



ACTTiVate, a reference in fostering cross-sectoral tech transfer

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ACTTiVate has directly promoted half a hundred cross-sectoral technology transfer projects, and laid the foundations for the development of new value chains involving different sectors and countries. **1.5 million euros of direct financing have been allocated to these SMEs, and 4.3 million euros in business support services** (information, training and facilitation of access to relevant stakeholders, mainly).

The beneficiary SMEs have also been able to raise close to **1.7 million extra-funds in 2018**, according to the information they have provided. This more than doubles the direct financial support provided by ACTTiVate that year. In addition, they have invested about 4.5 million euros in their innovative projects, without including the ACTTiVate funds.

These are just some of the quantitative results of the initiative, whose impact on SMEs is far-reaching. In fact, SMEs give ACTTiVate a global score of 4.4 points out of 5 and **SMEs appreciate the non-financial support received** (especially training).

At the same time, ACTTiVate offers **a reference for the promotion of cross-sectoral technology transfer**, carried out by European SMEs and with the **aid of cluster organizations and other business support entities**, as a means of stimulating and promoting regional innovation ecosystems.

The results of the initiative, along with the role of clusters, the challenge of cross-sectoral innovation and a selection of promising projects supported by ACTTiVate, were presented at the [final conference](#), under the title “**Fostering cross-sectoral technology transfer in Europe: Lessons and prospects from the European project ACTTiVate**”. It took place at [DES2019](#) (Madrid, 21st – 23rd May 2019).

One of the speakers, [Mercedes Delgado](#), Associate Professor of Strategy and Innovation at Copenhagen Business School, and Research Scientist at the MIT Innovation Initiative, highlighted the figure of the “**clusters as the key players for boosting innovation**”. She detailed the main characteristics of the clusters and affirmed that they are everywhere and in every sector. Although she considers important to **pay more attention to the traded industries** (vs local industries), in terms of taking advantage of the benefits linked to cluster agglomerations, as well as identifying **ecosystems and companies that are producing specialized inputs for other industries** (more downstream linkages and more agglomeration benefits); so as not to create clusters from scratch, where there are still no companies. Then, to be located in appropriate ecosystems is vital for startups; as their performance depends not only on strategy, but also on location.

[Anna Sobczak](#), EU policy-making expert for clusters and emerging industries at the European Commission (EC), stated that the EC is **using clusters to support SMEs, taking into account that clusters are facilitators and bridge-builders for innovation**. In the EU there are more than 3,000 strong regional clusters in related industries. The EC is promoting the **building of bridges across European ecosystems through cluster partnerships**, using three pillars: clusters as accelerators for innovation and industrial change, capacity building (Cluster Excellence Program), and inter-regional and international cluster cooperation. In addition, cross-sectoral collaboration has been one of the themes highlighted in the framework of the awareness-raising campaign across Europe on the role of clusters and their impact (developed between November 2018 and April 2019).

In the panel discussion on the **cross-sectoral innovation** the main stakeholders were represented: startups (through [Vitulo Plus](#)), clusters / sectoral support agencies (Oost NL), mentors / business advisors (Agnieszka Klucznik – Törö, ACTTiVate mentor) and investors (Spain New Ventures Lead, Johnson&Johnson). They highlighted some key factors such as the importance of **customer validation to bring an idea to the market, and of maintaining a continuous learning attitude and a global vision**, among others. Regarding the clusters' value, it was affirmed that clusters contribute with infrastructures to the needs of SMEs and facilitate their arrival to potential clients. They also bring and share values, and build relationships, making sure that SMEs get the right connections. Moreover, in relation to ACTTiVate, according to the CEO of Vitulo Plus, Gary Antonius, it has **enable them to be quicker** (time to market was improved) and it has facilitated the access to complementary financing.

Also, nine SMEs supported by ACTTiVate had the **opportunity to present their projects** at the event: [Chamco](#) (Agrofood & Health), [CiTD](#) (Aerospace & ICT), [Clover BioSoft](#) (ICT & Health), [Destina Genomics](#) (Health & Agrofood), [DNActive](#) (Health & Agrofood), [Fastinov](#) (Health & Agrofood), [IXL](#) (Health & Agrofood), [Mater Dynamics](#) (ICT & Agrofood) and [mDurance](#) (ICT & Health). Three of them (Chamco, DNA Active and Mater Dynamics), together with Vitulo Plus, also participated in a final round table in which various aspects of **“the Journey through the project”** were addressed.

By [Afi, Analistas Financieros Internacionales](#)

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