



GIVING TO RECEIVE: When competitors cooperate

Maritime clusters: Building on initial successes

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Speakers : **Steen Sabinsky**, Managing Director, Maritime Development Centre of Europe
Bernard Sans, President, PACA Sea Innovation and Business Cluster, France
Jean-Daniel Tordjman, Ambassadeur aux Pôles de Compétitivité, France
Niko Wijnolst, Chairman, Dutch Maritime Network

About half of the countries of Europe have maritime clusters, generally understood as groupings of economic, scientific, and sometimes governmental actors pooling their expertise for mutual advantage. A particularly active one is in France's Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur, or PACA region, as Bernard Sans demonstrated.

The PACA maritime cluster began with five partners. Three years on, it now had 250, Sans said. The cluster cooperates in the areas of maritime security, sustainable development, marine energy and biotech, and shipping. "The goal is to bring industry and research together so that projects become economic reality," he explained.

The PACA cluster's current projects include design of a hybrid diesel-solar sea shuttle, a hydrodynamic and environmentally-friendly marine paint and a safety system for sensitive maritime zones.

Also a lobby group, the PACA cluster works very closely with a similar cluster in Brittany, France's other major maritime region. It has built bridges to clusters in other industries of the region, as well, including space and aeronautics, renewable energies, IT and telecommunications.

Jean-Daniel Tordjman, who represents France's « Poles of Excellence, » or clusters, said one key to success was having precise objectives, and limiting them in number. He also considered that "people need to see each other," and not just communicate through virtual networks. This implied a certain geographic concentration. "Look at Silicon Valley. That's why it works. You're constantly bumping into someone, and the first reaction is, 'How can I help you?'" he said.

Indeed, another pillar of clusters was trust, which meant putting competitive suspicions aside and "giving to receive," Tordjman said. He advocated an international maritime cluster covering the Mediterranean.



Denmark's Steen Sabinsky pointed out that in some cases broader international cooperation might be more effective than regional models. "I believe more in a European cluster than a Scandinavian one," he said. Denmark and Sweden had established a joint maritime cluster three years ago but it collapsed due to their historical rivalry. As a result, today Denmark had its own cluster, driven primarily by shipping industry issues, Sabinsky added.

As the essential lifeline of the world economy, shipping could greatly benefit from clusters, especially in Europe, the Netherlands' Niko Wijnost argued. "Today, 40 percent of the world's existing ships and the same percentage of new ship orders are European," he said.

The key to wealth creation was innovation, he insisted. "To innovate we need to mobilize industry but also promote education." To encourage this, the Dutch Maritime Network had used what Wijnost called "psychological tools." "Innovators are interested in prestige, so we set up a maritime innovation prize with a fancy gala with government ministers and all that," he said. This had been so successful they now had six such prizes. "Peer pressure and ambition is very stimulating, which is part of a cluster's function, too," he added.
