

CLUSTER General Assembly 2024
Friday 12th of April 2024
KU Leuven

Minutes of the meeting / Jules Vanpée

Materials of the meeting / <https://cluster.org/intranet> (Password: Erasmus1999!)

1. Opening of the Meeting and Welcome

CLUSTER President Luc Sels opens the meeting at 09:04 a.m. He presents a recap of the previous Steering Committee, and that we will formalize some of the steps during the meeting.

Secretary-General Jos Vander Sloten informs the participants of a change in the agenda for the General Assembly meeting on the 12th of April 2024. Everybody approves switching the topic 'Finance' and 'SEEEP'.

The modified agenda and minutes of the previous General Assembly on the 31st of March 2023 are unanimously approved. All meeting materials were sent to the participants of the meeting and are accessible via the intranet of the CLUSTER website.

2. Keynote presentation – Tech Transfer: Experiences from Leuven

CLUSTER President Luc Sels introduces our keynote speaker, Paul Van Dun. He is the managing director of the TechTransfer office at KU Leuven, an expert who has been part of LRD since 2000.

Paul Van Dun starts his presentation by explaining that the experiences he presents will not work for everyone or anywhere. He continues by elaboration on what TechTransfer entails and offers some examples of usages in society. Paul explains what has helped for KU Leuven in order of importance followed by the organizational structure.

Leuven Research and Development (LRD) is one central structure and decided on the 'One Stop Shop' approach. One of the main advantages is the low threshold to introduce PI's to other fields and other PI's. The result is an organic evolution of research and increased internal TechTransfer.

The last topic is on student entrepreneurship, centered around three main topics. Some of these activities are imbedded in the curriculum of the students. For example, 'learning by doing' where we ask a company to present a real life problem. They are offered an interdisciplinary team of students who will work on this topic for a year, and will propose a solution to the company. Important to note is that only the last topic is specifically focused on creating companies.

3. SEEEP

David Smeulders (TU/e) presents an update on the SEEEP Summer School. He explains that participant receive a certificate and observes a stable number attendees each year. The 2023 edition was hosted in China, they also show a growth in taking initiative. The topic for 2024 is presented and

David informs the General Assembly that the Summer School selects a maximum of 40 students, 20 places for Europe and 20 for China.

Next are the finances, David explains that there are no costs for 2023 since it was hosted in China. For 2024 the presented budget is higher due to fact that accommodation costs have doubled. David proposes a new system in which CLUSTER will reserve €1000 for each participating European student, meaning a maximum of €20.000.

The members of the General Assembly agree.

Sophie Prima (Grenoble INP-UGA) concludes this topic by presenting the provisional agenda for the 12th SEEEP workshop in September. This will be jointly organised with the CLUSTER Steering Committee.

4. CLUSTER Finances – Jules Vanpée

Jules Vanpée presents the CLUSTER actuals of the KU Leuven presidency as well as the modified agreement regarding the internal auditing process.

The general Assembly approves the report and the auditing system.

5. Update on the current activities

5.1. WG EUI

Peter Van Puyvelde (KU Leuven), explains that they did not meet formally. However, the position of CLUSTER was prominently discussed throughout this week. Peter gives a brief overview of the working group's activities in the past two years. He suggests to start looking at a mission and vision statement, because the one on the website is no longer accurate. Peter recommends that the next presidency should relocate the mission statement of CLUSTER.

He explains what the network has been doing very well, and is preparing a position paper which will be a first step towards a new mission statement. Peter is going to use the input from the past days to finalise this position paper, which will then be distributed. It be used as a discussion paper for the next steering committee in October as well as define the role of CLUSTER within the world of alliances. In this paper they should also discuss the success of the pilot lab.

Peter concludes by proposing to finalise the position paper and refine the mission statement based on our current activities.

5.2. WG CLUSTER & Africa

Laurens Rademakers (KU Leuven), explains that the WG believes in the relevance of creating cooperation with Africa. He continues with the achievements and objectives of the working group these past two years, and gives an update on the submitted 'Capacity Building'-project between CLUSTER and our African partners.

Laurens ends his presentation with 'the evolution in the EU funding system', evaluating the WG and offering recommendations.

5.3. WG Mobility

Pascale Conard (KU Leuven), gives an update on the Mobility activity and explains the topics that were discussed, mainly the sharing of experiences and the travel policy in the different institutions.

During the presentation Pascale remarks on the difference in terminology when talking about degrees. He mentions that 'Dual Degrees' are typical for KU Leuven, while others have either 'Joint' or 'Double' Degrees. However, an overall preference for the term 'Double Degree' can be observed.

The WG mobility informs that they want to improve communication to the other working groups. A WG discussion summary will come on the CLUSTER intranet.

5.4. WG Associated Partners

Guylaine Larocque (PolyMtl), presents the discussion that was held within the WG prior to the General Assembly. She explains that the main topic was preparing for the Strategic Discussion of yesterday's Steering Committee. When it comes to the removal of term 'Associated Partners', this needs to be reflected in the statutes and IR.

5.5. WG Communication

Klaus Rümmele (KIT), gives the update. He explains the guidelines for the testimonials are almost finalized. He also explains that around 6 universities have provided a contact person for distributing CLUSTER information within their institutions. Other universities still need to respond. Klaus is optimistic and believe the WG can soon start with sharing information through the channels of CLUSTER and its members. He also informs the participants that future meetings and events will be used to get a mix of statements from the participants.

In the discussion that follows, Klaus explains that this campaign is focused on the internal communication within CLUSTER and its members. It aims to increase the involvement in CLUSTER from professors and researchers for the scientific side, from students and personnel for the administrative side.

5.6. WG Entrepreneurship

Yolande Berbers (KU Leuven), gives the update on the WG's Erasmus+ Project. She explains that 'ChallengED' has been submitted and the results are expected in July. The project combines the 3 presented priorities by including local actors such as municipalities and NGO's as well as selecting topics aimed at sustainable improvement.

Jos Vander Sloten comments on the opportunity to have collaboration with other working groups.

5.7. WG GAST

Mirko Varano (KTH), provides the update for the last time as chair. We thank Mirko for his years of active involvement and wish him the best of luck in his future endeavours.

5.8. CSO

Jos Vander Sloten (KU Leuven), explains the difficulty in regards to engaging the CSO. Several ideas come up during the discussion. Involve them more in further projects such as InComm2, or try to come up with a competition. That might help integrate the students into CLUSTER and spread the name amongst the student population.

6. Next presidency 2024-2026

Roberto Zanino introduces the newly elected rector of Polito, Stefano Paolo Corgnati. Stefano talks about his background and elaborates on Polito's priorities. The General Assembly unanimously elects Polito for the 2024-2026 CLUSTER presidency.

7. Closing

We thank Luc Sels for showing his commitment by being here for the entire event both physically and mentally. Luc Sels formally closes the meeting by thanking everyone for their participation and expresses his believe in CLUSTER as an added value within the different networks. He wishes everyone to continue their engagement end commitment in CLUSTER. He thanks Jules Vanpée for all his organizational support, Peter Van Puyvelde and Jos Vander Sloten.

The meeting officially concludes at 12:41 p.m.