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PRESSE RELEASE

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**« SME and competitiveness clusters »: a reality to reinforce »  
Theme of the 3rd annual Competitiveness Cluster Forum  
The 9th of November 2007 at Sophia Antipolis**

More than two years after their creation and after the recent launch of the 5th call to tender, there are today 71 labelled clusters. The evaluation of the competitiveness cluster policy should be launched before the end of the year and lead to results in the autumn of 2008, the priority will be given in the following months to the support of existing clusters and the support of research and development projects that originate from these. SMEs are today at the heart of initiatives that aim to reinforce their capacity to grow a lot quicker and to cope with international competition.

***For the third edition of the competitiveness clusters forum, that will take place on the 9th of November 2007 at Sophia Antipolis the crucial theme of relations between competitiveness clusters and SMEs will be at the centre of the debates.***

Organised by the Fondation Sophia Antipolis in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Employment (MINEFE), the Interdepartmental Delegation to Landscaping and the Competitiveness of the Territories (DIACT), the Ministry of Research and Higher Education, CDC Enterprises and with the support of Alpes Maritimes local council, the Agglomeration Community of Sophia Antipolis and the Regional Council of Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur, this manifestation will be the occasion where light can be shed on the essential problems between SMEs and Competitiveness Clusters to promote the dynamic innovation of SMEs and the emergence of their projects.

Through concrete examples and testimonials, different subjects will be addressed such as **the support of SME projects by the clusters, the setting up of research projects, SME coaching for their international development, innovations in terms of financing.**

These subjects will be addressed during sessions that bring together representatives from SMEs, and clusters, representatives from the governmental, industrial and academic world and from the European Commission.

***By addressing, for the first time, in a concrete and open manner the advances as well as the restraints of the relations between SMEs and Competitiveness Clusters the forum of the 9th of November will open up new perspectives and will promote the communication at the centre of these communities of which the success is vital for the future of France.***

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