

Why join the Cluj IT Cluster?

We are frequently asked by interested companies, but also by cluster members a number of questions regarding the nature of our activity, more specifically questions such as: why should we join the cluster? what are our benefits as members? what does the cluster organization do for me? what does the cluster doesn't do for me? The FAQ below aims at responding to some of these questions while also providing some insight into what Cluj IT Cluster is really about.

Frequently Asked Questions [by companies]:

What is Cluj IT Cluster?

Cluj IT Cluster is a cluster management entity, built on the quadruple helix model of the IT value chain (companies, universities and research institutes, authorities and other catalyst organizations and the community). Cluj IT facilitates and integrates the communication and collaboration among its members.

Why should I join?

Your organization will be exposed to a new form of collaboration that seeks and leverages the strategic alignment with other players in the IT value chain in order to build new business increase opportunities and create business sustainability in our region. This is achieved through a tested environment which allows each member to identify its interests in relation with others in Cluj IT Cluster.

What are some of the direct benefits of members?

Collaborative environment:

- Members have access to a network of IT companies, universities and public authorities in order to utilize at the maximum their resources, develop new projects, reduce project overloads, accelerate their market approach and influence public policies in order to improve their businesses.
- Facilitation communication with other entities in the IT value chain.
- Access to the knowledge management platforms of Cluj IT Cluster (community.clujit.ro, drive, and others) and focused mailing lists. Where you can find from [opportunities](#) to [workgroup spaces](#).
- Access to personalized @clujit.ro account on the Google Apps for Business platform

Access to Services:

- Internationalization through relevant networking contacts for business and project development (matchmaking, consultancy, facilitation)
- Representation of interests in relation with providers of various services, products etc., public authorities (local, regional, national or European)
- Selection of tailored information relevant for your organization's activity
- Matchmaking events with various types of potential partners: research teams from universities and institutes, foreign business delegations, members of other clusters
- Internally organized workshops and trainings
- Matchmaking for the participation in consortia for public funding
- Early information on funding opportunities available in EU and Romania
- Single contact point for various providers and possible partners
- Priority to all events organized by Cluj IT Cluster such as Cluj Innovation Days
- Facilitation of project proposals and implementations with other stakeholders

Promotion:

- Through Cluj IT's communication channels (print, online, social media, conferences, etc)

What are some possible indirect benefits for members?

- Access to facilities obtained by various initiatives of cluster members (e.g.: tailoring of state aid facility, changes in call documents / guides based on cluster feedback to central authorities, openness towards collaboration from local authorities for smart city initiatives promoted by members)
- Association of the Cluj IT Cluster results in shaping public policies and public financing opportunities with it's members

What services does the cluster provide to members (to be revised)?

- Matching of project demand / overload with resources available in member companies
- Group Purchasing Organization (GPO) – representation for the negotiation of certain services, products, utilities based on needs expressed by the members
- Project Management Office (PMO) – platform for large or medium scale projects where several companies / entities might be involved in order to provide an integrated approach towards their management
- **Innovation ...**
- **Internationalization ...**
- **Human resources ...**
- **Entrepreneurship ...**
- **Lobbying ...**
- Facilitation of high level international consultancy acquisition on product development and commercialization
- Facilitation of access to venture and other forms of capital
- Consultancy in the preparation of applications to EU and Romanian public funding
- Consultancy in innovation management
- Consultancy in organizational development

- Consultancy in product development and commercialization strategies
- Monitoring of public tender opportunities based on member's interest, in Romania and EU states. Consultancy in preparation of offer submission, development of consortiums, litigations related to public tender
- Facilitation of internationalization – finding business opportunities through the Cluster's partners, finding contractors
- Providing a channel for advertising and commercialization of member's premium services and products (based on individual pre-approval of each item)
- Preparation of targeted economical delegations
- Consultancy for the management of events

How does the cluster work?

The cluster's main functionality is to provide facilitation of interest based interaction between various stakeholders along the value-chain of the IT industry. This is done under the framework established by the General Assembly of Cluj IT which translates into equal opportunities, fair treatment and positive action approach. More concretely, Cluj IT Cluster facilitates the formation of working groups based on the strategic objectives of its members through which interested participants contribute towards the realization of a portfolio of applied projects and/or activities. When the case, intellectual property and business knowledge are protected through non-disclosure agreements signed by all parties prior to engagement in initiatives. Working Groups are usually coordinated by one or more members of the Board of Directors, while the projects and activities are carried out by the cluster's own staff in collaboration with people designated by the organizations. The overall implementation processes are coordinated by the Executive Director. In some cases, project / activity participation is conditioned by resources allocation in the preparation phase. In other words, priority is given based on the previous resource engagement of any of the cluster member. As a general rule, all activities are initiated, driven and supported (with resources) by member organizations through their representatives.

What does the cluster not provide?

- Does not generate projects for you. The cluster members generate projects for themselves (mostly in collaboration with other members), by leveraging Cluj IT Cluster's network, financing opportunities, visibility and business trust, shared knowledge and strategic alliances.
- Does not execute a valid idea you propose, unless you come up with a plan that describes how resources (including budget) are mobilized to support the initiative. The executive team does not have the resources available for all the ideas members come up with.
- Does not act as a sales agent for members. Except where it is initiated and financed by some members.

Why isn't my organization contacted to be offered projects?

Cluj IT Cluster does not usually offer projects, but rather integrates larger scale projects where direct beneficiaries could be member organizations. Exceptionally, Cluj IT Cluster might be able to bid internally certain projects that require expertise from cluster members. Your organization will extract benefits of being part of the cluster as long as you will invest resources for project opportunities where the participation of a single entity is either un-eligible or your organization's resources are not sufficient.

Why only some companies are involved in projects in the cluster?

Not all projects that Cluj IT Cluster is carrying out are of interest for all members. Participation in or project benefits are determined by:

- **Interest and involvement** (of representatives or other resources) of the organisation
- Previous resources allocation (for the preparation phase of the projects; priority is given to those who have allocated such resources)
- Internal competition when potential project resources are smaller than manifested interests (rules are established together by potential participants)

What projects did the cluster bring to its members?

- **Cluj Innovation Days** – annual conference promoting local IT companies & fostering international collaboration
- **POSCE** – financing of innovative IT products (some budget details and benefiting companies)
- **PRACTIT (POSDRU)** – organized student practice (some budget details, benefiting companies and number students)
- **Come to Cluj** – a multi annual campaign for attracting IT specialists in Cluj (in progress)

What partners and bodies interact or are consulted by the cluster?

Cluj IT Cluster works and collaborates with a host of other organizations and bodies, from Romania and international. Priority is given to those that have an impact on our industry's value chain such as: governmental (e.g. Ministry of Information Society, Ministry of European Funds), regional and local authorities, European bodies, international organizations.

What does the Board of Directors of Cluj IT Cluster do?

The Board of Directors is elected every two years by the General Assembly. Its main function is to steer the activity of Cluj IT Cluster between elections, based on the operational plan approved by the General Assembly. Some of the operations are delegated to the Executive Director based on negotiated Key Performance Indicators. The Board of Directors meets regularly, usually twice a month and approves or rejects initiatives brought to its attention by Cluj IT Cluster members and staff. Meetings of the BD are chaired by the President of Cluj IT Cluster and, if delegated, by the Executive Director.

Access to the BD meetings are open to members and [minutes may be consulted here](#).

What are current initiatives of the cluster?

Some of the quasi-continuous initiatives undertaken by Cluj IT have been described under previous sections of the FAQ, but there are others as well such as:

- Changing current state aids schemes
- Generating projects on e-Health
- Facilitate generation of innovative projects/solution created by members

you can find more information on [current initiatives here](#).

Why are we expected to pay for additional services although my organization already paid the annual membership fee?

Some services require specialized resources and/or expertise which the cluster needs to engage for their delivery. This is translated to costs that are not coverable by the membership fee you are paying. However, paid services provided through by cluster are generally more cost-effective than their price availability on the market.



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