



September 2012 / Issue 1

Dear reader,

welcome to the first edition of the project newsletter of CluStrat - *Boosting innovation through new cluster concepts in support of emerging issues and cross-sectoral themes*. CluStrat is a strategic project implemented by the CENTRAL EUROPE programme co-financed by the ERDF. Its objective is the development of new cluster concepts with regard to Emerging Industries and Cross-cutting Issues.

CluStrat has started in October 2011. After one year's work, this 1st CluStrat Newsletter presents the project's progress so far, highlighting major achievements, decisions and events. But we also look into the future of the project. From now on, the CluStrat Newsletter will deliver updates, information on recent & upcoming events and other contributions on cluster policy on a regular basis. We hope you "stay tuned" and enjoy reading!

About CluStrat

In recent years, several **societal challenges** and developments can be recognized that are expected to sustainably change the way we live and work, consume and produce. For instance, climate change and the receding availability of natural resources call for new solutions regarding energy and resource efficient, environmentally friendly production, construction or mobility. With a view to the ageing societies across Europe, older consumers can be expected to have different requirements regarding a whole range of products and services.

As a consequence, new industries are expected or even already seen to emerge. These new **Emerging Industries** will often call for cross-fertilization between traditional industries, Key-enabling Technologies (KETs) as well as cross-sector services.

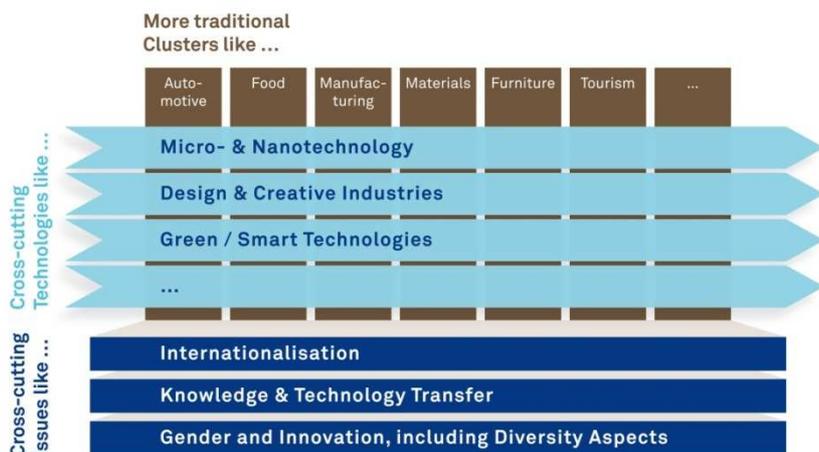
Anticipating these new, Emerging Industries is clearly a necessity for Europe to stay successful in global competition. Exploiting the resulting market chances by advancing **innovations at the interface of industries, technologies and services** is a specific opportunity in the European Single Market: In light of the differing strengths and assets of European regions, a promising way to facilitate the necessary cross-fertilization lies in promoting cross-cluster collaborations between different regions.

CluStrat explores ways to support clusters in Central Europe in anticipating and exploiting new market opportunities with a view to Emerging Industries. In line with the **Smart Specialisation** concept, CluStrat first looks at the potentials of each project region with a view to selected Emerging Industries, then explores how to bring together the given assets and knowhow of different regions to enable the necessary cross-industry innovations. The project consortium will finally adopt a **joint strategy** for encouraging clusters to address and make use of the Emerging Industries. Concrete support mechanisms will be tested in pilot actions with clusters in the regions.



In addition, the project looks at relevant **Cross-cutting Issues** and their integration by clusters. Again, ways to support the uptake of these horizontal issues including internationalization, knowledge and technology transfer and gender in innovation, will be tested in pilot actions, and translated into strategy elements.

Boosting Innovation through new Cluster Concepts



CluStrat is a **transnational cooperation project** between 18 partners and seven associated institutions from Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. The strategic project is coordinated by Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum, in close cooperation and with financial support from the Ministry of Finance and Economics Baden-Württemberg.

>> [Click here to find out more about the consortium](#)

The Story so far

Setting the Scene: The opening conference of the project on 14 December 2011 in Stuttgart featured several high-level speakers, including two key note speeches from the European Commission’s DG Enterprise & Industry and DG Regional Policy, and a Central European expert panel. Clearly, CluStrat is positioned in the midst of today’s innovation topics: What can policy do to help industry exploit and make use of the Key-enabling Technologies in manufacturing and services? Which role do clusters play in regard to Smart Specialisation? And what is the expectation of the involved regional policy makers with a view to new cluster policy?

>> [Click here to learn more about the conference](#)

Decision on the sectoral / thematic priorities: The 1st Transnational Policy Dialogue on 15 December 2011 in Stuttgart brought together experts from Key-enabling Technologies and Smart Specialisation, helping the project partners and policy makers from their respective regions to define their priority areas with regard to the Emerging Industries and Cross-cutting Issues. Taking into consideration the majority votes during the 1st Transnational Policy Dialogue, the Steering Committee of CluStrat afterwards decided upon the future focus areas of the strategy development:

Emerging Industries

- Active Aging
- Sustainable Development / Green Economy
- Sustainable/ Intelligent Mobility

Cross-cutting Issues

- Knowledge and Technology Transfer
- Internationalization
- Gender in Innovation, including Diversity Aspects

>> [Click here for the report on the 1st Transnational Policy Dialogue](#)



Speakers at the gender in innovation workshop (Photo copyright: Susanne Baur)

Clusters – An innovation environment for

gender? Already during the opening conference, the importance of the gender topic within cluster was questioned. Thus, an expert session on the Cross-cutting Issue of Gender in Innovation organized by the Lead Partner of CluStrat on 20 March 2012 in Stuttgart took place within the frame of an international gender conference. The expert session showcased very convincing good practices and experiences from Sweden and Norway, demonstrating how gender aspects can make a difference for clusters in regard to innovation.

- >> [Click here to learn more about the expert session](#)
- >> [Download VINNOVA's publication "Innovation & Gender"](#)

Mapping of potentials underway in CluStrat regions: As a first step in strategy development, the cluster potentials of each project region with a view to the selected Emerging Industries and Cross-cutting Issues have to be analyzed. Interviews with relevant stakeholders have been conducted in all project regions during the summer, in order to explore the capacities of the regions to exploit the Emerging Industries. The analysis is performed by an external expert (Openfield, Poland) and will be available in autumn this year. As to the mapping of potentials for the selected Cross-cutting Issues, the methodology will be finalized shortly and questionnaires will go out to the partners in September this year.

Policy Dialogues start in the regions: In several project regions, the policy dialogue has been launched. Preparatory workshops with regional stakeholders including cluster managers have been organized in Baden-Württemberg, Karlovy Vary Region, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Upper Austria. The Regional and National Level Policy Dialogue will gather momentum in autumn, when draft reports of the mapping of potentials are available and need to be discussed and validated/updated by policy makers, cluster practitioners and experts.

Website and online Library available: The project website www.clustrat.eu was launched in spring 2012 and serves as the central information pool of the project, providing key facts also in Central European languages. Moreover, the website features a searchable online Library. Next to project documents and publications, the CluStrat Library contains papers and other publications of thematic relevance to the project's contents and objective. >> [Click here to visit the website](#)

Light House Project for the EU Strategy for the Danube Region: On its second meeting held on 05.-06. December 2011 in Bucharest, the Steering Group of Priority Area 8 Competitiveness decided that CluStrat is considered a Light House project for the Danube Region. Due to its novel thematic focus and approach and its strategic set-up, CluStrat is seen as a model for future projects in the field of innovation and technology transfer in the Danube Region.



What's next?

Policy Dialogues on the Mapping of Potentials in the Central Europe regions: While the results of the mapping of potentials in relation to Emerging Industries are currently being processed into a draft report, the mapping of potentials with regard to Cross-cutting Issues will be conducted in the regions as of September. The results of the mapping of potentials will have to be discussed intensively at regional and national level, to validate the results of the analysis of data and the conclusions made by the external expert. As these conclusions will form the basis of the strategy development, this regional and national level Policy Dialogue is of utmost importance. Do policy makers agree with the results? Is there a need for corrections?

2nd Transnational Policy Dialogue: The so validated and updated versions from all the regions will then be discussed from a Central European point of view in the 2nd Transnational Policy Dialogue, which will take place in early 2013 in Poland. Invited experts from European level will support the discussion. The potentials of the different regions will be the basis for their Smart Specialisation strategy. Combined in the Central European Region, the various potentials form a matrix which visualizes the opportunities for transnational cooperation. This will influence the development of a strategy to exploit the full potential: no duplications in investment, but exploiting through cooperation, joined learning and other possible tools. The results of both parts of the mapping will eventually be published on the project website www.clustrat.eu (in the beginning of next year).

Drafting strategy elements: With the conclusion of the mapping and the 2nd Transnational Policy Dialogue, a new phase in the project begins. The 2nd Transnational Policy Dialogue will trigger, and give direction to, the strategy development. The public **mid-term conference** will take place in May 2013 in Brussels, taking stock of general project progress and sharing previous results. A first draft of the strategy is expected to be available by September 2013 for the **3rd Transnational Policy Dialogue**. Afterwards, the identified strategy elements will be tested through **pilot actions** in several project regions.

In light of these prospects, we look forward to sharing our experiences & findings with you!

Impressions from the 1st Transnational Policy Dialogue on 15th December 2011 in Stuttgart



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