

Policy Recommendations

developed by the strategic project CluStrat

Policy Recommendation 1

Cluster policy should be selective

Cluster policy should be selective, not supporting all the existing clusters but aiming at favouring the development of the formation of production systems that have the characteristics of a good cluster, i.e. advantageous inter-firm relationships, entrepreneurial firms, and effective institutions.

Besides the fact, that cluster excellence is already taken care of at European level by the Cluster Excellence label, the approaches to cluster excellence at regional level may ask for other or additional criteria, which can also be object of tailor-made support initiated by policy makers. A (non-exhaustive) list of criteria in the light of CluStrat could be:

- A high quality cluster strategy, which is aiming at introducing KET knowledge to their cluster members and identifies opportunities for strategic partnerships;
- Cluster members receiving services paid by membership fees
- Financial stability of clusters (high self-financing rate), not dependent on public funding.

Policy Recommendation 2

Cluster smart specialization

In the context of selective policies to favour clusters, a crucial aim is that of the evolution of CMOs towards an entrepreneurial approach, so that they get capable of identifying and proposing to cluster firms (or their combinations) business opportunities in emerging industries and to offer occasions of trans.-regional cooperation. This way, CMOs will facilitate the development of the **cluster smart specialization**, which already represents a key concept of the European Commission 2020 policy framework. To secure the entrepreneurial approach of cluster organizations,

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- the cluster set-up should combine top-down AND bottom-up approaches;
- clusters should be supervised by an advisory board consisting mainly of representatives of Industry and some form research;
- clusters should be aware of their member's needs (e.g. customer relation management, continuous company visits,...);
- companies should pay for cluster services right from the beginning.

Policy Recommendation 3

Creation of regional cross-sectoral clusters

European policy should foster the **support of regional cross-sectoral clusters**, in cases in which the regional scale (critical mass of partners) allows to take opportunities, linked with the emerging industries, which a smaller scale will not allow to catch. A similar approach should favour the development of other suitable forms of collaboration and network having the same aim, even so they do not fit common cluster definitions.

In this case, European Policy should look at best practice cases, which picture how successful cluster organizations have been set-up and developed and how they have managed to be a successful pioneer. Next bits and pieces of these approaches could be used for similar implementations of organizations and cluster policies in other regions all over Europe.

Policy Recommendation 4

Accreditation of innovation actors (e.g. Key-Enabling-Actors (KEA) and Knowledge intensive business services (KIBS))

In order to increase the ability of European regions to compete in emerging industries or innovation projects, developed by firms and clusters – in particular the projects, implying trans-national cooperation – have to be supported by an appropriate innovation institutions (sub)system. Accreditations for innovation actors, both key enabling technology actors (KEA) and institutional knowledge intensive business services (KIBS), would show that they have reached the excellence in their field, work at the global level and thus be a valuable partner in projects of transnational cooperation on emerging industries. In order to ensure to involve just high level experts, **a form of accreditation of both KEA and KIBS at the European level could be developed.**

This accreditation system could be developed using and adapting formats such as ISO, EFQM, and the labelling system developed under the European Excellence initiative.

Policy Recommendation 5

Strengthening & connecting technology transfer centres, laboratories and open innovation centres

The **presence of laboratories networks**, where demand and supply can meet and interact, represents a cognitive resource, entailing a high value to the development of innovation projects in emerging industries (e.g advanced materials, ambient assisted living, etc.) and can become hubs for interaction between R&D, companies / end users. The formation of new contexts of this type and the strengthening of the existing ones, represent a qualified object of EU policy in the emerging industries. Developing such kind of laboratories all over Europe, interlinking them with each other and hence develop completely new value-chains could be supported by funding schemes and calls on European Level.

Policy Recommendation 6

Enhancing knowledge transfer and joint training activities

Developing and implementing key enabling technologies (KETs) require a perfect blend of complementary skills of the workforce. Therefore a continuous improvement process for human capital and knowledge transfer is key, to bring KETs into industrial application. It is recommended to launch **Europe-wide training schemes** to secure the needed knowledge-transfer.

Policy Recommendation 7

Interconnecting parallel projects in CE regions and beyond

Many transnational projects run in parallel across Europe. Fostering an exchange of experiences and transfer of results among them will enable a consolidation of insights, bundling of competences and thus create added value and increased scope. E.g. common webpages with significant project events and possibilities for project partners from different project consortia to interact during these events or conferences would strongly **strengthen transnational cross-project cooperation** and would foster the generation of new ideas/innovations in the field of emerging industries.