



CLUSTERS AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES

RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY

DEVELOPED IN THE STRATEGIC PROJECT CLUSTRAT

CLUSTRAT – BOOSTING INNOVATION THROUGH NEW CLUSTER CONCEPTS IN SUPPORT OF EMERGING ISSUES AND CROSS-SECTORAL THEMES

Emerging industries require innovation at the interface of industries, technologies and services including the cross-sector implementation of Key Enabling Technologies (KET). The strategic project CluStrat aimed at the development of new cluster concepts fostering such cross-fertilization in order to better seize the related opportunities and advance the emerging industries in the European regions. The transnational consortium developed a joint strategy on new cluster concepts for central Europe.

The present document translates the strategic approach into recommendations to policy, aiming to fertilize the conceptual phase on new cluster concepts at all policy levels, addressing policy makers at transnational/European as well as regional/national level.

The full strategy on new cluster concepts as well as further project results, including proposals for joint policy actions at transnational and macroregional level, are available at

www.clustrat.eu/results/

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Recommendation 1 | Cluster policy should be selective

Cluster policy should be selective, not supporting all the existing clusters but aiming at favoring 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 the 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

Recommendation 2 | Cluster Smart Specialization

In the context of selective policies to favor clusters, a crucial aim is that of the evolution of CMO 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 transregional cooperation. This way, CMO will facilitate the development of the cluster Smart Specialization, which already represents a key concept of the Europe 2020 policy framework. To secure the entrepreneurial approach of cluster organizations

- 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 from research;
- clusters should be aware of their members' needs (e.g. customer relation management systems, continuous company visits, ...);
- companies should pay for cluster services right from the beginning.

Recommendation 3 | Creation of regional cross-sector clusters

European policy should foster the support of regional cross-sector 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 favor 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 implementation of organizations and cluster policies in other regions all over Europe.

Recommendation 4 | Accreditation of innovation actors

In order to increase the ability of European regions to compete in emerging industries, innovation projects developed by firms and clusters – in particular projects implying transnational cooperation – have to be supported by an appropriate innovation institutions (sub)system. Accreditations for innovation actors, both key enabling 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 (International Organization for Standardization), European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and the labelling system developed under the European Excellence initiative.

Recommendation 5 | Strengthening and connecting technology transfer centers, laboratories and open innovation centers

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 and 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 at European level.

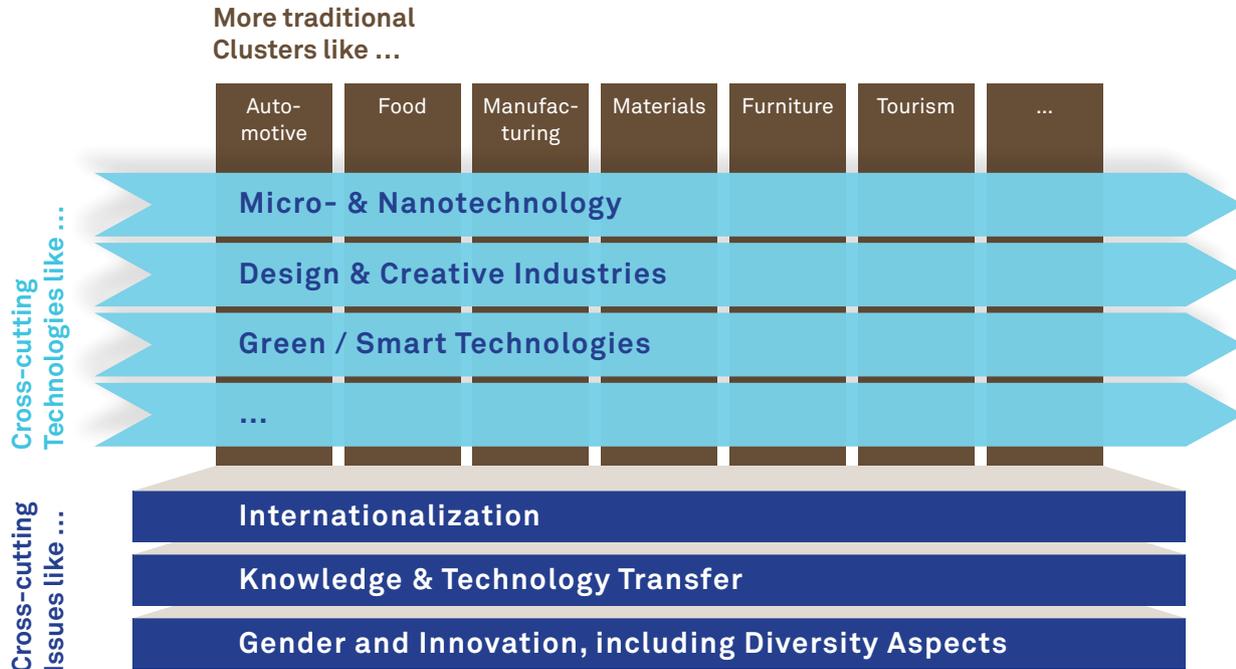
Recommendation 6 | Enhancing knowledge transfer and joint training activities

Developing and implementing KET requires a perfect blend of complementary skills of the workforce. Therefore a continuous improvement process for human capital and knowledge transfer is key to bring KET into industrial application. It is recommended to launch Europe-wide training schemes to secure the necessary knowledge transfer.

Recommendation 7 | Interconnecting projects – in central Europe 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.

Boosting Innovation through new Cluster Concepts



PROJECT & CONSORTIUM

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