



Collaboration for Tomorrow – ‘The Brabant Way’

Experience the synergy of innovation, policy, and business as Brabant's unique ecosystem fosters transformative growth and sustainability across Europe.

26 – 27 MARCH 2025

Conference Center High Tech Campus Eindhoven

Address: The Strip, High Tech Campus Eindhoven 1, 1B, 5656 AE Eindhoven

Day 1 – Wednesday, March 26th, 2025

09.00 – 09.25	Registration & Coffee
09.25 – 09.30	Welcome by moderator - <i>Simone van Trier</i>
09.30 – 09.35	Introduction to Clusters meet Regions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teodora Jilkova, ECCP team member
09:35 – 10:00	<p>Opening Session – <i>Simone van Trier</i> Connection. Leading. Entrepreneurial. Scoring. Enjoying. Historical. That ´s Brabant at its best.</p> <p>Opening by Irena Banaszynska, Representative of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union responsible for the Council WP on Industry, Space, Technical Harmonisation</p> <p>Opening interview with the CMRs organisers and the European Commission – “Welcome to Noord-Brabant”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul van Nunen, Managing Director, Brainport Development • Sander Groenen, Managing Director, AgriFood Capital • Jakub Boratynski, Director for Networks & Governance at Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission

10.00 – 10:15	Setting the scene – presentation of the Input Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan-Philipp Kramer, ECCP team member 	
10:15 – 10:35	Keynote “Regional economic development and the role of clusters in regional innovation ecosystems” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koenraad Debackere, Executive Director, KU Leuven Research & Development / Vice Chairman, Leuven Mindgate 	
10:35 – 10:55	Keynote “Operating in a regional innovation ecosystem” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joost van Hees, Vice President Global Government Affairs, ASML 	
10:55 – 11:15	Keynote “Brabant, nursery of strong triple helix collaborations for competitiveness” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martijn van Gruijthuijsen, Regional Minister in charge of Economic Affairs, Innovation and International Affairs, Province of Noord-Brabant / Member of the European Committee of the Regions 	
11:15 – 11:45	Coffee Break	
11:45 – 12:45	Panel I - Collaboration across borders, from nice to needed <i>Moderator – Simone van Trier</i> Panel Description: Regional ecosystems alone can only go so far—specialisation is essential to making a real difference. Clusters play a pivotal role in forging trusted collaborations with complementary partners across borders, strengthening European industry as a whole. But how do you initiate and excel in these critical collaborations? Join this panel to uncover strategies and success stories demonstrating cross-regional partnerships' power to drive competitiveness and innovation. Firestarter: “Building European Corridors” - Kristina Karanikolova , Innovation Policy Consultant and Researcher, TNO Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lieke van Alphen Buscardini, Senior Advisor EU Public Affairs, Province of Noord-Brabant / Vanguard Initiative • Sophie Bourez, Co-director, Wagralim • Wolfgang Munch, Senior Expert, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission • Kristina Šermukšnytė-Alešiūnienė, CEO, AgriFood Lithuania / Vice President European Cluster Alliance 	
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch	
13:45 – 14:15	Parallel programme on location Departure by bus to one of the three site visits (please choose during registration).	
14:15 – 16.30	Programme SITE VISITS	
	Robotics & AI and (Circular) Semiconductors: @Brainport Industries Campus (Eindhoven) Manufacturing has long been an economic stronghold for Brabant, particularly in Brainport Eindhoven. The development and integration of key enabling technologies, combined with effective supply and value chain management, have driven transformative changes in the region—changes	(Plant-based) Agri- & FoodTech: @Noordkade Veghel Discover how Brabant's agricultural and food sector leads global innovation. This vital industry combines technological expertise with farmers' wisdom to create a smart, sustainable, and circular food system. From fields to factories, Brabant drives sustainability and turns ideas into innovative products. Join
	Safety & Security: MELT @Avular (Eindhoven) The Dutch defence industry is, in majority, located within the Province of Noord-Brabant. Emerging technologies and shifting geopolitical realities are key drivers behind the renewed focus on safety and security. Join this session to explore the latest developments in this rapidly growing field firsthand.	

<p>that are only expected to accelerate. Join this session for a comprehensive update and an inspiring glimpse into the future.</p> <p>14:15 – 15:45 Presentations Moderated by Harm de Bruin, Province of Noord-Brabant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brainport Industries & Brainport Industries Campus John Blankendaal, Managing Director, Brainport Industries ● Brainport Digital Factory Benno Beuting, CEO, Cordis SUITE ● Circular Business Plan Semicon Harold Mehagnoul, Head of Strategic Sourcing & Procurement Re-use & Repair, ASML ● Breda Robotics Chantal van Spaendonck, Director, Breda Robotics ● The European perspective Mariusz Baldyga, Programme Officer - EU policies, DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology, European Commission <p>15:45 – 16:30 BIC tour with on-site visits/demonstrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Company 'AM-Flow' ● Company 'Cordis SUITE' ● Company 'X Robotics' ● Vocational Education School Summa College 	<p>this site visit programme to explore cutting-edge food innovations and discover how collaboration fuels Brabant's success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome and short introduction Simon Maas, Industry & (inter) national Collaboration, AgriFood Capital ● Smart Farming in Brabant Stefan van Gestel, Smart Farming Field Crops, Province of Noord-Brabant Paul van Zoggel, Program Developer, VDBorneCampus & Wageningen University & Research ● Scale-Up Plant Brabant Marjan Welvaarts, Programme Manager Agrofood, BOM Jonica de Bruijn, Programme Manager Plantbased, REWIN ● Smart Food Processing – Next Tech Food Factories Lisanne van Oosterhoud, Programme Manager, Brainport Development Simon Maas, AgriFood Capital Bram de Vrught, Managing Director / Co Owner, QING ● Food Waste Free United Janny van der Heijden, Province of Noord-Brabant Jip Jordaen, Projectmanager, Food Waste Free United ● Wrap-up, Q&A Simon Maas 	<p>14:15 – 15:45 Presentations Moderated by Jules Lancee, Business Developer Quantum Technologies, Brainport Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● About Avular, a Mobile Robotics company Albert Maas, CEO, Avular ● Brainport Innovation and Technology for Security and NATO's DIANA Accelerator Midas de Rooij, Projectmanager Brainport Innovation & Technology for Security (BITS), Brainport Development ● HIVE dual-use Aerospace cluster Ivo van der Vlis, Managing Director, Business Park Aviolande & Kol. Robin Schoonen, Commander Logistics Centre Woensdrecht, Air Support Command (ASC) & Edwin Poldermans, Location Director Woensdrecht, Fokker Services Group ● The European perspective Paul Kruis, Policy Officer, DG DEFIS, European Commission <p>15:45 – 16:15 Avular tour</p>
16:15 – 16:45	Transportation back to High Tech Campus for wrap-up and Matchmaking	
16:55 – 17:00	Re-start plenary programme	
17:00 – 17:05	Wrap-up of the day <i>Moderator – Simone van Trier</i>	
17:05 – 17:30	Matchmaking the Brabant way <i>Rudy van Beurden</i> In Brabant, business networking is unique and informal. Hierarchies and titles don't hinder meaningful conversations, and everyone, from CEOs to newcomers, is approachable. Matchmaking happens in relaxed settings, often with a drink, making interactions flow naturally. This fosters authentic connections, making networking both effective and enjoyable.	
17:30 – 18:30	Matchmaking & Networking drinks	
18:30	End programme Day 1	

Day 2 – Thursday, March 27th, 2025

08:45 – 09:00	Registration & Coffee
09:00 – 09:30	Pitching 'op de zeepkist' (speakers' corner)

09:30 – 09:40	Welcome by moderator <i>Simone van Trier</i>
09:40 – 10:30	<p>Panel II - Funding, more than just money <i>Moderator – Simone van Trier</i></p> <p>Panel Description: Securing resources is vital, but funding is more than just a financial transaction. The distinction between project-based funding and the strategic implementation of cluster-led programs lies in the transformative results they achieve. In this panel, actors on the ground and policymakers will share their insights and experiences, offering a fresh perspective on leveraging funding to strengthen value chains and maximise cluster impact.</p> <p>Firestarter: “An innovative view on funding cluster activities” – Steven Berens, Advisor, ERAC</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felipe Carrasco, Regional Vice-Minister for Industry, Trade and Consumers, Valencia Regional Government • Veerle De Graef, Programme Manager, Flanders' FOOD • Pieter Liebrechts, Partner and Senior Advisor, ERAC • Mariella Masselink, Head of Unit Industrial Forum, Alliances, Clusters, DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission • Stefan Rink, CEO, AM-Flow
10:30 – 11:20	<p>Panel III - Cluster potential: driving regional and global impact <i>Moderator – Simone van Trier</i></p> <p>Panel Description: This engaging panel will delve into how clusters catalyse innovation and collaboration, showcasing strategies and measurable outcomes that extend beyond economic metrics. Following new ways of mapping value chains and addressing key strengths, clusters redefine success and truly (re)shape the future of ecosystems, both regionally and beyond.</p> <p>Firestarter: “A new approach to generating true impact” - Naomie Verstraeten, Chief Innovation and Technology, Brainport Development</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Søren Elmer Kristensen, CEO, Odense Robotics • Frank Bösenberg, Managing Director, Silicon Saxony • Maria Cristina Russo, Director Prosperity, DG for Research and Innovation, European Commission • Celine van Soest, Manager and Senior Advisor, ERAC
11:20 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 – 12:50	<p>Panel IV - Adapting for success: exploring the diversity of cluster models <i>Moderator – Simone van Trier</i></p> <p>Panel Description: Clusters are as unique as the challenges they address—there's no one-size-fits-all model. Anchored in triple-helix collaboration among academia, industry, and government, clusters develop distinct “centres of gravity” that drive their focus and impact. This panel will highlight diverse perspectives from clusters led by universities, companies, and regional agencies, offering insights on how to adapt and thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape. Learn how</p>

	<p>to ensure your cluster's model stays fit for purpose while embracing its diversity and potential.</p> <p>Firestarter: "Boosting cluster collaboration from national level" – Hugo Leyte, Innovation Accelerator, Dutch Ministry of Defence</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norbert Reichl, General Manager, Food Processing Initiative • Mariella Masselink, Head of Unit Industrial Forum, Alliances, Clusters, DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission • Ákos Szépvölgyi, Managing Director, CTRIA • Renee Westenbrink, Strategy director and Head research policy at General Affairs, Eindhoven University of Technology
12:50 – 12:55	<p>ECCP announcing the next CMRs edition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teodora Jilkova, ECCP team member
12:55 – 13:00	<p>Wrap-up and closing of the plenary part of the conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AI Tool – Dembrane • Mariella Masselink, Head of Unit Industrial Forum, Alliances, Clusters, DG GROW, European Commission • Sander Groenen, Managing Director, AgriFood Capital • Simone van Trier
13:00 – 14:00	<p>Lunch & Pitching 'op de zeepkist' (speakers' corner)</p>
14:00 – 15:30	<p>The afternoon will offer a selection of more interactive and hands-on workshops and courses. Participants will receive an insight into a dedicated topic of particular relevance for high-quality cluster management. Make use of this unique opportunity to discover new insights and to connect with session leaders and participants. Make your choice during registration.</p> <p><u>Knowledge sharing session Monitoring & Business Intelligence (Insight 14:00 – 14:45)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruben Ottenheijm, Business Analyst, Brainport Development • Sanne Walraven, Junior Business Analyst & Monitoring, Brainport Development • Naomie Verstraeten, Chief Innovation and Technology, Brainport Development <p>A presentation by Brainport Development's monitoring and BI team regarding monitoring and strategic development. During the session, the Photonic dashboard will be showcased as an instrument for measuring current strengths and providing insights that can be used to achieve strategic positions within international value chains.</p> <p><u>Understanding Innovation Corridors (Crash course 14:00 – 15:30)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristina Karanikolova, Innovation Policy Consultant and Researcher, TNO <p>Explore interregional innovation corridors in this engaging workshop, designed for professionals (like DIH representatives, cluster and partnership managers, and regional policymakers) eager and responsible to enhance their regional impact through European collaboration. Participants will gain insights into the corridor concept, its purpose, and its evolution. It will also address defining its mission and introducing the different collaboration levels</p>

	<p>to maximise interregional impact. By the end of the session, participants will leave with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why European partnerships matter for innovation • Understand what key elements are needed to build successful collaborations • A better understanding of their needs for collaboration and their role in building these • This session isn't just a starting point. It's a step toward unlocking new opportunities for your region. Join us and be ready to build connections that matter!" <p><u>Managing and maximising your EU-funded projects</u> <u>(Workshop 14:00 – 15:30)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Struijcken, Partner and Senior Advisor, ERAC • Olav Veldhuizen, Senior Advisor, ERAC <p>Managing and maximising your EU-funded projects: The impact of good governance & smart project control.</p> <p>This 90-minute session will explore the essential principles of good governance and effective project control in managing EU-funded projects. Participants will learn practical strategies to enhance project oversight, ensure compliance, and optimise outcomes, all while maximising the impact for European clusters. By the end of the session, attendees will be equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to drive success and achieve lasting results in their EU-funded initiatives.</p>
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