

Athens 2025: Advanced EU Funding & Project Innovation Camp

2 - 6 June 2025 Athens, Greece





About Us

European Academy is a training provider.

Established in 2015 as a respond to the noticeable information gap between the E.C. and its beneficiaries.

Building on our direct experience within the E.C. and the E.U. funding and project environment, we offer open and tailor-made courses on highly specialised domains.

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Welcome!

A European Academy's exclusive event, meticulously designed to provide you with the tools, connections, and confidence to deliver projects that stand out.

Gain the essential skills and knowledge to excel in every aspect of EU project management—from crafting winning proposals to advanced project execution, financial mastery, impact maximisation, and audit preparedness.

Athens 2025: Advanced EU Funding & Project Innovation Camp Sessions for Online Delivery

Friday, 13 June

- 09:30-11:00 CET
Managing Project Costs:
Direct & Indirect Costs

11:00-11:30 CET – Coffee Break

- 11:30-13:00 CET
Reporting Costs of External
Experts

Tuesday, 17 June

- 09:00-10:30 CET
The Erasmus +: 2021-2027

10:30-11:00 CET – Coffee Break

- 11:00 – 12:30 CET
Avoid Risks: Coordination
That Clicks – Meetings,
People & Partner
Communication in EU-
Funded Projects

12:30-13:30 CET – Lunch Break

- 13:30-15:00 CET
Mapping Your EU-Funded
Project to PM² Methodology

15:00-15:30 CET – Coffee Break

- 15:30-17:00 CET
Future of Work and Industry
4.0: Dr Bojan Lalić

Wednesday, 2 July

- 12:45-14:15 CET
Managing Project Costs:
Direct & Indirect Costs

14:15-14:45 CET – Coffee Break

- 14:45-16:15 CET
Reporting Costs of External
Experts

Friday, 4 July

- 16:00-17:30 CET
Innovation in Public &
Private Sectors

Tuesday, 8 July

- 09:00–10:30 CET
Innovation Leadership &
Change Management

10:30–11:00 CET – Coffee Break

- 11:00–12:30 CET
Industrial Transition
Strategies

12:30–13:30 CET – Lunch Break

- 13:30–15:00 CET
Creating Effective Cluster
Models

15:00–15:30 CET – Coffee Break

- 15:30–17:00 CET
Workshop: Strategic
Planning for Industrial
Clusters

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*"He who stands on a hill,
though it be low,
sees more than he who
stays below."*

Petar Petrovic Njegos

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Strategic Planning for Industrial Clusters

Goran Mladenovic

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Goran Mladenovic
Inspirer, Change Maker

Business Achievements

- Guided 20 startups and SMEs to early-stage investments totalling €4.5 million
- Secured funding for over 60 projects
- Best hiring process in Serbia in 2020; 2nd and 3rd place in 2023

Education

- Faculty of Electronic Engineering
- MBTI

Experience

- 2003 NGO Youth Response
- 2005 Branch Manager at a Coliers
- 2007– Organizational Development and HR in an international corporation at WVI
- Since 2011 CEO and Project Manager at Ni CAT
- Since 2025 Founder of ITG Consulting

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Agenda

- Key elements of strategic planning
- Group work and Discussion
- Useful documents, Critical skill
- QA session

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Introduction and experience in making strategies

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“(We) need new forms of cooperation and that is expressed in the clusters and their cooperation. It is a real challenge because only a few recognise the problem-solving expertise of clusters.”

Christian Ketels , 9th cluster conference, Brussels 2024

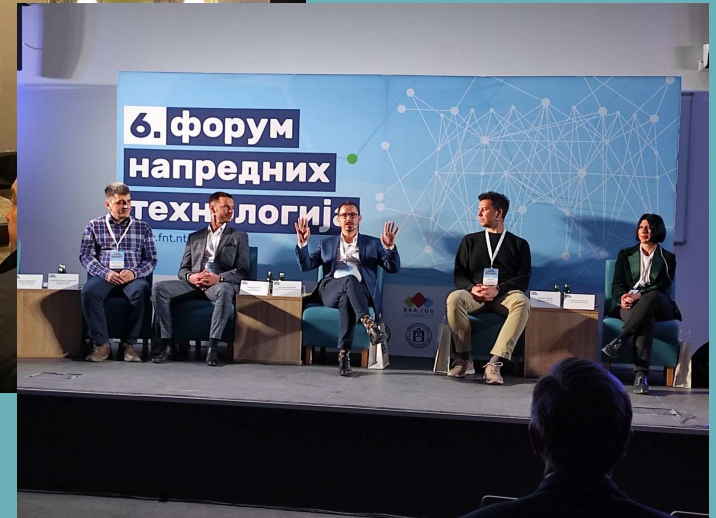
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1. Key Elements of Strategic Planning

Theory and practice

- Vision, mission, values
- Strategic directions
- Action planning and responsibilities
- Monitoring and evaluation

Preaching element



Tips for strategic planning

- It is about them- Listening your members
- Engage key persons-Change management –create strong coalition
- Keep it simple-Have one pager with strategic directions and action plan
- Be „on the business“ but facilitate

2. Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement

- Identify key actors (business, academia, government)
- Define roles and engagement levels
- Build trust and shared ownership-**live events**

Ni CAT experience

- Members
- Other players-5 helix
- Open space

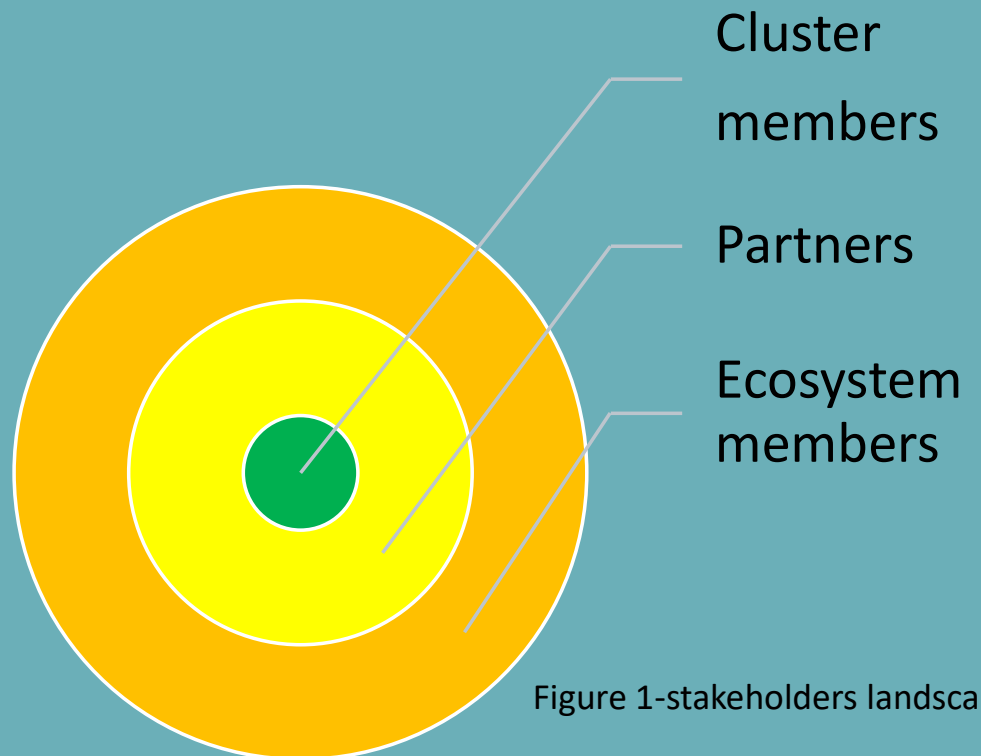


Figure 1-stakeholders landscape

3. Setting the Vision, Mission and Values

- Define shared long-term vision
- Align mission with purpose
- Create SMART goals

NI CAT experience

- Created before establishment
- Values developed in 1 year
- All values are „alive“-agile approach

VISION

The region of southeast Serbia is the epicenter of development of advanced technologies in the Balkans.

MISSION

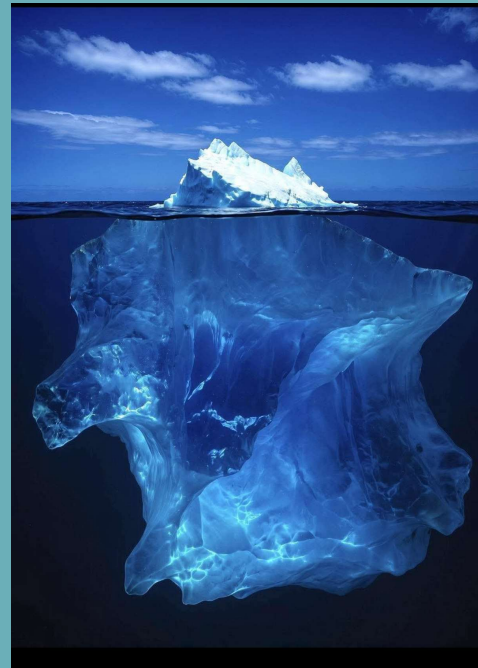
To leverage the potential and develop opportunities for the region in the field of advanced technologies.

VALUES

- Integrity
- Changes
- Partnerships
- Innovations
- Technology
- Excellence

2 important elements

- Ni CAT „Licence to disrupt“
- „In the business vs on the business“



4. SWOT or Cluster Diagnostic Tools

- Analyse internal and external factors
- Use data and focus groups
- Prioritize based on findings
- Know trends in industry

Strengths	Weaknesses
What unique resources or expertise does the cluster offer?	Where are there gaps in skills, knowledge, or resources?
What successful collaborations or innovations have emerged from the cluster?	What internal challenges slow down progress or collaboration?
What advantages do members gain from being part of the cluster?	Are there areas where the cluster underperforms?
What is the reputation or visibility of the cluster in the region or sector?	How sustainable is the current funding or leadership structure?
What internal capabilities set the cluster apart from competitors?	What feedback have members given about limitations within the cluster?
Opportunities	Threats
What emerging trends or technologies could the cluster leverage?	What external factors could disrupt the cluster's growth?
Are there new markets or partnerships the cluster could explore?	Are there stronger competitors in the same field or region?
How can the cluster benefit from policy changes or public funding?	Is there a risk of losing key talent or partners?
What regional or global needs align with the cluster's strengths?	How could economic or political instability affect the cluster?
Can collaboration with academia or startups create new opportunities?	Are there regulatory or legal changes that could be a threat?

Future NOW

- Technological shifts (UBER)
- Changing customer behavior (Air BnB)
- Regulatory changes (Gaming industry)
- Business model evolution (Skype)
- Global events (Zoom)
- Organizational inertia (Nokia)

So is it possible in „Brave New World“ to have usefull strategy?

4. Setting Strategic Goals

	Opportunities	Threats
Strength	Strengths + Opportunities	
Weaknesses		Weaknesses + Threats

5. From Strategy to Action: Operational Planning

- Translate goals into projects
- Assign timelines and resources
- Form working groups

Challenges/NI CAT experience

1. Completely disconnected from daily activities
2. The cluster is donor-driven
3. Denying agile reality
4. Low Interest in realization
5. Underestimating the financial element

Group work-25 min

Group 1-Identify key actors for strategic planning, their motivation, and contributions

Group 2- Defining Strategic Directions from SWOT Analysis

Group 3- How to Ensure Operational Implementation of Strategy

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Discussion

6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Adaptation

- Set measurable KPIs
 - Collect and analyse data
 - Adjust plans as needed
- Ni CAT experience
 - Action plan-short term
 - Action plan annualy
 - Strategic directions
 - Annual KPIs

Key Industrial Cluster Trends by 2030

- AI
- People and Skills
- Globalization
- Political Support and Internal EU tensions
- Crisis and Defenses

Answer-metaccluster,
multysectorial approach



Critical skill- Strategic thinking

Strategic thinking means **thinking ahead, seeing beyond the day-to-day, and making smart choices** that lead to long-term success.

5 Key Ways to Improve Strategic Thinking

- **See the Big Picture**
Regularly connect daily tasks to long-term goals and industry trends.
- **Ask Smart Questions**
Focus on "Why?", "What if?", and "What's next?" rather than just "How?".
- **Think in Scenarios**
Explore multiple possible futures – optimistic, realistic, and worst-case.
- **Learn Across Disciplines**
Read and think beyond your field – economics, psychology, tech, geopolitics.
- **Schedule Time to Think**
Block time weekly to reflect, step back, and think strategically without distractions.

QA

1. How do you set realistic and measurable goals in a cluster's strategic plan?
2. What are the most effective tools for monitoring the implementation of a strategic plan?
3. How can all cluster members be involved in the strategic planning process?
4. How do you adapt a cluster's strategic plan in rapidly changing market conditions?
5. What is the role of the management board in approving and overseeing the strategic plan?
6. How do you align strategic goals with available financial resources?
7. What are the most common mistakes in cluster strategic planning and how can they be avoided?
8. How do you connect daily activities and projects with long-term strategic objectives?
9. How can a cluster utilize external donors without becoming donor-driven?
10. How do you define and track key performance indicators (KPIs) in cluster strategic planning?

Summary and what is next

- Engage right people and listen
- Preching the future but make balance
- Be agile
- Review your current strategy with fresh eyes
- Engage 3 external stakeholders in next 30 days
- Facilitate one strategic reflection session with your team
- Use open space or structured dialogue

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References

- Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog by Florian Maganza,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wanderer_above_the_Sea_of_Fog#/media/File:Caspar_David_Friedrich_-_Wanderer_above_the_Sea_of_Fog.jpeg Accessed 6 July 2025
- TheSupererogatory *Guy James Bond meeting Q (1080)* 11 Jan 2014
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57Uy9jPxxwI> Accessed 6 July 2025
- *This content was partially created with the assistance of artificial intelligence (ChatGPT), followed by review and adaptation to ensure relevance and applicability OpenAI ChatGPT (2025)*