



LONG TERM STRATEGY AND COOPERATION AGENDA

DELIVERABLE 4.3



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Transit aimed to strengthen the resilience of textile, advanced manufacturing, aerospace and construction SMEs towards greener and more digital social and business models, with a mixed support mechanism including individual assessment, coaching and a lump sum to ensure their consolidation and sustainability.

The project provided an open online collaborative platform involving innovation actors from the aerospace, construction, advanced manufacturing, and textile sectors that will serve as a space for sharing best practices and as a matchmaking system for new ideas for innovation and circular economy and new collaboration partnerships.

The In Transit consortium integrates 10 partners coming from Aerospace, Construction, Textile, and Advanced Manufacturing sectors: ATEVAL (Spain) as Project coordinator, Tèxtils.CAT (Spain), CTA (Spain), CORALLIA (Greece), PRODUTECH (Portugal), SPG (Austria), IDEAM-TUS (Ireland), POLIMI (Italy), IRT Jules Verne (France), and CCS (Slovenia).

This document was elaborated within the frame of task 4.5 – Long Time Strategy and Cooperation Agenda with the aim of guaranteeing the partnership's sustainability and the effectiveness of the In Transit space after the project end and for a minimum period of 5 years, with the view to continue mutual learning and joint initiatives for the exploration and exploitation of synergies between the partner clusters, its members and ecosystems.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), having the present document as annex and being an integral part of it, to enforce the strategy and the agenda is being signed by all partners representatives expressing their commitment to maintaining the momentum and the fruitful partnership that was created.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	4
1.1 In Transit project.....	4
1.2 In Transit objectives.....	5
2. Long term strategy.....	7
2.1 Core purpose.....	7
2.2 Vision.....	7
2.3 Mission.....	8
2.4 Goals.....	8
2.5 Strategic focus areas.....	8
3. Cooperation Agenda.....	9
3.1 Activities.....	9
3.2 Instruments.....	10
3.3 Timeframe.....	11
3.4 KPIs.....	11
4. Conclusion.....	12

1. Introduction

1.1 In Transit project

In Transit project facilitated dedicated support to SMEs through a combination of multiple mechanisms to enable cross-sectoral and cross-border innovative activities. The Project extended the uptake of technologies as part of the digital transition of the textile, construction, aerospace and advanced manufacturing sectors. The consortium partners which comprised seven innovation clusters from these sectors, one business incubator and accelerator, one university, and one research centre brought this cross-regional partnership to life.



Figure 1. In Transit consortium partners

The In Transit project helped small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to take advantage of new, sustainable, and innovative ways of doing business. It supported them by combining advanced technologies with environmentally friendly practices, helping create a more sustainable business environment. The project also helped SMEs connect seamlessly with innovation networks and digital solution providers like technology clusters, digital innovation hubs and testing labs, to help them choose the best systems for their circular business models. The project worked closely with SMEs, linking them to experts, knowledge networks, and digital tools across different industries. The project partners brought strong expertise from various fields and regions, offering valuable cross-border support. In Transit directly supported 547 SMEs far exceeding the initial target. This success is an extra incentive for us to ensure that the partnership remains active and continues to bring value to its members and their entire ecosystem.

1.2 In Transit objectives

The In Transit project helped SMEs adopt sustainable, innovative business models and practices by fostering collaboration and linking them with innovation hubs, knowledge networks, and digital solution providers across the EU. Supported by experienced Project Partners within a strong, well-connected industry consortium, the project facilitated cross-sector and cross-border collaborations that accelerated digital adoption and promoted more sustainable production patterns. The project was guided by four key objectives:

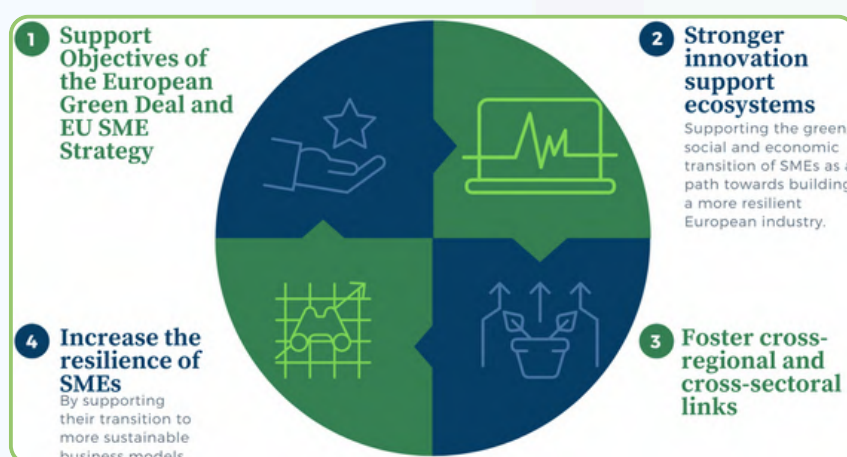


Figure 2. In Transit project objectives

I. Support Objectives of the European Green Deal with EU SME

Business model innovation was facilitated for SMEs through a mixed support mechanism including individual assessment, coaching and a lump sum aligning with the EU Circular Economy Action Plan, setting out sustainability principles and specific requirements linked to environmental and social aspects in resource-intensive focus industries (textile & construction as such, and ICT & electronics for aerospace).

II. Stronger innovation facilitating ecosystems supporting the green, social and economic transition of SMEs as a path towards building a more resilient European industry

An open online collaborative platform involving innovation actors from the aerospace, construction, and textile sectors supported by advanced manufacturing solutions was created ([In Transit Community Platform](#)) to share best practices and act as a matchmaking system for new ideas for innovation and circular economy including new collaboration partnerships. Through this open platform, which was subscribed by 333...

...participants, the cross sector and cross border collaboration was facilitated towards promoting discussions, innovations and partnerships which resulted in applications for Cascade funding projects and also could lead towards establishing long term business relationships. Overall, this system promoted a strategic framework to seed, explore, and scale-up new sustainable and digital value chains based on the EU Green Deal, New EU Industrial Strategy: building resilient, autonomous European industries, and EU SME Strategy guidelines to shape the SMEs' transition towards a greener business model towards driving positive economic and social impact.

III. Foster cross-regional and cross-sectoral links

SMEs across the EU region were facilitated with dedicated learning expeditions and matchmaking events to establish the seed for collaboration among the focus sectors by identifying potential partners for commercial and innovation partnerships through projects. The participation in the above-mentioned events was supported with travel vouchers. There were 72 participants in the 2 matchmaking events, Barcelona (Spain) and Graz (Austria), and 81 in the 4 learning expeditions, Ljubljana (Slovenia), Seville (Spain), Barcelona, and Athens (Greece).

IV. Increase the resilience of SMEs by supporting their transition to more sustainable business models

SME competitiveness and resilience were strengthened through cross-sector, inter-cluster collaboration and the creation of new sustainable and digital business models. This was achieved through advisory services and initial assessments provided to 100 SMEs under the INNOVATE vouchers, as well as funding for 61 SMEs involved in 43 projects through the DEVELOP voucher.

2. Long term strategy

EXPLOIT	› Synergies, › Common assets, › Innovation sources, › Growth potential of the clusters, › Joint collaborations in the target sectors and beyond
DEFINE	› Complementarities › Cooperation interests
DESCRIBE	› Work frame of IN TRANSIT space after the end of the project › Actions and initiatives with related means › KPIs to measure the progress

Figure 3. Overall objectives of In Transit long term strategy

2.1 Core purpose



In Transit partnership exists to strengthen Europe's innovation ecosystem by fostering collaborative, cross-sector, and cross-regional connections that provide support along the entire innovation pathway. Our purpose is to build an agile, resilient and interconnected innovation community that transforms collaboration into lasting impact, enabling innovation to succeed beyond individual projects and to deliver long-term economic, social, and environmental value.

2.2 Vision



By 2030, we aim to become Europe's go-to sustainable hub for cross-sector innovation, where textiles, aerospace, construction, and production technologies companies -and beyond- collaborate to grow, digitalize, and go green thus becoming more competitive. We envision a partnership that continuously evolves, supports its members, and acts as a reference model for collaborative innovation and sustainable transformation across Europe.

2.3 Mission



Our mission is to build and expand a dynamic European platform that enables SMEs and partners to collaborate across regions and sectors, sharing best practices, knowledge, and business opportunities. We intend to drive innovation, and green and digital transformation, ensuring long-term impact beyond project boundaries.

2.4 Goals



By 2030, our impact will be reflected in a stronger, more connected European innovation ecosystem where collaboration and knowledge exchange drive concrete development. Our goals are:

- Create a sustainable, cross-sector innovation hub that unites regions and industries, enabling continuous collaboration and knowledge transfer.
- Support SMEs in their green and digital transition by helping them adopt future-ready technologies, sustainable practices, and resilient business models.
- Improve SME access to funding by aligning European, national, and regional instruments and promoting cascade financing as a standard mechanism.
- Build long-term capacity and impact through high-quality training, mentorship, events, and by developing a self-sustaining community that continues generating growth, partnerships, and policy influence beyond the project's duration.

2.5 Strategic focus areas

Several areas were identified that are interesting for the clusters and their ecosystems. Nevertheless, three areas were collectively chosen as strategic:

SMEs ENGAGEMENT

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFER

3. Cooperation agenda

The In Transit partnership has set up a cooperation agenda for 2026-2030 that, although ambitious, is considered feasible. The agenda identifies some potential activities to assure the sustainability of the partnership, some instruments to materialize them and the time-frame for the implementation. Some KPIs are defined with related targets that will allow the monitoring of the implementation.

3.1 Activities

SMEs ENGAGEMENT

- Foster collaboration among clusters by sharing members needs
- Annual nurturing online event (pitching session by In Transit beneficiaries) with matchmaking
- Networking events taking advantage of partners initiatives and projects
- Maintain B2Match database ongoing
- Maintain In Transit website and use it to disseminate information to SMEs
- Follow-up on INNOVATE and DEVELOP beneficiaries once a year

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

As a consortium:

- Joint proposals for new projects on innovation preferably with FSTP
- Synergies with ongoing projects

To partners members:

- Promote and/or disseminate to SMEs webinars on 'How to find funding'
- Share Cascade Funding calls from other ongoing projects (e.g. [EU Funding & Tenders portal](#) – Cascade; [ECCP Funding](#), ...)
- Share ESA downstream funding calls

TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFER

- Involve other sectors in the In Transit hub to promote technological transfer
- Keep on nurturing the relation with the In Transit Ambassadors and expand the pool: CITEVE, NTT, University of Zagreb
- New cooperation/competition scheme dedicated to SMEs (in the aim of other ongoing projects; on circularity and digitalisation)
- Promote the use of DIHs by SMEs in their path for digitalization

3.2 Instruments

SMEs ENGAGEMENT

- Partners shared document with members needs
- Other projects matchmaking events disseminated to the In Transit community
- B2match platform (data migration to another project to scale up)
- Partners shared events calendar and info

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

As a consortium:

- Explore EU Funding opportunities (Euroclusters, I3, HORIZON Cl4 calls, ...)

To partners members:

- Ongoing projects, namely Euroclusters ([GREENMANTIS](#), [ELEVATEX](#), [CR.EU.IN.HERITAGE](#),)
- In Transit website
- Partners shared events calendar and info

TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFER

- In Transit Exploitation Handbook featuring the DEVELOP projects (promote and disseminate)
- MoUs with entities and initiatives from other sectors
- DIHs managed or integrated by any of the partners ([PRODUTECH DIH](#), [SMART ATTICA](#), [InnDIH](#), [AIR ANDALUSIA](#))
- Hackathons or Open Calls competitions with other ongoing projects (e.g. ERASMUS+, ...)

3.3 Timeframe

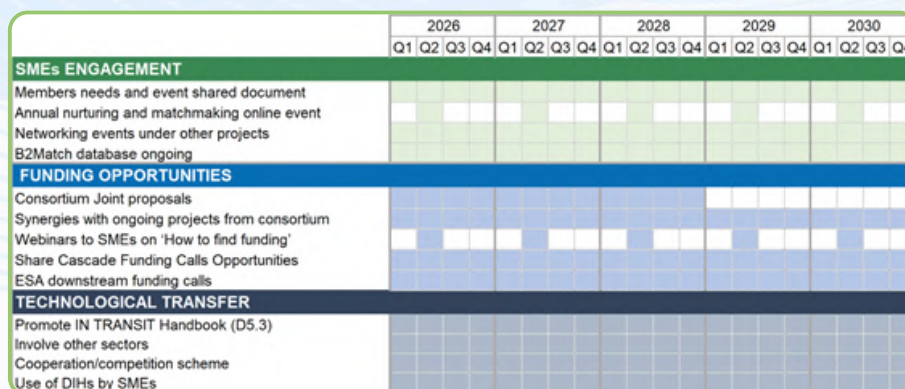


Figure 4. Timeframe of the activities defined in the cooperation agenda 2026-2030

3.4 KPIs

KPI	Description	Target
Partnership meetings	Annual meetings	5 (1 per year)
Strategy and agenda review	Strategy updates to integrate new joint actions	2 (minimum)
New joint projects	Joint applications with broad partner participation	3
Nurturing & Matchmaking Event	Nurturing and matchmaking annual events	5
Open Calls in other projects	Open Calls competitions within other ongoing projects	8
New sectors integrated	Sectors added to the hub through joint projects	4
New linkages created	New linkages with EU/national/regional initiatives	7

4. Conclusion

This joint long-term strategy and cooperation agenda is meant to guide the following work of the partnership after the In Transit project ends. It is envisaged to be dynamic and as so reviewed and updated minimum every 2 years or responding to very disruptive events.

It is the reference document to facilitate partner's cooperation beyond the lifetime of the project.

The collaboration will be symbiotic and cross-cutting to effectively generate multiplying effects as well as intersectoral and interregional synergies for partners, members and other actors involved.

Within the aim of scaling up the In Transit network different MoU have already been signed namely with the Portuguese Cluster Habitat Sustentável, the Spanish Cluster Andalucía Aerospace as well as the InnDIH, the European Technology Platform for the Future of Textiles and Clothing, and the Green Mantis Euroclusters partnership.

This joint long-term strategy and cooperation agenda materializes the willingness to cooperate stated in the signed In Transit partnership MoU.