaborative initiatives within the EXCITE partnership. This entails a comprehensive assessment of the individual competencies of each partner and the identification of areas where collective capabilities can be harnessed for mutual benefit.

7.2 Cultivating Research and Innovation:

Objective: Highlight the significance of research and innovation as pivotal drivers of smart specialization, fostering a culture of continuous development and exploration.

Smart specialization thrives on a solid foundation of research and innovation. The clusters commit to actively advocate and participate in initiatives that advance research agendas and innovative practices. Collaboration in joint research projects, engagement in EU-funded initiatives, and cross-cluster knowledge exchange contribute to this goal.

7.3 Facilitating Cross-Sector Collaboration:

Objective: Promote collaboration that transcends sectoral boundaries, encouraging the cross-fertilization of ideas and expertise.

Clusters within EXCITE recognize that the intersection of different sectors can lead to innovative breakthroughs. Encouraging collaboration across sectors involves creating platforms for dialogue, establishing shared initiatives, and fostering an environment where knowledge seamlessly flows between diverse industries.

7.4 Enhancing Public and Private Awareness:

Objective: Augment the visibility and understanding of smart specialization strategies among both public stakeholders and private enterprises.

To ensure the success of smart specialization, garnering support from both the public and private sectors is crucial. This goal involves proactive efforts in disseminating information, organizing awareness campaigns, and engaging with key stakeholders to create a shared understanding of the benefits and opportunities presented by smart specialization.

7.5 Contribute to a Unified Regional Vision:

Objective: Actively participate in the formulation of a joint regional vision aligning with the broader goals and strategies of the EXCITE partnership.

By contributing to the development of a joint regional vision, clusters aim to align their individual objectives with the broader aspirations of the EXCITE partnership. This involves collaborative planning sessions, strategic workshops, and ongoing dialogue to ensure a cohesive and unified approach to smart specialization.

7.6 Goals

Each of the organization under EXCITE has prioritized their own objectives within the joint exploitation of activities within the partnership based on their own cluster strategies and business models. In the next lines this prioritization can be found:

7.6.1 DTI Cluster:

- Strengthen ties with public organizations to enhance the visibility and influence of smart specialization strategies.
- Research smart specialization strategies of partner countries to identify potential areas for collaboration and knowledge exchange.

7.6.2 SCS Cluster:

- Establish crossed membership with EXCITE partners to foster a collaborative ecosystem.
- Share expertise and knowledge on specific sectors, encouraging the mobility of experts within the partners' ecosystems or participation in events.

7.6.3 Business Hive Vilnius:

- Contribute to the cross-sector collaboration by actively participating in shared initiatives and collaborative projects.
- Promote regional strength by showcasing the unique competencies and capabilities within the cluster.

7.6.4 Mazovia Cluster ICT:

- Collaborate with other clusters in joint regional vision activities, ensuring alignment with broader EXCITE goals.
- Strengthen ties with public and private entities to enhance awareness of smart specialization strategies.

7.6.5 GAIA:

- Contribute to the cross-sector collaboration by actively participating in shared initiatives and collaborative projects.
- Actively participate in joint regional vision activities to ensure alignment with broader EXCITE goals.

7.6.6 Silicon Saxony:

- Strengthen ties with public organizations to enhance the visibility and influence of smart specialization strategies.
- Research smart specialization strategies of partner countries to identify potential areas for collaboration and knowledge exchange.

These partner-specific goals contribute to the overarching objectives of the EXCITE smart specialization strategy, ensuring that each partner plays a vital role in the collective success of the partnership.

8. Build a Vibrant EXCITE Eco-System

This section underscores the imperative of cultivating a dynamic EXCITE eco-system, focusing on enhancing visibility, augmenting innovation capacities, fostering collaboration, and promoting transnational cooperation among regional ecosystems. The goal is to achieve a vibrant eco-system through strategic interventions aimed at creating a conducive environment for sustained growth and innovation.

Improving Visibility:

Enhance the visibility of EXCITE clusters within the broader ecosystem.

Increased visibility fosters recognition, attracting potential collaborators, investors, and partners. Strategies include targeted marketing, participation in industry events, and the development of a cohesive brand identity.

Focusing on Innovation Capacities:

Promoting the collaboration beyond regional boundaries.

Transnational cooperation broadens opportunities and perspectives. Initiatives may include joint projects, exchange programs, and collaborative events with clusters from different regions.

Enhancing the EXCITE Eco-System:

The Roadmap for joint services includes building a vibrant EXCITE eco-system to strengthen European competitiveness. The focus is on improving visibility, developing innovation capacities, creating joint value, enhancing regional attractiveness, fostering transnational cooperation between regional ecosystems, and strengthening cluster organizations.

Actions:

- Implement joint value creation services.
- Organize international events between regional eco-systems.
- Provide support for innovative SMEs.

9. Develop innovation capacities

It is crucial for our Roadmap of Joint services because it focuses on the improvement of competences and capabilities in order to close the gap between research and technology. We, as cluster organisations would like to create incentives for the SMEs to become international innovators.

- Develop innovation competences and capabilities
- Close research & technology gaps
- Stimulate SMEs as international innovators

Actions:

- Obtain innovation funding for SMEs.
- Secure awards for SME innovations.
- Foster partnerships between research centers and SMEs.
- Provide new services to SMEs to increase their competitiveness and innovation capacity.
- Organize international events for SMEs.

10. Create more business

It is another goal in our Roadmap because we would like this project to develop business models, foster entrepreneurship, benefit from new business opportunities and improve the access to international partners. We would like cluster organisations to focus on SMEs and start-ups to offer services that will close the gap between the current services offered.

- Develop entrepreneurship
- Develop business models
- Unlock new opportunities
- Improve access to international partners
- Focus on SMEs and start-ups

Actions

- Win Entrepreneurship awards
- Sign MoU with international partners
- Provide services tailored to the needs of SMEs and start-ups
- Project management with international partners
- Boost Start-up orientation services
- Provide networking opportunities for entrepreneurs

- Explore new business opportunities
- Create start-up orientation service

11. Mobilise Funding Sources for EXCITE

Mobilizing funding sources for EXCITE involves facilitating public-private partnering, providing knowledge on commercial investment, entrepreneurial funding, and venture capital, as well as informing clusters about public funding opportunities.

Facilitating Public-Private Partnering:

Foster collaboration between public and private entities to support EXCITE initiatives.

Public-private partnerships bring together resources and expertise. Strategies involve creating platforms for dialogue, identifying shared goals, and establishing frameworks for collaboration.

Knowledge on Commercial Investment and Venture Capital:

Equip EXCITE clusters with knowledge on commercial investment, entrepreneurial funding, and venture capital. Understanding funding mechanisms is crucial. Workshops, seminars, and partnerships with financial institutions contribute to building this knowledge base.

Informing about Public Funding Opportunities:

Providing clusters with information on available public funding opportunities. Public funding is a valuable resource. Keeping clusters informed about relevant opportunities involves regular updates, collaboration with funding agencies, and the dissemination of funding guidelines.

Actions:

- Obtain public funding for EXCITE initiatives.
- Prepare newsletters for the dissemination of public funding opportunities.
- Organize networking events for entrepreneurs.
- Create public-private partnership initiatives.

12. Implementation Roadmap- Best Practices & Implementation Context

Best practices and the implementation context significantly influence the roadmap for joint services. Detailed discussions on these aspects are provided in section 2.4. The EC's Pact4Skills, launched in 2020, aims to support organizations with upskilling and reskilling for thriving through the green and digital transitions.



Figure 2 Implementation of roadmap

The Roadmap of Joint Services details various stages in terms of the timeline: assessment of execution readiness, upskilling execution capabilities, implementation/development of joint services, and evolution of joint services. The evolution phase addresses shared priorities and outlines the way forward.

Assessment of Execution Readiness:

Objective: Evaluate the preparedness of EXCITE clusters to embark on the implementation roadmap.

A thorough assessment ensures that clusters are equipped with the necessary resources, skills, and commitment before initiating the roadmap.

Upskilling Capabilities:

Objective: Enhance the capabilities of cluster members through targeted upskilling initiatives.

Continuous learning is vital for adaptation. Upskilling programs, workshops, and collaboration with educational institutions contribute to skills enhancement.

Development of Joint Services:

Objective: Implement and develop joint services outlined in the roadmap.

The actualization of joint services is a key milestone. This involves collaborative efforts, resource allocation, and adherence to the proposed timelines.

Evolution of Joint Services:

Objective: Ensure the continuous evolution and improvement of joint services.

Joint services must adapt to changing circumstances. Regular evaluations, feedback mechanisms, and a commitment to innovation contribute to the ongoing evolution of services.

This comprehensive approach underscores the multifaceted nature of building a vibrant eco-system, enhancing innovation capacities, creating business opportunities, mobilizing funding, and systematically implementing a roadmap for joint services within the EXCITE partnership.

13. Joint Services Development Roadmap

In our strategic journey towards success, our roadmap is a dynamic guide that outlines the specific actions and services essential to achieving our goals. This comprehensive table serves as a visual representation of our path forward, ensuring clarity and alignment across the organization. This roadmap table not only serves as a valuable planning tool but also fosters effective communication, ensuring that every team member understands their role and contribution to the collective success of our endeavour.

Actions	Timelines and Services		
Processes approach	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3
Secure Senior Management Commitment for internationalization	[Orange]	[Orange]	
Set clear goals for Technology	[Blue]		
Assess of execution readiness	[Brown]		
Appoint a high caliber launch team for Networking	[Green]		
Organize promotion activities for Events Management		[Light Blue]	[Light Blue]
Build capabilities/Upskill execution capabilities for Funding		[Dark Green]	[Dark Green]
Establish digital savvy leadership and foster evolution of joint services			[Purple]
Nurture Digital Culture	[Yellow]	[Yellow]	[Yellow]

Table 1. Roadmap with specific actions and services

13.1. Internationalisation:

Securing senior management commitment is the foundational step in endorsing internationalization, paving the way for allocated resources and support for international business initiatives. Setting clear goals and assessing execution readiness provide a strategic roadmap, ensuring the organization is well-prepared for global engagement. The appointment of a high calibre launch team focuses on networking expertise, facilitating the establishment of international business relationships and fostering collaborations through events like B2B meetings. Organizing effective promotion activities enhances visibility and participation, attracting potential international partners. Finally, building capabilities for funding ensures the organization's ability to secure financial resources for international business ventures and partnerships.

13.1.1 International Business:

GAIA, as the lead partner for International Business, plays a pivotal role in securing senior management commitment for internationalization. Recognizing the critical importance of top-level support, GAIA will engage with senior executives to communicate the strategic significance of internationalization. Through careful strategizing and clear communication channels, GAIA aims to secure ongoing support from senior leadership.

In setting clear goals for international business, GAIA will conduct a thorough market analysis to identify promising international opportunities. The defined goals will follow the SMART criteria, ensuring they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This will provide a concrete roadmap for internationalization, aligning all stakeholders with a shared vision.

To assess execution readiness, GAIA will undertake a comprehensive internal assessment. This involves evaluating the organization's capabilities and identifying potential challenges or gaps. The insights gained will inform the development of an execution plan, ensuring that GAIA is well-prepared to navigate the complexities of internationalization.

Lead Partner: GAIA

Key Activities:

- Secure Senior Management Commitment for internationalization.
- Set clear goals for international business.
- Assess execution readiness.

13.1.2 B2B Meetings:

As the lead partner for B2B Meetings, SCS spearheads the formation of a high-caliber launch team dedicated to the success of B2B initiatives. This involves identifying individuals with expertise in B2B coordination and networking, forming a team with diverse skills, and providing necessary training and resources for effective B2B engagement.

Organizing promotion activities for B2B events is a key focus for SCS. A carefully crafted marketing strategy will be developed to enhance awareness and participation in B2B meetings. Leveraging various channels, including social media and industry partnerships, SCS aims to maximize the reach and impact of these promotional efforts.

Recognizing the importance of upskilling for successful B2B execution, SCS will actively work on building capabilities within the team. This includes targeted upskilling initiatives to ensure that the team possesses the necessary skills and competencies for seamless B2B coordination and engagement.

Lead Partner: SCS

Key Activities:

- Appoint a high calibre launch team for B2B meetings.
- Organize promotion activities for B2B events.
- Build capabilities/Upskill execution capabilities for B2B meetings.

13.2 Technology:

Securing senior management commitment for technology goals is crucial, ensuring the allocation of resources and support for initiatives like Open Innovation Day. Setting clear technology goals establishes a roadmap for the development and execution of innovative events. Assessing execution readiness identifies strengths and gaps in technological infrastructure, ensuring preparedness for collaborative and innovative activities. The appointment of a high calibre launch team with networking expertise ensures seamless execution of technology-related aspects during events. Effective promotion activities for technology-driven events increase visibility and attract a diverse range of participants. Building capabilities for funding enhances the organization's ability to secure financial resources for technology-driven initiatives and innovations. Establishing digital-savvy leadership and nurturing a digital culture ensure technology is leveraged, fostering an environment where innovation thrives across various services.

13.2.1 Open Innovation Day:

Silicon Saxony, as the lead partner for Open Innovation Day, takes on the responsibility of appointing a dedicated team for organizing this impactful event. The success of Open Innovation Day hinges on the expertise and commitment of the organizing team. Silicon Saxony will carefully select individuals with experience in event management, innovation, and technology to ensure the seamless execution of the Open Innovation Day.

Fostering a digital culture within the Technology focus area is a strategic initiative led by Silicon Saxony. This involves promoting a mindset that embraces digital transformation and innovation. By creating awareness and providing training on digital advancements, Silicon Saxony aims to infuse a digital-first approach within the Technology focus area, ensuring alignment with modern technological trends.

Establishing digital-savvy leadership for driving technological advancements is a critical aspect led by Silicon Saxony. This involves identifying and nurturing leaders within the Technology focus area who possess a deep understanding of digital technologies. These leaders will guide the clusters toward adopting cutting-edge technologies, ensuring that the joint services remain at the forefront of technological innovation.

Lead Partner: Silicon Saxony

Key Activities:

- Appoint a dedicated team for organizing Open Innovation Day.
- Foster a digital culture within the Technology focus area.
- Establish digital savvy leadership for driving technological advancements.

13.3 Evolution of Joint Services:

Business Hive Vilnius, as the lead partner for the Evolution of Joint Services, plays a key role in fostering continuous improvement through feedback mechanisms. Business Hive Vilnius will establish robust feedback channels, ensuring that stakeholders can provide input on the effectiveness of joint services. Regular evaluations and adjustments based on feedback will contribute to the evolution and enhancement of services.

Developing mechanisms for academic interaction within the identified joint services is a strategic initiative led by Business Hive Vilnius. This involves creating platforms for collaboration between academic institutions and industry partners within the joint services. By facilitating knowledge exchange and research collaboration, Business Hive Vilnius aims to enrich the academic dimension of joint services.

Exploring opportunities for paid services within the joint collaboration framework is another important responsibility led by Business Hive Vilnius. This involves conducting market analyses, identifying services with potential commercial value, and developing strategies for introducing paid components. The goal is to create sustainable revenue streams that contribute to the long-term viability of joint services.

Lead Partner: Business Hive Vilnius

Key Activities:

- Foster the evolution of joint services through continuous feedback mechanisms.
- Develop mechanisms for academic interaction within the identified joint services.
- Explore opportunities for paid services within the joint collaboration framework.

Overall Goals and Vision:

Partners will collaborate across services to enhance smart specialization, build a vibrant global ecosystem, develop global innovation capacities, create more local and global business opportunities, and mobilize global funding sources.

This roadmap ensures that each partner plays a crucial role in areas that align with their expertise and strengths, fostering a collaborative and efficient approach to achieving the overall vision.

14.CONCLUSIONS:

The roadmap includes three aspects- people, processes and technology. The roadmap of joint services is a bridge between our strategy and project execution. We have explored different actions over time that lead to a wide range of services such as improving excite smart Specialisation, developing innovation capacities, building a vibrant ecosystem, and mobilizing funding sources for Excite. We have taken into account the role of best practices and the implementation context. Also, we have explored the value added for each partner which is of great importance in order to foster joint services implementation even after the end of the project. **Each partner has contributed so that we have a comprehensive roadmap of joint services. Our Roadmap also includes specific examples of joint services per partner which is a sign how practical the roadmap is. The roadmap with specific actions and services shows our commitment to implement joint services in the best possible way.**