

Interview with Bernard Kleynhoff

“The SSI cluster must boost actions that are complementary to plans of enterprises“.

The SSI (*Solutions et Systèmes Industriels* – Industrial Solutions and Systems) cluster was founded on four institutions that already existed in the PACA region, and has a development potential well anchored in very specific experiments, supported by players with strong bonds in the region. Its president, Bernard Kleynhoff, tells us that its PRIDES (Regional Joint Innovation and Economic Development Cluster) label marks both its regional vocation and its ability to handle large projects.



Bernard Kleynhoff

> Where did the SSI Cluster come from?

Bernard Kleynhoff: The SSI cluster brings together design, manufacturing and industrial maintenance enterprises working in the mechanical, electronic and mechatronic sectors. It also federates expert and research technological centres. It was labelled in October 2007 as the result of a long period of work and cooperation by its four founding members:

- the Mechanical Committee (to support the regional Mechanical Industries cluster),
- The APPIM (Association des Partenaires pour la Promotion de l'Industriel Méditerranéen – Association of Partners for the Promotion of Industry in the Mediterranean),
- The GMIF (Groupement Maritime et Industriel de Fos et de sa région – Fos and Regional Maritime and Industrial Group),
- The IRA (Institut de Régulation Automation – Automation Regulation Institute).

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For further information :

<http://www.ssi-paca.com/>

The PACA SSI –Mechanical and Electronic Cluster site

> **After 18 months of hindsight, what has the PRIDES label brought you?**

Bernard Kleynhoff: It confirms the main theme chosen by the cluster, namely to create an active and transverse partnership between the four major founding associations. Its objective is to promote and support the mechanical and mecatronic industry in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region... knowing that we all need mechanical, electronic and automatic control equipment, and maintenance in our daily life.

The PRIDES also gives us a regional configuration and encourages our very small, small and medium sized enterprises to have well-structured ambitions based on the five performance aspects included in the PRIDES charter (Innovation, ICT, Export and Marketing, Social Responsibility of Companies, Human resources and training). Therefore, the PRIDES provides a real assistance in obtaining financing for regional or international projects common to members of the cluster.

> **What is happening at the cluster now?**

Bernard Kleynhoff: Our first years 2007 and 2008 were dedicated to setting up and becoming functional, with the idea of maintaining the functional flexibility offered by the founding partners. Everyone chooses how he wishes to interact with the cluster. Many actions (shows, events, collective actions, cooperative projects) have been starting to take shape since 2008, to create a common identity for members of the cluster who now potentially include more than 4 000 enterprises.

> **And what will the cluster's projects be in the future?**

Bernard Kleynhoff: Beyond triggering the driving parameters of a Cluster – network synergy, sharing of means, development of actions common to export, etc., our plan is to set up very specific actions for companies outside the cluster, who would not have time to perform them themselves. For example, one of our main ideas for 2009 is to bring out many dormant projects within our small and medium size companies to accompany some of these projects. The cluster must boost actions that can be complementary to plans of enterprises, the final idea being to encourage the "Made in PACA" label in all businesses of cluster members, particularly for the development of products for which our common know how is especially relevant.

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PROVENCE PROMOTION
AGENCE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
Les Docks - Atrium 10.5 - 10, Place de la Joliette - BP 45607 - 13567 MARSEILLE Cedex 02 - FRANCE

Tél. +33 (0)4 96 11 60 00 - Fax +33 (0)4 96 11 60 11
provence-promotion@provence-promotion.fr - www.theprovencepartnership.com

