



# Best practices, lessons learnt and the next phase of ClusterXchange

*Testimonials from CXC participants and  
Partnerships*

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# SMART4NZEB



# Who we are



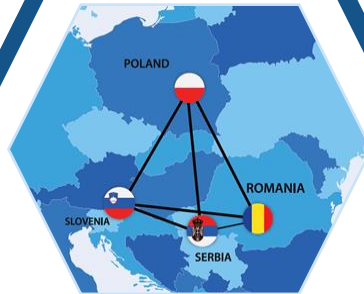
Poland



Slovenia



Romania



Poland



Serbia



Slovenia

- Background: construction sector, energy efficiency, nZEB
- Focus: promoting the nearly zero energy building concept

- Background: RES, Energy efficiency
- Focus: research on sustainable environmental solutions

- Background: ecofriendly materials
- Focus: providing an innovative solution for the construction sector

# Two virtual exchanges – Jan/Feb & June 2021



## Type of exchanges

- Capacity building
- Networking and Events
- 3 working days – 24 hrs

## Main activities

- Getting to know each other
- Trainings
- B2B meetings
- Workshops
- Success Stories

## Weekly, every MONDAY :: 10:00-14:00hrs CET from 18 January 2021, until 22 February 2021

Day 1 - 18 January	Day 2 - 25 January	Day 3 - 1 February	Day 4 - 8 February	Day 5 - 15 February	Day 6 - 22 February
Main Topics & Activities: Getting to know each other and learning on how to communicate efficiently - training, workshop	Main Topics & Activities: nearly Zero Energy Buildings - training, B2B meetings, workshop	Main Topics & Activities: Circular Economy - training, B2B meetings, workshop	Main Topics & Activities: Globalization and Internationalization - training, B2B meetings, workshop	Main Topics & Activities: Industry - Competences and Digital Transformation Plan - training, B2B meetings, workshop	Main Topics & Activities: Funding opportunities and how to write project proposals - training, B2B meetings, workshop

## Weekly, Mondays and Thursdays from the 07th, until the 24th of JUNE 2021

Day 1 - 07 June 09:00-12:30hrs CET	Day 2 - 10 June 09:00-12:30hrs CET	Day 3 - 14 June 09:00-12:30hrs CET	Day 4 - 17 June 09:00-12:30hrs CET	Day 5 - 21 June 09:00-14:00hrs CET	Day 6 - 24 June 09:00-14:00hrs CET
Main Topics & Activities: Introduction, Getting to know each other, Partnering Clusters Presentations, Workshop	Main Topics & Activities: Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Clusters	Main Topics & Activities: Writing project proposals - training and workshop (Part I)	Main Topics & Activities: Writing project proposals - training and workshop (Part II)	Main Topics & Activities: Building partnership with the client / Professionalism in the sales and customer service - training and workshop	Main Topics & Activities: Building partnership with the client / Professionalism in the sales and customer service - training and workshop



# Two virtual exchanges – Jan/Feb & June 2021

## Participation

### 1st Virtual Exchange

43 attendees, out of which 7 were Visiting Organisations (4 clusters and 3 SMEs)

### 2nd Virtual Exchange

58 attendees, out of which 7 were Visiting Organisations (1 cluster and 6 SMEs)

Total: 2 Host Organisations and 14 Visiting Organisations → **14**

## EXCHANGES



# Interests in the ClusterXchange

## Host Organisations

- Mutual learning, experience sharing and being part of an overall fertile environment for development, both for organizations and individuals
- Promotion – presentation of the cluster, cluster members & sharing of experience on best practices - renewable energy sources, sustainable development, research and innovation
- Networking – getting to know new potential partners for further projects / initiatives
- Inspiration – learning about how other clusters are dealing with common challenges

## Visiting Organisations

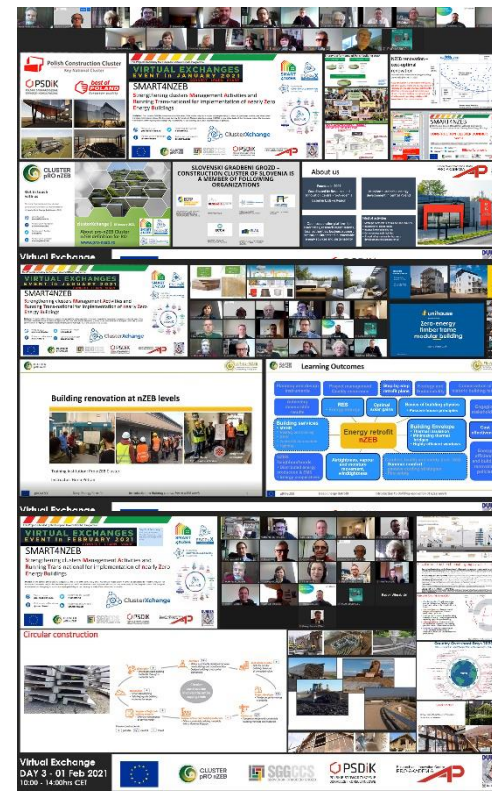
- Enriching network of international partners to jointly develop project proposals and apply for funding / implement project together
- Improving skills in terms of cluster management and marketing
- Developing new services for cluster members
- Exchanging experiences, establishing new non-standard ones, participation in training
- Learning about foreign markets
- Gaining new knowledge & skills regarding energy efficiency in buildings, especially nZEB
- Improving personal and professional competencies



# Success stories

## Some insights

- Collaboration on new projects & other activities (e.g. Axelum collaboration with PSDiK)
- New SMEs joining Clusters (some of the guests joined clusters that were participating in the events)
- New technologies that may be transferred to other countries (e.g. hempcrete – Cogreen d.o.o)
- Insights on the challenges faced by the participants (feedback forms / open discussion sessions) – this allows for the development of more coherent and applied strategies & action plans
- Interest of participants in new markets



# Lessons learnt

## Some insights

- Pre-ClusterXchange events should be organized
- Potential participants should be contacted directly (face-to-face / by phone at least) – e-mails or newsletters most of the times are not sufficient and close contact should be assured
- High competition in on-line events (people are bored, cannot decide on what is worth participating in)
- Having diverse topics on the menu can be interesting and dynamic, but, in some cases, it could make it harder to find interested parties



# Research and Innovation Centre Pro-Akademia

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## Some insights

- Invite speakers with an on-site experience – they will talk about real-life examples, not only about theory
- Prepare an engaging agenda (discussions, workshops) – to prevent dropping out of participants throughout the event
- Prepare participants – explain objectives of the event, what can they expect, and potential benefits. Explain also what the event is NOT about
- Ask participants about their expectations and address them in the agenda





# Cogreen d.o.o.

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## Some insights

### Company:

- Using hemp with other natural materials and renewable technologies for following sustainability goals (CO2, energy efficiency, living environment)
- Co-creating BIO based economy. Supporting architects in early stage of project preparations with concept and technical info.
- Better living environment for people to boost their health, quality of their life and creativity in society.

### Virtual exchange:

- I liked connecting with other companies globally and creating possible collaborations
- Learning Cultural differences
- Sharing experiences with policy makers, research institutions for win-win results

### Could have been better:

- Greater emphasis on companies good practices, point of view – how market works
- More cluster activities on business integration

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# Collective best practices

## For Partnerships

- **From the administration perspective**
  - Have a walkthrough of all administrative issues with all participants before the event (pre-ClusterXchange meetings – not only exchange of e-mails)
  - Develop checklists (based on the Quality Manual as well) and send reminders in case something is not in order (including phone calls) – avoid indirect contact between HO and VO (discuss this with partners before) – keep everyone interested updated (all on same page)
- **Organisation of action plan and agenda**
  - Organize pre-ClusterXchange meetings, as an icebreaker and to identify the needs and interests of potential participants – emphasize that the ClusterXchange / Virtual Exchange is not just another webinar
  - Identify potential participants interests before the event (e.g. questionnaires / meetings)

## For participants

- **How to enhance the role of the HO during a virtual exchange**
  - Find ways to always keep participants engaged - avoid long presentations, use icebreakers and challenge those present to interact with each other – let everybody know in advance the technical requirements (e.g. working microphone / camera) and that they will be asked to participate actively in the event, not just watch it passively
- **How to start and end an exchange to benefit the most from it**
  - Inform participants on what will happen from the very beginning and facilitate matchmaking during the event (e.g. make sure participants exchange contacts, participate in co-creation sessions), so that in the end all those who might build new collaborations will be able to work together out of their own initiative

# Collective best practices

## For Partnerships

- **Organisation of the events to best meet the needs of multiple participants**
  - Consider having parallel activities in order to best match participants interests and needs
- **How to follow-up with all the participants**
  - Organize follow-up events, including follow-up events for making sure all administrative issues are sorted out (especially for virtual exchanges)
- **How to make the same participants be interested in being part of physical exchanges as well**
  - Have an idea on how the physical exchanges will be organized (a draft agenda, main activities, refer to who might be joining and what the immediate benefits might be for all participants)
  - It seems organisations are more interested in immediate practical / commercial advantages than long term results (e.g. from upskilling) – showcase effective results

## For participants

- **What not to do...**
  - Do not avoid engagement with other participants
  - Do not let people outside of discussions / Do not monopolize discussions – involve everybody
  - Try to always be supportive and have a friendly demeanor to other participants

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# Thank you for your attention!




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